

# **Muslim Personalities in Sri Lanka, then and now**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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A revised and updated sequel to  
**“Personages of the Past (Moors, Malays and other Muslims of the past in Sri  
Lanka”**

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**To Dad, Mum & Aunty Shireen**

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## **CONTENTS**

<b>The Muslims of Sri Lanka .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Brief History of the Muslims of Sri Lanka .....	3
<b>The Moors of Sri Lanka.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>History of the Colombo Grand Mosque .....</b>	<b>16</b>
PORTUGUESE PERIOD 1505-1658 .....	16
DUTCH PERIOD 1658-1796.....	18
BRITISH PERIOD 1796-1948.....	18
RE-BUILDING OF THE COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE .....	19
HISTORY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MOSQUE .....	19
THE MOSQUE CANNON .....	20
THE CEMETERY .....	20
AL MADRASATUL HAMEEDIA .....	21
DEATHS OF MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE .....	22
OFFICE BEARERS COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE 1956.....	22
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE 1956 .....	22
<b>Arab Influence in the East .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Arab Influence in the East .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Arab Trade with Ceylon .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Interaction with the Portuguese .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Dealing with the Dutch.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>British Rule.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Vathimi (son of Fathima) Kumaraya.....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Ancient Marriage Customs of the Moors of Ceylon.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Red Letter day for Moors' Sports Club .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>The Malay Community of Sri Lanka .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Malays in Sri Lanka .....	67
Malay Heroism in Sri Lanka .....	70
What lured Malays to Sri Lanka?.....	72
Islam and learning among Malays.....	75
Elite and cultured Malays.....	78
Life after the Regiment.....	81
<b>Orang Melayu: The story of Sri Lanka's Malay folk.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Chronological events in the history of Sri Lankan Malays .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>The Memon community of Sri Lanka.....</b>	<b>90</b>
Introduction.....	90
The Lohana Theory .....	91
Other Theories.....	92
'The Memons - Important Muslim minority of Sri Lanka' .....	93
Family Names of the Memon Community .....	95
<b>The Bohra community .....</b>	<b>96</b>
A spiritual togetherness .....	97
Who are the Dawoodi Bohras?.....	99
Family Names of Dawoodhi Bohra's of Sri Lanka .....	99

# The Muslims of Sri Lanka

## Brief History of the Muslims of Sri Lanka

### Introduction

Sri Lanka, known to the ancients as Ceylon, has been recorded in history books as a country that has had many visitations from foreign travelers throughout the ages. The people are mainly Buddhist, with a complex mixture of Hindus, Muslims, Roman Catholics and other Christian denominations. The main race, are the Sinhalese while the Tamils, Muslims and Burghers form the remaining. The Muslims of Sri Lanka are a small minority amounting to approximately 10% of a total population of 20 Million people. They claim descent from the Arab settlers of Hashemite origin, Yemeni traders and of the Berbers of Morocco and North Africa, who were visiting and trading with the Island even before the advent of Islam.

The first Sri Lankan Muslim settlement was in a port settlement in western Sri Lanka which was named Berbereen (Beruwala) in honor of the Berber traveler who founded the city, Abu Yusuf al-Barbari. This individual was also responsible for converting the nearby Maldive Islands to Islam. The Berbers are an ethnic group from North Africa, mainly from Morocco. Their attachment to tradition and Islamic values sets them apart from the Arabs and identifies them as formidable warriors in Islam next to the Turks. Famous Berbers include, General Tariq bin Ziyad, Ibn Batuta of Tangier among many others.

The second settlement in the area was in Alutgamaweedia which was subsequently named Dharga town in the 1940's by the Muslims of that town. The grand mosque in Dharga town has archeological evidence pointing to its historical origins.

The third settlement in the region was in Weligama a town further to the south of Berberyn. This city was known by its Arab name as As-Salawat. The biggest massacre of Muslims in the island by the Portuguese was committed here at Weligama where at least 10,000 Arab soldiers and their families were slaughtered mercilessly by the Portuguese who were reknowned for their barbarity towards those who refused to convert to Christianity. A glance at the family names of the current Muslims of this region points to their noble origins. The larger settlements of Colombo (Kalembu), Galle (al-Ghali) and Matara (al-Muttrah) were established by trading families who migrated from Arab lands in the later centuries.

Sri Lankan Muslims can be categorized into two distinct sub groups, the Moors and the Malays. The former is the name given to them by the Portuguese colonial rulers who used the word Moros to identify Arabs in general. The Malays are a group of Muslims who originated from Java and the Malaysian Peninsula. They differed from the Moors, both, in their physical appearance as well as in the language they spoke which was a mixture of Malay and local dialects.

The Muslims of Sri Lanka have a colorful history behind them punctuated by a long spell of hardship suffered during the Portuguese and Dutch occupation of the Island. It is much to their credit that they withstood the onslaught of economic constraints, political intrigues and religious persecution to stay behind and survive. Most other peoples may have packed their bags and left for good. They not only saved their religion from the

Christian enemies but also rebuilt the economy, slowly and steadily, by the 18th century when the British took over control of the island from the Dutch.

Being geographically isolated from the main centers of Islamic culture and civilization the Muslims of Sri Lanka were forced to interact closely with their neighbors, the Muslims of South India, in order to preserve their identity. Had they been denied this slender link, it is possible that, they may have lost their distinct Islamic character completely. However, it must be observed that this link has also caused many Indian (Hindu) traditions and rituals to creep into their culture and life style, some of which, even though vehemently anti-Islamic, are still practiced to date. Lack of a correct understanding of the teachings of Islam has been the main cause of this sad situation.

Having adapted to the local conditions in various ways and also contributing largely to the Islands economic prosperity, the Muslim community of Sri Lanka, unlike the Hindu Tamils of the Northern Province, has saved itself from any major clash with the indigenous Sinhalese population. They have also been able to receive a fair share in the country's Politics and Administration by virtue of their hard work and also of being an important minority whose support has been vital to all the political groups in the country. Although it may be said that the Muslim community was not politically dominant at any stage, yet, it is certainly true that they maneuvered their political activity without much noise, unlike the Tamils.

This work attempts to present a brief history of the Muslims of Sri Lanka from their early Arab trader beginnings to the present day minority community that is fully integrated into the Sri Lankan society.

### Historical Background

Sri Lanka (previously known as Ceylon) lies of the South-East of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The pear shaped island, often referred to as the pearl of the east is separated from mainland India by a narrow strip of water called the Palk Strait.

Being in such close proximity to and having such easy access from India, it might be expected that Sri Lanka received a large number of migrants from its neighbor from pre-historic times. The original inhabitants of the island are believed to be an aboriginal tribe called the Veddahs. The Sinhalese, presently the majority community, are supposed to be the descendants of the colonists, led by Vijaya, from the valley of the Ganges who settled in the island around the 6th century B.C. Sinhala, the language of the Sinhalese, is an Aryan language, closely related to Pali. Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa during the period 307-267 B.C.

Trade relations between India and Sri Lanka are traced to the 3rd century B.C. Historians have not been able to pin-point the actual date of establishment of Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka. However, during the 3rd century B.C. a Tamil General, Elara, set up a Tamil Kingdom at Anuradhapura, in the North Central Province, and ruled there for 44 years. He earned a reputation for his just and impartial administration among the Sinhalese and Tamils and was thus called Elara the Just.

The strategic location of the island, in the Indian Ocean, together with some of the coveted goods it produced, resulted in a fair degree of foreign trade even from ancient times. The Romans discovered the commercial value of Sri Lanka in the first century A.D. and the island was visited by Greeks, Romans, Persians, Arabs, and Chinese traders. Sri

Lanka's trade offering included Cinnamon, which grew wild in the forests of the wet zone, precious stones, pearls, elephants and ivory.

While most of the traders were only visitors to the island, who made their fortunes and left, it was the Arabs who settled down, making Ceylon their home. Furthermore as the Muslims of Sri Lanka claim their descendancy from the Arabs it is important to look at the information available on the advent of the Arabs to the island.

### The Arabs:

The Tamils of Sri Lanka, throughout history, have attempted to categorize the Sri Lankan Muslims as belonging to the Tamil race. This has been mainly for selfish reasons in a bid to eliminate the minority Muslim community from having its own unique identity. The Government of Sri Lanka, however, treats the Muslims as of Arab origin and as a distinct ethnic group from the Tamils.

Fr. S.G. Perera in his book -History of Ceylon for Schools- Vol. 1. The Portuguese and Dutch Periods, (1505-1796), Colombo (1955), The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., p 16, writes,

*"The first mention of Arabs in Ceylon appears to be in the Mahavamsa (Ancient Sri Lankan history) account of the reign of the King Pandukabhaya, where it is stated that this king set apart land for the Yonas (Muslims) at Anuradhapura"*

With the decline of the Roman Empire in the 3rd century A.D., Roman trade also died out and the Arabs and Persians filled up the vacuum; engaging in a rapidly growing inter-coastal trade. After the conquest of Persia (Iran), Syria and Egypt, the Arabs controlled all the important ports and trading stations between East and West. It is estimated that the Arabs had settled in Sri Lanka and Sumatra by the 1st century A.D. K.M. De Silvas, Historical Survey, Sri Lanka - A Survey, London (1977), C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., p 50, states,

*"by about the 8th century A.D., the Arabs had formed colonies at the important ports of India, Ceylon and the East Indies. The presence of the Arabs at the ports of Ceylon is attested to by at least three inscriptions discovered at Colombo, Trincomalee and the island of Puliantivu"*

The manner in which Islam developed in Sri Lanka is very closely similar to that on the Malabar coast of India. Tradition has recorded that Arabs who had settled down on the Malabar coast used to travel from the port of Cranganore to Sri Lanka on pilgrimage to pay homage to what they believed to be the foot-print of Adam on the top of a mountain, which, until today, is called Adams Peak.

Ibn Batuta, the famous 14th. century Arab traveler, has recorded many facets about early Arab influence in Sri Lanka in his travelogues. Before the end of the 7th. century, a colony of Muslim merchants had established themselves in Ceylon. Fascinated by the scenic splendor and captivated by the traditions associated with Adams Peak, Muslim merchants arrived in large numbers and some of them decided to settle in the island encouraged by the cordial treatment they received by the local rulers. Most of them lived along the coastal areas in peace and prosperity, maintaining contacts, both cultural and commercial, with Baghdad and other Islamic cities.

According to Tikiri Abeyasinghe in his Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, Colombo (1966), Lake House Investments Ltd., p 192, tradition has it that,

***"the first Mohammadans of Ceylon were a portion of those Arabs of the House of Hashim, who were driven from Arabia in the early part of the 8th. century by the tyranny of the Caliph, Abdel Malik bin Marwan, and who proceeding from the Euphrates southwards made settlements in the Concan in the southern parts of the peninsula of India, on the island of Ceylon and Malacca. The division of them which came to Ceylon formed eight considerable settlements along the North-East, North and Western coast of that island; viz., one at Trincomalee, one at Jaffna, one at Colombo, one at Barbareen, and one at Point de Galle."***

It is perhaps reasonable, therefore, to assume that the Arabs, professing the religion of Islam, arrived in Sri Lanka around the 7th./8th. century A.D. even though there was a settled community of Arabs in Ceylon in pre-Islamic times.

The circumstances that helped the growth of Muslim settlements were varied. The Sinhalese were not interested in trade and were content in tilling the soil and growing cattle. Trade was thus wide open to the Muslims. The Sinhalese Kings considered the Muslim settlements favorably on account of the revenue that they brought them through their contacts overseas both in trade and in politics. The religious tolerance of the local population was also another vital factor in the development of Muslim settlements in Ceylon.

The early Muslim settlements were set up, mainly, around ports on account of the nature of their trade. It is also assumed that many of the Arab traders may not have brought their womenfolk along with them when they settled in Ceylon. Hence they would have been compelled to marry the Sinhalese and Tamil women of the island after converting them to Islam. The fact that a large number of Muslims in Sri Lanka speak the Tamil language can be attributed to the possibility that they were trading partners with the Tamils of South India and had to learn Tamil to successfully transact their business. The integration with the Muslims of Tamil Nadu, in South India, may have also contributed to this. It is also possible that the Arabs who had already migrated to Ceylon, prior to Islam, had adopted the Tamil language as a medium of communication in their intercourse with the Tamil speaking Muslims of South India. The Muslims were very skilful traders who gradually built up a very lucrative trading post in Ceylon. A whole colony of Muslims is said to have landed at Beruwela (South Western coast) in the Kalutara District in 1024 A.D.

The Muslims did not indulge in propagating Islam amongst the natives of Ceylon even though many of the women they married did convert. Islam did attract the less privileged low caste members of the Tamil community who found the factor of equality a blessing for their status and well-being.

There is also a report in the history of Sri Lanka of a Muslim Ruler, Vathimi Raja, who reigned at Kurunegala (North Central Province) in the 14th. century. This factor cannot be found in history books due to their omission, for reasons unknown, by modern authors. Vathimi Raja was the son of King Bhuvaneka Bahu I, by a Muslim spouse, the daughter of one of the chiefs. The Sinhalese son of King Bhuvaneka Bahu I, Parakrama Bahu III, the real heir to the throne was crowned at Dambadeniya under the name of Pandita Parakrama Bahu III. In order to be rid of his step brother, Vathimi Raja, he ordered that his eyes be gouged out. It is held that the author of the Mahavamsa (ancient history of

Ceylon) had suppressed the recording of this disgraceful incident. The British translator, Mudaliyar Wijesinghe states that original Ola (leaf script) was bodily removed from the writings and fiction inserted instead. The blinded Vathimi Raja (Bhuvaneka Bahu II or Al-Konar, abbreviated from Al-Langar-Konar, meaning Chief of Lanka of Alakeshwara) was seen by the Arab traveler Ibn Batuta during his visit to the island in 1344. His son named Parakrama Bahu II (Alakeshwara II) was also a Muslim. The lineage of Alakeshwara kings (of Muslim origin) ended in 1410. Although all the kings during this reign may not have been Muslims, the absence of the prefix -Shri Sangha Bodhi- (pertaining to the disciples of the Buddha) to the name of these kings on the rock inscriptions during this hundred year period may be considered as an indicator that they were not Buddhists. Further during Ibn Batuta's visit a Muslim ruler called Jalasthi is reported to have been holding Colombo, maintaining his hold over the town with a garrison of about 500 Abyssinians.

In spite of this the Muslims have always been maintaining very cordial relationships with the Sinhalese Royalty and the local population. There is evidence that they were more closer to the Sinhalese than they were to the Tamils. The Muslims relationship with the Sinhalese kings grew stronger and in the 14th. century they even fought with them against the expanding Tamil kingdom and its maritime influence.

By the beginning of the 16th. century, the Muslims of Sri Lanka, the descendants of the original Arab traders, had settled down comfortably in the island. They were every successful in trade and commerce and integrated socially with the customs of the local people. They had become an inseparable, and even more, an indispensable part of the society. This period was one of ascendancy in peace and prosperity for the Sri Lankan Muslims.

### The Malays:

Sri Lankan Muslims include the Malays although they form a separate group by themselves. Even the earliest census of Sri Lanka (1881) lists the Muslims as Moors and Malays separately. Malays too, follow the Islamic religion just like the Moors.

The real beginning of the Malays in Sri Lanka dates back to the 13th. century. Husseinmiya writes,

*"The definite arrival of Malays in Sri Lanka took place in the 13th. century. Chandra Bhanu, the Malay King of Nakhon Sri Dhammarat in the Isthmus of Kra on the Malay Peninsula invaded Sri Lanka in A.D. 1247, with Malay soldiers. He was determined to possess the relics of the Buddha from the Sinhalese kingdom. In a second invasion he brought soldiers from India"*

Chandra Bhanu's 50 year rule of northern Ceylon in the 13th. century is remembered by such place names as Java Patnam (Jaffna), Java Kachcheri (Chavakachcheri), Hambantota etc. Most authors have, yet, linked the origin of the Malays in Ceylon to the period when the island was ruled by the Dutch. Murad Jayah in -The plight of the Ceylon Malays today-, MICH Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 1944-1969, Colombo (1970), p 70, writes,

*"In 1709 Susana Mangkurat Mas, king of Java, was exiled to Sri Lanka by the Dutch with his entire retinue. He was followed in 1723 by 44 Javanese princes and noble men who*

surrendered at the battle of Batavia and exiled to this country with their families. These families formed the nucleus from which the Malay community grew."

*"The Dutch continued to bring more -Java Minissu- (Malay people) as exiles, and employed them to fill the ranks of the army, the police force, the fire brigade, the prison staff and other services. They formed the bulk of the servicemen during the Dutch occupation and the early British times. The British too imported Malay families for settlement in Ceylon with the idea of raising a regiment. The Kings colors were awarded in 1801 to the Ceylon Malay Regiment, the first Asian to receive that Honor."*

The unsuccessful attempts of the British to attract more Malays from overseas, the meager salaries paid to the Malay soldiers coupled with more avenues for lucrative employment in the plantation industry, resulted in the disbandment of the Malay Regiment in 1873. The Malays released from the army were absorbed into the police and the fire brigade services.

The mother tongue of Malays is Malay (Bahasa Melayu). Murad Jayah writes,

*"Bahasa Melayu has been preserved in this country for over 250 years due to the fact that the original exiles from Indonesia were accompanied by their womenfolk and it was not necessary for them to find wives among Sinhalese and Tamil women, unlike the Arab ancestors of the Ceylon Moors."*



## The Moors of Sri Lanka

The factual evidence of the origin of one of Ceylon's minority communities, The Ceylon Moors, is very little known. It has been suggested that the expression came into being in much the same manner that the early European historians and writers applied the name, *Gentoo*, meaning Gentile, to all the inhabitants of Southern India without distinction.

In its present form, the word "Moor" is traced through the Spanish Moro and the Portuguese Mouro, either to the Mauri, the ancient inhabitants of Mauretari, now known as Morocco, or as Tennent, the famous historian of Ceylon suggests, to Maghrib (Morocco).

The Ceylon Moors do not lay any claim to, possible, African origin, just as much as they, rightfully, resent the suggestion that they are of Dravidian (Tamil) origin. It is not that they feel any discredit or insult attached to being classified as Tamils, but being of Arab descent, they take a natural pride in tracing their ancestry to a race of people who were, in their day, the pioneers of civilization in the East. More than this, it must be remembered that the Moors of Ceylon are Muslims without exception and being attached to the race to whom Islam was first revealed is certainly a status of great pride and distinction.

The beginnings of Arab settlement in Ceylon appear to be shrouded in oblivion. With the exception of the fragmentary relics of the distant past scattered over a period of many centuries, the story of the present day Moors, who are the descendants off these settlers, has remained unrecorded.

However meager the material available, there is sufficient evidence to show, to the unprejudiced mind, that the Ceylon Moors had their origin from among the Arab traders and settlers of old who traveled across the seas in search of trade and barter during the earliest times of the history of Ceylon.

It has been recorded that the early Arab traders, who visited Ceylon, settled in the coastal belt of Ceylon concentrating mainly in the South Western towns of Puttalam, Beruwela and the Southern ports of Galle, Matara, and even Hambantota.

Although Nevill gives the date of the domination of Kalah (the Southern port of Galle) by the Maharajahs of Zabedj as 100 B.C. O 700 A.D. he adds:

*"The truth, however, is that there were Arabs in Ceylon ages before the earliest date in these conjectures."*

The "conjectures" occur in a foot note on page 607 of Tennent's History of Ceylon and read as follows"

*"Mounstuart Elphinstone, on the authority of Agatha cides (as quoted by Diodorus and Photius) says, that from all that appears in that author, we should conclude that two centuries before the Christian Era the trade between India and the ports of Sabaea was entirely in the hands of Arabs."*

Nevill goes on to say:

*"The whole north-west coast and Jaffna has from the most ancient times been peopled by the Tamils and the Moors, thus accounting for the districts being under the Maharajahs of Zbedj, who extended their empire and ruled the Malay Islands, Kalah and Travancore."*

This establishes beyond doubt the connections of Arabia with Ceylon over two thousand years ago.

Sulaiman, an Arab trader and explorer, recounts his visit to Ceylon in 850 A.D. and mentions a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak. One cannot think of an Arabian, ignorant of the language of the indigenous inhabitants of a country, unlike its people in every respect in regard to habits, customs, diet and observances, undertaking a long and perilous journey into the heart of an unknown country. This surely suggests that the Arabs had been in the country some time already, that they were known to the original inhabitants of Ceylon and wielded influence and were therefore permitted to travel far into the interior in safety and comfort.

Fifty years later, in the year 900 A.D. we hear of another Arab, named Abou Zaid, who supports the stories of Cosmas and Sulaiman and describes the still flourishing port of Kalah (Galle). Zaid's narrations are based on the experiences of other travelers, one of whom was Ibn Wahab who included "Serendib" in his travels. Wahab, like his predecessors made careful observations and collected much information regarding ancient Lanka for he is able to tell us that the Maya Rata or "Pepper Country", one of the three oldest divisions of Ceylon, was situated between Kalah (Galle) on the coast and the Ruhuna Rata in the South East.

With no devastating wars, no politics and no intrigues, the Moors were able to concentrate their attentions on the accumulation of wealth alone. Meanwhile, the Tamils of the North made an occasional invasion into the territory of the Sinhalese Kings, only to be massacred and driven back later. This state of affairs continued, till in the Thirteenth Century, the Moors were in the zenith of their power. Trade had expanded on every hand and business flourished. Their influence increased proportionately and their Buddhist neighbors were beginning to receive them with cordiality and recognize the avowal and free performance of their religious rites.

The thriftless Sinhalese petty-trader and the improvident garden cultivator were disposed to overlook the Moorman's sharp, bargain-making proclivities so long as the former realized that there was something to be gained by such forbearance on their part. For one thing, there was always the possibility of obtaining ready money from the Mussalman in an awkward and trying moment; the one against his crop of areca-nuts or cinnamon the other in the form of a loan-of course at remunerative interest-when his rice-crop failed. As for the wealthier classes of Sinhalese feudal chiefs of the interior, they were satisfied to receive their supplies of salt from the coast and such luxuries articles of daily use which the Moors imported from abroad.

It was beneficial for both parties to live in peace, and this form of relationship was permitted to continue indefinitely, since there was no clash of interests, the Sinhalese never having been a sea-faring race. The activities of the latter were confined to the mountain fastnesses, where they hatched their plots and schemed their intrigues. It was the northerners whom the Sinhalese had to prepare against, in the event of an inroad

into their preserves in the North-Central Province, whilst the Moor made his profits and batted on the produce of the land.

The Moors of the Fourteenth Century, like their descendants of the present day, never missed the opportunity of driving a shrewd bargain. Where a Sinhalese country yokel still turned over a proposition in his mind, the Moorman saw at a glance, with the traditional instinct of his race, the business possibilities of an offer of any kind. The following historical incident which is related by Johnstone, besides illustrating this trait in their national character, throws some light on an obscure point in regard to the history of that community of the Sinhalese people who belong to the Salagama caste.

Up to the Fourteenth Century, the Sinhalese were not familiar with the art of spinning and the weaving of cloth. Of course, there were the primitive hand-loom and distaff, but the best articles produced locally were inferior in quality and coarse in texture, as insufficient to meet the wants of the whole population. Accordingly, they had to depend on India for their clothing.

Whilst things were in this state, a certain Sinhalese King issued proclamations offering handsome rewards to any person who would go over to India and bring some skilled artisans for the purpose of introducing the art of the manufacture of cloth in to Ceylon. About this time, a Moorman of Beruwella, in the Kalutara District-to the strong hold of the Moors and the Salagama people, respectively,-induced by the tempting offers made the voyage across Palk's Strait and brought with him a batch of eight weavers of the Salagama caste, from a place call Saliapatanam.

There is a tradition that the eight persons referred to were drugged and bound and taken on board and that they only realised that were being transported to a foreign country when they had been many miles out at sea. It is stated that two of the victims rather than being the subjects of such deception, jumped overboard and were never heard of again.

According to others, these founders of the cloth-making industry in Ceylon were inveigled to the ship on the pretext that there was to have been an excellent opportunity of making a fortune by taking part in a particular game of chance which had been arranged, and that the vessel noiselessly slipped its moorings and sailed away whilst play was in progress.

However the case many have been, the weavers were accorded a cordial welcome upon their arrival in Ceylon. In due course they were presented to the King who treated them with every kindness in order to induce them to commence practicing their craft locally. They were at the instance of the Court, married to women of distinction and given houses and lands. A manufactory was established for them in the vicinity of the Royal Palace and the highest honors were conferred on their chief. Amongst other things they were allowed the privilege of traveling in palanquins and were permitted to wear a gold chain on certain occasion.

By such methods as this, the Moors ingratiated themselves into Royal favor. This obtained for them a larger measure of indulgence which they in turn utilized in exercising their power to the fullest within their territory along the sea coast.

Prominent among the Moors of that period was Ibrahim, "the ship captain," who entertained Batuta and his party at his mansion at Galle. The same historian in his

reference to Colombo, which he describes as "one of the largest and finest cities of Serendib" mentions "the Vizier, prince of the sea, named Djalesty" who had about five hundred Abyssinians."

According to local legend, Djalesty was a petty sultan and had a band of powerful Moors and Africans who were alike valiant fighters on land with the scimitar, as they were pirates and plunderers, familiar with every creek and jungle fastness along the coast of Colombo. It is said that he lived in state, with all the pomp of a minor ruling potentate on an elevated headland overlooking the sea. A place called Rasamunakanda, in Mattakkuliya, in the north of Colombo is pointed out as the spot where he had his little fortress concealed behind the huge trees of the neighboring hills. From this point of vantage, the arch-pirate could spy an approaching merchant ship and his band of brigands always would be ready to swoop down in their small craft under cover of darkness and plunder the unsuspecting stranger.

It would appear that Djalesty is the individual referred to by John de Marignolli who was driven to Ceylon by adverse winds in the May of 1350 A.D. Marignolli, however, gives him another name. He states that he met a certain tyrant name Koya Jaan, "an enuch who had the mastery in opposition of the greater part of the kingdom. Marignolli must have been a Roman Catholic. His bitterness against the "accused Saracen" is easily explained, for he makes no secret of it that this sultan "in the politest manner" robbed him of the valuable gifts which he was taking to Europe, to the Pope.

**When the early merchant sailors returned home to Arabia with ship-loads of rich merchandise, they undoubtedly spread the news of the productiveness of Ceylon and its natural beauties. The accounts of its wealth and the prospect of amassing fortunes attracted other adventurous spirits and yet other merchants followed in the trail of their sea-faring predecessors. In this manner many of their countrymen came to Ceylon, until in the course of time there was a small colony of Arabs in this country. Amongst those who made Ceylon their home was Hashim and his family who are mentioned by Denham in his census of Ceylon. Hashim arrived some time in the seventh or the ninth century according to this authority. It is said that Hashim was accompanied by his family and although the case is an isolated one, it is proof of the fact that there have been Arab women too in Ceylon at one period.**

Denham's story of this foundation of an Arab colony in Ceylon is supported by Johnstone who states that the Moors first permanently settled in the island in the Eighth Century, that they were of the house of Hashim and that they were driven from Arabia by the tyranny of the Caliph, Abdul Melak Ben Merwen.

The inauguration of a colony in this manner is not without parallel in history. There is a striking similarity between this incident and that of the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers in America by the "Mayflower" in December, 1620. Like Hashim the heroes of the "Mayflower" left their home country for reasons of freedom and liberty; the one owing to religious persecution and the other owing to political intolerance, for we are left to infer that Hashim's political creed was a danger to the tranquility of his country.

Had circumstances permitted the early Moors to continue indefinitely in the position which they held in Ceylon, it is possible that the subsequent history of this country would have been totally different. However, the appearance of Vasco da Gama in the East changed the trend of events completely. In 1498, the Portuguese navigator struck land at Calicut in South India, and this brings us to modern history. European dreams of

colonial expansion had begun to materialize and when it had come to the day of navigators of the type of Columbus, Arab sea-power crumbled and disappeared.

The first Western nation to whom the Arabs had to yield pride of place as sailors was the Portuguese. With Arabia's decline in naval importance, her foreign trade collapsed, and as a natural sequence the business of the local Moorish merchants suffered. Arab vessels ceased to call as frequently as before. Occasionally a fugitive pirate would show its sails on the dim horizon and disappear again in the distance. Those Arabs who had made Ceylon their home, with their children and grand children found themselves cut off from communication with Arabia, but their descendants have retained the religion and observances of their ancestors to the present day with that inward conservation which is a racial habit.

Under the altered circumstances, the less affluent Moors were driven to the land for a living. Many of them, nevertheless, continued to carry on a trade with South Indian ports in cinnamon and areca-nuts. For this purpose they had to rely on the small coasting vessels or Champans (boats) and when opportunity offered, musk, cloth and brass were imported by them from the neighboring continent. In the course of time, the Moors succeeded in establishing a fair trade with the Portuguese and later with the Dutch in regard to whom the Moor was the middleman. Those of them who had not the necessary capital to engage in export trade with India became peddlers and hawkers whilst a few made large profits through the exploitation of the salt pans on the Western and Southern sea-board. For many years afterwards, almost the entire inland trade in salt had been in the hands of the Moors. Just as their ancestors transported their merchandise overland by camel caravan, the local Moor in those days of difficult communication conveyed their salt from the coast to the Sinhalese Capital and other interior towns by means of the Tavalama or pack-bulls.

The Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol:II, Part II, 1853, describes the Moors of the Chilaw and Puttalam districts as follows:

***"They carry on a very extensive trade in rice, salt, indigo, chanks, cheya, etc. and by making advances to the natives for the purpose of repairing their tanks, were the means of keeping the northern part of the island in a very prosperous condition. They are the most industrious class; they are traders, boutique-keepers, master-fishers, etc. They also deal largely in cattle and are frequent purchasers of Government taxes...They are for the most part confined to the immediate neighborhood of the sea; there are however Moor villages scattered about the interior....."***

In reference to the civil rights of the Moors; it would appear that as early as 1804 they had so succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of the Britisher that a resolution was passed on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, publishing a code of Mohamedan Laws which were observed by the Moors residing in the area known as the Province of Colombo. It will be noticed that whilst the Portuguese and Dutch did everything that was possible to disregard the rights of the subjects of this history and wantonly wound their susceptibilities, the diplomatic Englishman took them under his sheltering protection, with that characteristic solicitude for subject races which distinguishes British rule in the most distant out-posts of Empire. Government's attitude towards the Moors who were only a minority community even in those days could not have failed to impress the Sinhalese themselves who in their territory of their own kings were not infrequently made the instruments of arrogant chiefs and intriguing ministers of the Royal Court.

The next outstanding event relative to the Moors of those pioneering days of British colonization in Ceylon was the incident of 1814. In the November of that year, ten Moorish cloth merchants from the Coast who had gone into the interior for purposes of trade and barter were seized and punished on the orders of the Sinhalese King. They were so horribly mutilated and dismembered, that seven of them died on the spot. The three survivors managed to escape to Colombo, where their blood-curdling tales of the torture inflicted on them provoked the anger of the authorities. The Governor at the time, General Brownrigg, considered the treatment meted to the Moors who were British subjects as an act of aggression, and Major Hook immediately took the field and advanced as far as Hanwella. It is supposed that it was the commencement of hostilities on this occasion really that terminated in the overthrow of the Sinhalese kingdom and the annexation of the Kandyan Country. However, although the brutal massacre of the Moorish merchants is regarded by some as one of the immediate causes of the last Kandyan War, it is well known that there were numerous other contributory factors, the chief of which may be regarded as the long desire of the Britishers to be absolute masters of the whole of Ceylon. The Moors, of course, regarded the injury done to their kinsmen as the primary *casus belli*, and it is a noteworthy fact that whilst there have been a few petty insurrections on the part of the Sinhalese, since British conquest, the Moors, to the present day have remained loyal to the Union Jack.

It is about this time that Ceylon Moors were for the first time appointed to native ranks. One of the earliest of these was Hadjee off "Velassy" the distinguished, though little known Moor. A more popular individual was Uduman Lebbe Marikar Sheik Abdul Cader, the grandfather of the late I.L.M. Abdul Azeez, who in his day was a prominent member of the Moorish Community. "Shekady Marikar" by which name he was better known was appointed Head Moorman of Colombo by Sir Robert Brownrigg, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1818. Several other appointments followed soon afterwards and the Moors were not only made chiefs in different parts of the maritime Provinces, but they were also admitted into the Public Service. The names of some of these with the offices which they held are to be found in the "Ceylon Calendar" of 1824 which was an official publication, published in book form those days.

These names are mentioned here as indicating the status of the Moors a hundred years ago.

- Head Moorman of Colombo, Uduman Lebbe Marikar Sheik Abdul Cader
- Interpreter to the agent at Tamankaduwa, Mr. John Downing; Cader Shahib Marikar
- Kariapper, or Head Moorman over the Temple at Welasse, Neina Marikar, - Head Marikar of the Moormen in the jurisdiction of Tricomalie; Cader Sahib Marikar
- Head Moorman under the collector of Galle; Pakir Mohadien Bawa Saya Lebbe Marikar and Samsi Lebbe Ali Assen
- Head Moorman of Gindura; Slema Lebbe Samsy Lebbe
- Head Moorman of Matara; Sekadi Marikar Sekadi Lebbe Marikar
- Head Moorman of Weligama; Kasi Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar
- Head Moorman under the Collectors of Chilaw; Omer Marikar Sego Lebbe Marikar
- Head Moorman of Puttalam; Neina Lebbe Bawa Marikar
- Head Moorman of Kalpentyn; Sinna Tamby, Clerk
- Storekeeper to the Deputy Assistant Commissary of Hambantota; S.A.L. Munsoor Sahiboo
- Storekeeper to the Assistant Commissary at Badulla.

In March, 1825, Sir Edward Barnes, Governor of Ceylon, appointed the first Moorish Notary Public, "Shekady Marikar," "for the purpose of drawing and attesting deeds to be executed by females of the Mussalman religion." The fact that there was not a single Moorish lawyer in the island in 1825 and that the community is today represented in all the learned professions and has two elected representatives in the Legislative Council, indicates the advancement of this section of the population during the intervening period of a hundred years. Again, it is worthy of note, that the Moors who had not one among their number in 1825 who was capable of holding a brief before even the Minor Courts of Justice, in the year 1904 wielded such influence as to be able to insist on the rights of their lawyers to appear in their Fez-caps before "My Lords."

The regime of Sir Wilmot Horton, 1831-1837 which is notable for the establishment of the Legislative Council, the running of the "First Mail Coach in Asia," the abolition of compulsory labour and the publication of the first news paper in Ceylon, also saw the repeal on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1832 of the Dutch Resolution in Council of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1747, by which Moors and Tamils were prohibited from owning property or residing within the Fort and Pettah or Colombo.

Up to this time, according to the old order of things, various section of the public had separate residential areas allotted to them. For example, the Moors were, confined to Moor Street which is designated Moors Quarters in old maps of Colombo, the Colombo Chetties lived in Chetty Street or Chekku Street, as it was also known, the brassfounders in Brassfounder Street, the barbers in Barber Street and silversmiths in Silversmith Street, whilst the "dhobies" lived in an area called Watermen's Quarters."

The removal of these restrictions led to an influx of Moors into the business quarters of the City. Gradually they began to acquire property in the Pettah of Colombo and in the process of time nearly all the immovable property here, which originally belonged to the descendants of the Dutch passed into the hands of the Moors. It is significant that a large proportion of the shops and other buildings in Pettah today belong to this community, whilst all that remains to the descendants of the Hollanders who excluded the Moors from this area, is their ancient Kerkhof behind "Consistory Buildings."

Having established themselves in business here, the Moors were now able to carry on a flourishing trade without any hindrance whatever, and strangely enough they count amongst their chief patrons, the Burghers who are the descendants of the Dutch. Although all professions and occupations were thrown open to this hitherto oppressed class of people, true to the instincts inherited from their Arab forefathers the Moors largely engaged in trade and amassed fortunes, whilst education suffered. It was in comparatively recent times that the efforts in this direction of the late Mr. A.M.Wapche Marikar, a building contractor; the Muslim Educational Society and the United Assembly were crowned with success. After more than a generation of patient endeavor, the Moors slowly began to realise the extent of the disadvantage encountered on every hand owing to a lack of modern education. The introduction of up-to-date business methods, strongly contrasted with the primitive systems of exchange and barter and it became necessary to be properly equipped in order to meet the competition from other quarters. Other communities were forging ahead in the march of progress and the Moors as a community were badly left behind. These considerations led to a wider interest in education, and the more progressive Moors sent their sons to the best schools at the time. Of these the most popular institution seems to have been Wesley College, due perhaps to the proximity of this institution in those days to Moor Street still the stronghold of the Moors. There had been no Muslim Schools at the time, with the

exception of the small classroom attached to most mosques where the Muslim youth is instructed in the Koran and receives an elementary knowledge of the reading and writing of the Muslim Zahira College, at Maradana, although it was proclaimed with much gusto, did not for very many years rise above the level of an elementary school. It is only during the last decade that it has mushroom-like sprung into prominence under the energetic direction and untiring zeal in the cause of enlightenment by its present principal, the Hon. Mr. Jaya B.A., London.

Of those Moors who engaged in trade, a large majority became shopkeepers. Their chief articles of merchandise were cloth, hardware, crockery, household goods and groceries. A few exported areca nut to South India and still continue to do so, and a fewer still became planters and made large profits in the days of "King Coffee" which preceded the tea-growing industry. Several continued to be dealers in precious stones, having gained distinction in this line since Dutch times when they were credited with an expert knowledge of pearls and gems. To the present day the leading firms, which deal in jewellery and precious stones are conducted exclusively by the Moors. One of these had even found it necessary in order to provide a nearer depot for its numerous European patrons.

### **History of the Colombo Grand Mosque**

extracted and revised from an account written by MIL Muhammad Nuhman in 1959, an old boy of Hameedia Boys' English School in 1905, which was presented to the Colombo Grand Mosque Committee of Management on July 25, 1959

The **Colombo Grand Mosque** occupies a unique place in the life of the Muslim community in Ceylon from the times of ancient Sinhalese Kings. Its early origins are hidden in the dim past where legend and tradition are interwoven with history. Its significance and position for the Muslim community has been such that even today it takes a leading role in all the religious activities of the community. The decisions made by the Mosque committee on various religious issues based on the consensus, deliberations and agreement of the various Trustees, Imams of the many Jumuah Mosques in Colombo, and the Ulema, held regularly within its auspices and premises have, generally, been accepted by most of the Muslims in the whole Island.

The origin of the Mosque can be traced to the adventurous and pious Arab traders who used to carry on a lucrative trade between the Orient and the European ports in the Mediterranean in elephants, pearls, gemstones and spices during the period between the first and sixteenth centuries. This was a period when the Arabs had established lucrative trading posts on the Western coastal belt of Ceylon from Puttalam, in the North West, to Hambantota, in the South, as evidenced by the large number of Ceylon Moors, descended from them, living in these parts of the Island. It is hardly necessary to mention that the Arabs of that era were pioneers, not only in trade, commerce and accounting but also as skilful navigators and geographers, carrying this vast knowledge to the then known parts of the civilized world.

### **PORTUGUESE PERIOD 1505-1658**

The earliest reference to the Mosque is contained in an illustration of the first Fort of the Portuguese which was built in 1505 (see map above). This illustration has been reproduced by Mr. R.L. Brohier in his "Historical Series" - No 1, and appears on the front of the book. The existence of Mosques in Ceylon, during this period, appears from a



description found on this illustration in Colombo. It is said that when "a flotilla of eight Portuguese sailing vessels anchored in the Bay (Colombo) on November 15, 1505, the Commander of the expedition saw, beyond a rummage of masts and spars of smaller shipping and off the shore marred by a crescent of sand, clusters of huts hidden by foliage, some cadjan godowns and two limewashed Mosques."

Until the Portuguese arrived, in 1505, the sea-board trade was mainly in the hands of the Arabs, some of whom who had settled in Colombo, Kalutara, Beruwela, Galle, Matara, and Hambantota along the western shoreline. Soon after their arrival, the Portuguese obtained permission from the Sinhalese King to establish a trading post in Colombo. After some years the new Governor of the Portuguese settlement in Goa (India), Diogo Lopez de Siqueyra, sent Lopo de Brito to take up position as Captain of Colombo (1518-1521) with a number of workmen to build a stronger Fort in Colombo, not just to strengthen their position against the Sinhalese but also to put down the competition in trade created by the Moors.

King Vijaya Bahu who was not opposed to the Portuguese establishing a trading post, was alarmed at their effrontery in trying to dominate the sea-board by building a Fort. He, therefore, launched an attack on the Portuguese in 1520. Though the Portuguese garrison was small their superior arms and training kept the King at bay and he was ultimately compelled to withdraw.. De Queyroz says, "The King himself abandoned the camp despairing of success against the Portuguese, and our people on the following day, again, burnt the town (Colombo) along with the two large Mosques built by the former Moor's who had lived there."

The continued friction between the Sinhalese and the Portuguese, and, the latter's inability to compete with the Moor's in trade in the interior parts of the Island made their position in Colombo rather precarious. Hence, when Vasco da Gama came to India (second Viceroy in 1524) he had orders from the King of Portugal to dismantle the Fort of Colombo, leaving only a factory there. The Fort was, therefore, razed to the ground and the garrison and artillery were moved to Goa in India. This was an occasion of great joy for the Moors, who, in gratitude to Almighty Allah, re-built a small Mosque in Colombo.

Father S.G. Perera has recorded that, "The population of the town was largely Muslim and there was a Mosque together with a Muslim cemetery and a Court of Justice to settle disputes according to Muslim Law."

There is also a strong tradition to show that the new Mosque was built on the identical spot where the demolished ones stood thus implying that the present day Colombo Grand Mosque must have a history of more than 450 years today (2002).

In later years the Portuguese found that it was to their advantage, commercially, to tolerate the Moors and hence they began to enjoy a considerable amount of freedom. In spite of definite instructions from the Portuguese Provincial Council in Goa and the Roman Catholic dignitaries against employing Moors by the Christians, many Moors were still appointed as Vidane's (Headmen) etc. by the local Portuguese.

In his, "Ceylon: The Portuguese Era", Dr Paul E Pieris states that even in Colombo there was a Moorish tailor named Belala, who, by 1625 had resided for thirty years and had also amassed great wealth. On the occasion of the marriage of his daughter to another Moor, the wedding procession paraded through the city at night and several Portuguese had also decorated and illuminated their houses and also joined in the procession. One

of the influential Portuguese residents had even sent one of his African slaves to slaughter the cattle according to Islamic Shariah rites for the marriage feast.

This brief description is more than sufficient to prove the existence of a flourishing Muslim community where this old Mosque played a significant part in their social, cultural, and religious requirements.

### **DUTCH PERIOD 1658-1796**

This flourishing era for the Moors of Colombo was not destined to last for long. The Dutch, who captured Colombo in 1658, were not prepared to tolerate the Moors for two main reasons. First, because they were of an alien faith, and next, because the Dutch were solely intent on earning as much wealth as they could and hence would not tolerate any rival or competition in their trade, unlike the Portuguese. Thus many oppressive laws were passed against the Moors preventing them from residing within the limits of Colombo and other towns and also preventing them from acquiring land and property within these towns. The Moors were thus compelled to keep away from the town and concentrate on their trade with the indigenous people of the interior.

In the 17th and 18th Century, both Ceylon and Indonesia (Batavia) were ruled by the Dutch United East India Company. At the zenith of their power, the Dutch East India Company, besides bringing mercenary soldiers to Ceylon had also sent many of the Indonesian nobility into exile here, especially those people whom they considered a threat to their political activities. Many of these exiles belonged to the ruling classes in Indonesia and they were also those who objected, both, spiritually and physically, to the growing power of the Company.

Kings, Princes, Chiefs and other Nobles who became a nuisance or hindrance to the Company were sent to Ceylon with their families from Indonesia as political exiles. A list of state exiles contains the names of 176 persons belonging to 23 families. Among the 23 heads of these families was Raja Gosman of Oesman (King of Goa in South Celebes) together with his Minister Hooloo Balangkaya, who had arrived in Ceylon in 1790 or earlier and had lived in Moor Street, Colombo.

### **BRITISH PERIOD 1796-1948**

It was only after the coming of the British to Ceylon that all nationalities were treated alike irrespective of caste, creed or numbers. The late C.J. Van Sanden in his book, "Sonahar", states, "It would appear that as early as 1804 they (Moors) had so succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of the Britisher that a resolution was passed on 5th August, publishing a code of Muslim laws which were observed by the Moors residing in the area known as the Province of Colombo. It will be noted that while the Portuguese and the Dutch did everything that was possible to disregard the rights of the subjects and wantonly wound their susceptibilities, the diplomatic Englishman took them under his sheltering protection." Some of the Moors began to flock to Colombo and occupy, especially, the Pettah, gradually ousting the Dutch residents.

## **RE-BUILDING OF THE COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE**

The present Colombo Grand Mosque was rebuilt during this period, and it is interesting to recall the circumstances which led to the need for enlarging and rebuilding the Mosque.

Hooloo Balangkaya, who has been mentioned earlier, had a son named Muhammad Balangkaya who displayed a great interest in the Moorish community. In spite of the objections and protests of his relatives and friends he had married a Moor lady, and through this marriage he had six sons and three daughters. Muhammad Balangkaya was an Architect by profession and was also a pious Muslim. He found this small Mosque in New Moor Street inadequate for congregational prayers, and by enlisting the support of many of his rich Moorish co-religionists, he had the Mosque enlarged and renovated to a two-storey building, designed entirely by him. This is the present Colombo Grand Mosque, and was the first of its kind in Colombo, or probably in all of Ceylon at that time.

When the re-building of the Mosque was completed, the then British Governor of Ceylon, Lieut. General Sir Edward Barnes, GCB, visited the Mosque in 1826 and highly commended Muhammad Balangkaya on the excellence of his work.

An additional wing to the Mosque was later constructed by Mr. I.L.M.H. Muhammad Mohideen in 1897, when he was managing the affairs of the Mosque. This wing which was used as part of the Mosque in addition to it also being used as classrooms for the Hameedia Boys' English School in 1959 was originally known as "kanjee maduwam" on account of it being used as the place for the distribution of "kanjee" (rice porridge) during the breaking of the Ramadan fast at sunset.

## **HISTORY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MOSQUE**

The lack of historical evidence has prevented information to be found regarding the early management of the Mosque. It has been generally held that the management of the Mosque was in the hands of different individuals at various times and these persons carried out the onerous task of management throughout these years.

However, it is from the year 1918 that substantial historical evidence of the Mosque management is available. A group, consisting of some of the leading members of the congregation of The Colombo Grand Mosque met on Friday, March 17 1918, after the Jumua Prayers at a meeting held within the Mosque premises to discuss the improvement of the management as the financial status of the Mosque was in a depleted state. The outcome of this meeting, as far as the welfare of the Mosque is concerned, have been of very significant importance. For the first time in the history of the Mosque discipline and methodology were introduced into the management of the Mosque. This was achieved by the establishment of a set of rules and regulations which provided for the management of the Mosque to be handled by a Trustee and a Management Committee, in addition to defining in detail their powers, responsibilities, and duties. Regular meetings were also provided for in this constitution.

It was at this meeting that New Moor Street Colombo Grand Mosque held its first democratic election in order to select a Trustee and a Committee of Management. I.L.M.H. Muhammad Mohideen was elected the first Trustee, unanimously, since he had already been handling the affairs of the Mosque for many years before and was acclaimed to be a very prominent benefactor and supporter of the Mosque. A

committee of 45 members was also elected which comprised a Managing Committee of 16 and a General Committee of 29 members.

Since the introduction of the democratic system of electing trustees and committees to manage the affairs of the Mosque in 1918, the following persons have held office until 1959:-

#### **TRUSTEES**

1918-1920: I.L.M.H. Muhammad Mohideen  
1920-1925: H.N.H. Jalaldeen  
1925-1940: S.L. Mahmood, JP  
1940- ? : M. Ghouse Mohideen

#### **TREASURERS**

1918-1933: W.M. Mohamado Usooff  
1933-1940: W.M.A. Wahid  
1940-1957: WM Abdul Jabbar  
1958-? : A.J.M. Ariff

The youngest son of Muhammad Balangkaya was Tuan Bagoos Krawan Balangkaya who was born on Tuesday, Rajab 21 1243 Hijra corresponding to January 28, 1827. He was qualified in Islamic Theology and became a scholar (Alim) succeeding to the position of Khalifa in Colombo.

### **THE MOSQUE CANNON**

A landmark in the history of the Colombo Grand Mosque is the Cannon. Credit must be given to the members of the then Mosque Committee for the keen interest taken by them in installing the Cannon sometime in circa 1898. The Cannon has become an institution by itself and stands as a monument to their zeal and enthusiasm. The original Cannon was in service for quite a period of time and was fired to indicate the times of break of fast, end of Suhoor during the Islamic month of Ramadan and was also used to indicate the start of the Eids (festivals). The present Cannon was donated by A.A. Abdul Raheman, a well known hardware merchant of the Pettah and also a member of the managing committee. The Cannon was mounted on a wooden base that was movable on wheels and this has stood the rigors of sun and rain for more than half a century. It was maintained by the then Imam C.L.M. Abdul Hameed who introduced many improvements for the benefit of the congregation and the Mosque.

The Muslim community has always been most grateful to all governments of Ceylon for having allowed the firing of this Cannon, even during the period of the two World Wars when such activity was restricted and prohibited. The Cannon is being fired until the present day.

### **THE CEMETERY**

The burial grounds that was present within the premises of the Colombo Grand Mosque was discontinued on October 21, 1874, on the orders of the government. In the meantime a block of land of over 1.25 acres in extent was purchased in Maradana, on Aug 12, 1875, not only for the purpose of building a Mosque but also to be used as a cemetery for the burial of the dead from amongst the members and families of the congregation of the Mosque. This ground was used for burials after the closure of the cemetery at the Colombo Grand Mosque. The present Symonds Road Mosque was built on this site and burial was discontinued here on May 21, 1875. The present Maligawatte Muslim Burial Ground was purchased on October 12, 1874 and this land became the cemetery from this date and is in use even today (2002).

## **AL MADRASATUL HAMEEDIA**

The history of the Colombo Grand Mosque will not be complete without the mention of the famous Muslim School which has been a part of the Mosque itself from its inception. The foundation of the building was laid by the then Turkish Consul in Ceylon on August 31, 1900 (1318 Hijra). The school building was erected by I.L.M.H. Noordeen, a great philanthropist and a leading member of the Muslim community, assisted by a band of his friends, viz; OLM Ahamadu Lebbe Marikar Alim, SL Naina Marikar, AL Abdul Careem, and SL Mahmood, JP. If not for the foresight, initiative, and enthusiasm of the founder, who had managed the school for many years, the school would not be in existence today (1959).

The management of the school and its properties was entrusted to NDH Abdul Caffoor in 1917. Amongst the alumni of the school were, a Minister of State, Civil Servant, Proctors, leading merchants and several other leading Muslims who embarked into various professions in life. Some of the old boys of this school are men of eminence in the community. The academic staff were well versed in Arabic and Tamil which were, at that time, the primary subjects. Other subjects taught at the school included English, Urdu and Persian.

It was in 1921 that the name of the school was changed from Al-Madrasathul Hameedia to Hameedia Boys' English School.

When SL Mahmood, Secretary of the school since its inception, was appointed Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque on March 1, 1925, he was also entrusted with the management of the school in 1930, when he took over from NDH Abdul Caffoor.

The Jamiyathul Hameediya Society, which was in existence from the time the school was founded in 1900, was re-organized on November 7, 1937. This Society appointed SL Mahmood as Manager of the school which he held until his demise in 1940. On August 4, 1940, SLM Sheriff took over as manager of the school being appointed by the Society.

The management of the school was handed over to the Colombo Grand Mosque Educational Society on September 1, 1955. Muhammad Ghouse Mohideen, the then Trustee of the Mosque, was appointed as its Manager from August 1957.

The school has, today (1959), achieved great distinction, both, in the sphere academic studies and sports. Permission to conduct the SSC class was granted to the school on December 9, 1953 and students were presented for this examination for the first time in December 1955. Much credit is due to the past principals of the school, as well as the present (1959) principal, MH Amit, for all the glory and achievements.

Thanks are also due to the Jamiyathul Hameedia Society for the very generous contribution of Rs 15,000 for building four classrooms with modern equipment in 1959.

## DEATHS OF MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Name of Member	Date of death
M.A.C. Idroos:	11-03-1942
I.L.M. Abdul Majid:	21-10-1946
I.L.M.H. Muhammad Hassan	04-12-1947
M.M. Muhammad Amir:	26-03-1948
S.M.L.M. Haniffa:	30-04-1951
M. Zahir Mohideen:	03-03-1952
M.C.M. Fuard:	9-07-1952
Razeen Abdul Cader:	19-09-1952
S.D.H. Abdul Razack:	22-02-1953
A.M. Hasheem:	25-07-1955
M.I.L. Muhammad Nuhman:	24-02-1962
W.M. Abdul Jabbar	29-12-1957
A.A.M. Ismail:	circa 1959

## OFFICE BEARERS COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE 1956

CHAIRMAN: **ARM Saleem**

TRUSTEE: **Muhammad Ghouse Mohideen**

HONY TREASURER: **WM Abdul Jabbar**

HONY JT SECRETARIES: **SL Muhammad, MUM Salih**

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE COLOMBO GRAND MOSQUE 1956

- 1 Muhammad Ghouse Mohideen, "Razeendale", Bambalapiiya, Colombo 4
- 2 WM Abdul Jabbar, 12 Alexandra Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6
- 3 SLMM Sheriff, 491, Galle Road, Colpetty, Colombo 3
- 4 MIL Muhammad Nuhman, 140, Messenger Street, Colombo 12
- 5 ML Bin Ahmed, "Salonica", Colpetty, Colombo 12
- 6 Rashid bin hassan, 27, fareed Place, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 4
- 7 SDHM Yoosoof, 104 St Joseph's Street, Grandpass, Colombo 14
- 8 SMS Hamid, 18 Hultsdorf Street, Colombo 11
- 9 ARM Saleem, 118, Galle Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6
- 10 SL Muhammad, 25, Clifton Lane, Maradana, Colombo 10
- 11 MUM Salih, 181, New Moor Street, Colombo 12
- 12 SHM Mohideen, 618-2, Nawala Road, Rajagiriya
- 13 AMM Mohideen, 21, Aloe Avenue, Colpetty, Colombo 3
- 14 MHM Yusuf, 87, Dickman's Road, Colombo 4
- 15 AMM Ismail, 35, Moor Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6
- 16 MT Jalaldeen, YMCA, Fort, Colombo 1
- 17 MM Jalaldeen, 522, Galle Road, Colpetty, Colombo 3
- 18 CMM Salih, 13, Hultsdorf Street, Colombo 11
- 19 AJM Ariff, 10, Station Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6
- 20 MMBKA Hamid, 50, Messenger Street, Colombo 12
- 21 MHM Mahful, 18-1, Frances Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6

- 22 MHM Nasoordeen, 90, Messenger Street, Colombo 12  
 23 AAM Khamsus-Zaciya, 381, Dam Street, Colombo 11  
 24 MFA Marzook, 22, Station Road, Wellawatte, Colombo 6  
 25 M Shamsudeen Muhammad, 606, Galle Road, Colpetty, Colombo 3  
 26 AAM Ismail, 6 Ascot Avenue, Colombo 15  
 27 Muhammadh Ovais, 69, 37th Lane, Wellawatte, Colombo 6  
 28 Mansoor Abdul Cader, 37, Pendennis Avenue, Colpetty, Colombo 3  
 29 Mohideen Jalaldeen, 28, Beach Road, Mount Lavinia  
 30 MA Careem, 10, 8th Lane, Colpetty, Colombo 3  
 31 ACM Hasheem, 52, Nelson Place, Wellawatte, Colombo 6

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 R.L. Brohier: "land, Maps and Surveys"  
 J.C. Van Sanden: "Sonahar"  
 M.J. Wangsa Achmed: "The Truth"

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#### **Extracts from the Report of the Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque, M Ghouse Mohideen, on 9 March 1956**

The Administration of the Mosque and the Trust properties fell on the shoulders of the erstwhile M Ghouse Mohideen, of Razeendale, Bambalapitiya, brother in law of Sir Razik Fareed on June 30 1940 consequent to the death of the late Trustee, the much lamented Mr SL Mahmood Hadjar, JP.

Mr WM Abdul Wahid, who was the Hony Treasurer, expired on May 2, 1940, and Al Haj WM Abdul Jabbar was appointed to the position on May 12, 1940.

At the time of assumption of office of Mr M Ghouse Mohideen the amount of finances in hand was as follows:-

Received from the administration of the Estate of the late Mr WMA Wahid:	Rs 2,586.46
Received from the administration of the Estate of the late Mr SL Mahmood Hadjar JP:	Rs 271.50
Total:	<b>Rs 2,857.96</b>

Of this amount a sum of Rs 2,508.50 was paid as balance purchase cost of premises No 175 New Moor Street and another sum of Rs 740.00 being repayment of deposits made by the tenants as advances, leaving a balance of Rs 390.54 as debit.

	<b>1940</b>	<b>1955</b>
INCOME:	Rs 295.00	Rs 2,148.11
EXPENSES:	Rs 197.00	Rs 1,600.00

The increase in income is mainly due to the amounts received as rents from the properties purchased since 1940, viz; Premises No 186, 188 New Moor Street, and Nos 176, 180, and 182 Keyzer Street, and from premises taken over consequent to the acquisition of the lands adjoining the Maligawatte Muslim Burial Grounds by the Government.

Three Khatheeb were officiating in 1940 as follows:-

Khatheeb ARM Salahudeen

Khatheeb MM Sabir

Khatheeb AJM Warid

They were paid an annual allowance of Rs 50.00 each from 1940 to 1943 which was later raised to a monthly remuneration of Rs 25.00 from Aug 1 1943. This amount was then increased to Rs 30.00 per month from Nov 11 1946.

On September 30, 1948, Khatheeb AJM Warid resigned his position and his allowance of Rs 30.00 per mensem was divided equally between the other two Khatheeb as they agreed to officiate alternatively taking up Khatheeb Warid's responsibilities. In January 1952 the monthly remuneration paid to the two Khatheeb was raised to Rs 65.00 each. In this manner the work of the Khatheeb was carried out successfully up to the end of December 1953, at which time Khatheeb MM Sabir resigned his position. In his place, Al Haj Moulavi SUM Hibathul Careem was appointed as Khatheeb on Jan 9 1954.

The roof of the upper floor of the Mosque was renovated during 1945 at a cost of Rs 4,883.29. This expenditure was met by the following benefactors:-

YM Naina Marikar JP:	Rs 500.00
AL Haj AMM Abdul Cader	Rs 500.00
Al Haj M Mathany Ismail	Rs 500.00
MHM Shamsudeen	Rs 500.00
Al Haj WM Abdul Jabbar	Rs 500.00
MB Mohammed	Rs 250.00
AL Haj MHM Sulaiman	Rs 250.00
M/S WMA Wahid & Brothers	Rs 250.00
M/S A Meera Mohideen & Sons	Rs 200.00
M/S Mukthar & Ghouse	Rs 100.00
Anonymous	Rs 100.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>Rs 3,650.00</b>

The late MHM Sulaiman met the shortfall of Rs 1,283.00 making a total of Rs 4,933.00, leaving a balance of Rs 49.71 which has been carried over to the Mosque funds. Since then the Mosque has been white-washed annually and minor repairs and painting works have been carried out. Mention must be made here that a portion of the cost of this annual maintenance work was met by a few members of the Congregation up to 1953.

The Electrical wiring of the Mosque which was in a deteriorated state, was also attended to by a complete re-wiring of the whole Mosque in 1948. Additional lamps for lighting were also provided at a cost of Rs 2,500.00. This expenditure was met by Al Haj WM Abdul Jabbar, the Hony Treasurer. His name is mentioned here in appreciation of his generous gift although he himself wished to remain anonymous.

The late Al Haj MYM Mashood gifted four ceiling fans and paid Rs 20.00 per month towards their cost from October 1947 to July 1951. AM Shahul Hamid also gifted two fans.



The cost of lighting the Minaret was met by some of the members of the Committee of Management.

Under the auspices of the Committee of Management of the Colombo Grand Mosque a mass meeting of representatives from various Mosques throughout the Island was held on September 29, 1943 at Hameediah School Hall, to consider the Draft Ordinance affecting Mosques, Waqfs, Charitable Funds, Shrines and Thakkiyas. A representative gathering, including Ulema, was present. At this meeting the various aspects of the Ordinance was discussed and all present were made to realize the hardships that were bound to be caused to all Muslims should the supervision and control of these institutions be handed over to the Public Trustee as contemplated in the Bill. It was decided to inform all Mosques in the Island of the defects in the proposed Ordinance and how it violated Islamic Law in allowing a non-Muslim to control the affairs of the places of worship of Muslims. A Committee was formed to take immediate steps to ascertain views of the representatives of the various Mosques in the Island.

A conference of delegates was held on December 18, 1943, at Hameediah School Hall. The late Mr MHM Shamsudeen presided and several resolutions were passed condemning the Bill. Later, as a result of a memorandum submitted by this Committee to the then Minister of Home Affairs, the general opposition manifested, and the Bill was shelved by the Government.

Since the attainment of independence the question of promulgating the amended Waqf Ordinance was revived. The Draft Ordinance was, again, taken up in 1952 by the Muslim Members of Parliament and the Senate. The Committee of Management lost no time in taking necessary action to protect the interest of Muslims. Under the auspices of the Committee a conference of representatives of Mosques and other places of Muslim Worship, of Muslim Organizations, and of Ulema, and other prominent Muslims, was convened on October 21, 1952 at Hameediah School Hall, New Moor Street, to protest vehemently against the proposed Draft amendments to the existing ordinance of 1931, as the proposed amendments were a violation of the inherent rights of Muslims under Muslim Law.

In accordance with the decision of the conference a Memorandum protesting against this amendment was forwarded to the Minister of Home Affairs on November 30, 1952.

On January 10, 1953, a circular was issued to all the Mosques in the Island requesting Muslims to meet their respective Members of Parliament and request them to oppose the Bill when it came before the House. The matter is now before the Parliament.

In this connection I would earnestly appeal to all Muslims to consider seriously, whether under the prevailing conditions of religious antagonism in the Island, it would be advisable for our Muslim Members of Parliament to continue to support the enactment of this amending Ordinance that is repugnant to the very spirit of Islam.

A notice was published in the Ceylon Daily News of December 4, 1950, by the Government Agent, Western Province, under sub-section (I) of section 7 of the Land Acquisition Act No 9 of 1950, to acquire the following lands belonging to the Maligawatte Muslim Burial Grounds:-

PPA 2831 Lot No 9 Narahena alias Narahenakumbura part of Assessment No 75 Maligawatte Lane, extent 17 Acres, 0 Roods 18.9 Perches.

PPA 2831 Lot No 12 Narahenakumbura Part of Assessment No 75, Maligawatte Lane, extent 11 Acres, 1 Rood and 30.5 Perches

Immediately this advertisement was noticed, the Chairman, in consultation with the office bearers, lodged an objection with the Government Agent, Western Province, through our lawyers on December 12, 1950, against the insertion of the name of OHM Sulaiman as claimant to the above lands and pointing out that the legal claimant was the Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque.

The action taken by the Chairman was unanimously approved by the Committee at its meeting held on Feb 3, 1951, and he was also requested to take all further action necessary to establish the claim of the Mosque to those lands.

Mr ARM Saleem, a member of the Committee of Management, suggested that instead of getting into endless litigation, it was desirable that an amicable settlement should be arrived at, as the claimant was in possession on a notarial document. The whole matter of bringing about a settlement was entrusted to a sub-committee comprising of Al Haj M Ghouse Mohideen and Al Haj WM Abdul Jabbar with power to add. Mr Saleem was co-opted to the sub-committee. At the meeting held on October 6, 1951, the sub-committee reported to the Committee of Management that they had recommended the payment to the claimant a sum of Rs 55,000 on account of compensation and Rs 4,000 on account of the damages received from the Government, if he agreed to renounce his right, title and interest in the said lands. It was agreed that a sum of Rs 13,820 taken by him as advance from the tenants on the leases granted by him be waived off.

A sum of Rs 316,000 was received from the Government as compensation for the aforesaid lands and Mr OHM Sulaiman was paid the agreed sum as compensation. The monies remaining were utilized to purchase Premises No 176, 180 & 182 Keyzer Street, at a cost of Rs 255,289, with the Mosque funds advancing the balance amount of Rs 14,126.44 required.

Prior to the purchase of these properties the Committee had paid an advance for the purchase of Premises No 188, New Moor Street, a new house opposite the Mosque. In order to meet the purchase price and costs of transfer, amounting to Rs 49,209.67, two sums of Rs 20,000 each were borrowed from Mr AJM Ariff/Mr AJM Jabir and Mr MHM Yusuf, who were very kind enough to accommodate the Mosque with these amounts. The loan of Rs 40,000 has since been repaid from the revenue of the Mosque.

The old ablution tank, which was in an insanitary condition, was filled up and a new one built. This, together with the building and passage leading to the Maligawatte Mosque Burial Grounds, was erected at a cost of Rs 14,000 which was met by Al Haj WM Abdul Jabbar, the Hony Treasurer, in memory of his daughter, Ummu Mahbooba.

Properties Purchased:-

Property	Value	Transfer Cost	Total
186 New Moor Street	Rs 10,000.00	Rs 200.00	Rs 10,200.00
188 New Moor Street	Rs 47,292.50	Rs 1,912.17	Rs 49,204.67
176,180,182 Keyzer Str	Rs 250,000.00	Rs 5,289.00	Rs 255,289.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>Rs 317,207.67</b>



## Arab Influence in the East

In the East, the Arabs struggled long with the Turks for absolute supremacy. Since both nations were powerful a protracted war followed. In the end, the Arabs lost, but they were not completely defeated for they continued to be the first sea-power in the Indian Ocean.

More intimate relations between the Arabs and Ceylon commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 712 A.D., when the great Sind invasion was undertaken by the famous boy-general, Mohamed Kassim. This campaign of slaughter and devastation, which led to the foundation of a great eastern empire, was provoked by the desire of Walid, the sixth Caliph, to punish the Karak and Mede pirates who plundered certain vessels returning from Ceylon laden with presents for the Caliphate.

This transmission of presents from Ceylon to the Caliphate gives the impression that the Arab traders and settlers domiciled in the Island acknowledged the authority of their own Government. It also indicates that the power of the mother country was so far-reaching that not even her most distant sons could have lightly escaped their obligations. In this connection it is interesting to note that in Lane's edition of the Arabian Nights, the story is related of Sinbad the Sailor, who, on his seventh voyage was shipwrecked whilst returning from Ceylon after having conveyed the presents of Haroun Al Raschid to the King of Serendib.

Soon after the great invasion, vessels began to come out East in increasing numbers. With territorial expansion came the obvious development of trade. The spices of Ceylon which had gained fame already in the time of King Solomon was in greater demand as the sources of supply became better known. A flourishing trade was carried on in the export to Europe of the fragrant bark of the cinnamon bush.

The produce of Ceylon was first shipped to Arabia whence it was transported to the shores of the Mediterranean. From there it was distributed throughout Europe where it was richly prized. This trade connection with Arabia is mentioned by Albert Gray in his English rendering of the French version of Defremery and Sanguinetti's travels of Ibn Batuta. Gray says:

*"From the swift rise of the Mohamedan power in the Seventh Century, down to the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calient in 1498, the trade of Europe with the East, was in the hands of the Arabs. The carrying to Europe was done in their ships, but in the Indian seas, a vast coast trade was developed by all the nations of the Indian sea-board, Persians, the races of India, Ceylon, the Eastern Islands, and China."*

The next great Arab whose travels in Ceylon are well known, is Ibn Batuta. His descriptions of what he saw throw a flood of light on the customs and history of the period, in addition to the information of topographical interest which he records. He appears to have spent a much longer period in Ceylon than most others like him. During his sojourn he embarked on a pilgrimage to Adams Peak. For this purpose, the monarch of the maritime regions of Ceylon furnished him with an escort, palanquin-bearers, and the equipment necessary for a long and tedious journey.

Describing the journey to the Sacred Mountain Batuta says:

*"We left Bender Selaouat, a little town, and after quitting it we traversed some rough country, much of it under water. There were numbers of elephants there, which do*

*no manner of harm to pilgrims, nor to strangers, and that is by the holy influence of Shaik Abou Abd Allah, son of Khafif, the first to open the way to visiting the foot"*

The little township of Bender Selaouart which is mentioned here is said to be no other than Chilaw, the word "diving in water"; the reference is undoubtedly to the diving for oysters at the pearl banks off Chilaw. Even in the earliest days the services of the Arab divers of the Persian Gulf had to be requisitioned whenever it was decided to fish for oysters. Incidentally, as in the similarity between Kaly and Galle, in this case the Sinhalese name for Chilaw is Halawatta, which bears a strong etymological resemblance to Selaouat.

## **Arab Trade with Ceylon**

**Having understood that the ancestors of the Ceylon Moors had been in Ceylon from earliest times, let us now examine the growth and history of the latter up to the arrival of the Europeans in the Sixteenth Century. In Europe the activities of tradesmen and navigators were confined more or less to their own continent. They were content to make use of such products of the East as found their way to the West in Arab ships and by the overland route from the northern shores of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic seas. Meanwhile the Arabs, and their successors for many generations, were exploiting to the full the vast possibilities of Eastern trade.**

In Ceylon, their story, although disconnected and fragmentary was not a peaceful one entirely. There were all the difficulties of the pioneer's life which had to be encountered in addition to the political strife and internal dissensions which agitated the country. It must be remembered that the ancestors of the present day Moors lived in conditions which differed vastly from those which obtain at the present day. Two powerful races in the Island vied with each other, the supreme authority fluctuating at varying intervals. A great part of the north of Ceylon was under the domination of the Tamil Kings who endeavored to drive the Sinhalese further inland towards the mountain districts. The latter in turn retaliated each time as soon as they were able to take the field again. In this manner an interminable warfare dragged on, on a continuous basis with fluctuating fortunes for either party.

In connection with these protracted struggles, the Rajavali under date 1410 narrates certain facts, which in so far as they bear reference to the status of the Moors at that time, are of more than passing interest. In that year the Raja of Jaffnapatam was the most powerful monarch in Ceylon. He had the largest army and was possessed of enormous wealth. So great was his power that the other monarchs were in a kind of subsidiary position to his, so much so, that he collected tribute from the high and low-country and the nine ports as well which were almost entirely in the hands of the Moors. The north, extreme north-west and north-east were under the supreme power of the Jaffna King. The central parts of the country bowed to the despotism of the Sinhalese monarchs, now on the wane, and the maritime areas including almost all the sea ports were in the hands of the Moors.

Unlike the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the Moors had not the equivalent of a regular army, or for that matter, a military organization of any kind although on occasion they participated in war-fare in a minor degree. They built no mighty palaces and constructed no enormous tanks, nor did they open roads and erect any remarkable forts. Their chief object was trade. This consisted largely of cinnamon, pearls, elephants, ivory and apes. They built themselves houses and some even cultivated lands and reared cattle, but navigation and trade were their principal interests. There was not, at that time, any properly organized system of exchange, and barter was the recognized means of transacting business.

In spite of these primitive commercial methods, the Moors as a rule amassed large fortunes, the conditions of barter enabling them to make dual profits. The Arab merchants would set about his business in somewhat the following manner. Having selected to embark on trade for a career, he purchases a ship in the first place. In some cases, however, ownership of the vessel was divided amongst a second and third person who were generally the ship's captain and chief assistant.

The vessel is then manned by a skilled and experienced crew to be remunerated on a profit sharing basis at the end of the voyage. A stock of provisions and fresh water, enough to last throughout the voyage is laid in and after having decided upon the country to be visited, a cargo of merchandise which is most in demand at the port of call is procured. Ordinarily the goods consisted of cloth and musk from India, horses from Persia, gold from Nubia, and other luxuries, in addition to a variety of minor marketable products which are not to be found in Ceylon.

On arrival in this Island, the vessel is anchored off the coast behind the sheltering reef or headland of some friendly roadstead. The captain or some other responsible person, along with a few others then come ashore, leaving the rest of the crew to look after the safety of the ship and guard against thieves and pirates. Once on terra firma the landing party are met by their fellow-countrymen, if any, or their Moorish descendants who receive them with friendliness and hospitality.

If the cargo is very extensive a house is taken on rent, and serves both as a temporary residence as well as a store. The merchant and part of his crew remain here until the entire cargo is disposed of or until it is decided to proceed to other Ceylon ports. Meanwhile, the news spreads of the arrival of the ship. Local Moors anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity of buying goods which in turn are transported to the interior and retailed there to the Sinhalese, begin to flock in from the surrounding country, as also those of them who are desirous of selling Ceylon products to the ship's merchants. The little colony of Moors in the neighborhood of the port is agog with activity till the departure of the vessel, when they turn their attention to the barter of their wares to the Sinhalese and the Tamils. It will be noticed that the indigenous producer does not come in direct contact with the Arab merchant, with the result that the Moor trader makes his bargain at both ends, being the middleman.

**Eventually, the good ship sails away heavily laden with cinnamon and pepper, cardamoms, pearls, precious stones and other valuables. The possibility of encountering pirates, the dangers of ship wreck and the hardship of a sailor's life in those distant days do not seem to have chilled the desire for trade in these hardy and enterprising navigators and we find these traits present to this date, though in a less prominent manner in their descendants, the Ceylon Moors.**

In this manner, a continuous trade was carried on for several centuries. As time went on, some of these merchants made lengthy sojourns in this country, some with the object of disposing surplus cargo, until the ship returned to Arabia before re-visiting Ceylon, whilst others remained behind as the buying agents of the more prosperous merchants knowing the immense profits that can be made. In the process of time, the nucleus of a small colony was formed here, and from this sprang the flourishing community known as Sonahar.

As the volume of trade increased, larger store houses or Kittengis were erected, and permanent dwelling houses were built. Gradually the pioneer began to take an interest in his immediate surroundings. He began to acquire land in the maritime districts which were of no consequence to the Sinhalese whose seat of government, cities and palaces were many miles away in the distant mountainous regions. Presently little unpretentious mosques of modest dimensions began to rear their diminutive minarets, hitherto an unfamiliar feature in the landscape.

## Interaction with the Portuguese

In the same way that the arrival of the Portuguese in 1496 in Calicut meant the commercial extinction of the Coast Moors of that country, their appearance in Ceylon in 1505 marked the downfall of the Ceylon Moors. The rounding of the Cape by Vasco da Gama was an epoch-making event in many ways. The news spread with great rapidity and particularly in Portugal which was at the time one of the leading naval powers in the west, there was great speculation in regard to the possibilities of trade with the East, now that direct communications had been opened. Extravagant stories of the fabulous wealth of India, with her gold and spices and precious stones, created a headlong desire for the adventure of reaching this El Dorado. The intriguing fascination of the mystic East with its Pagoda Tree with leaves of gold stirred wild dreams in a people by nature imaginative. To the merchant and explorer alike, the gentleman adventurer and the fugitive from justice and not a few wild-cat speculators and pirates, the lure of the land of golden dreams was irresistible. Nor did the pious Catholic missionary shrink from the arduous labors which awaited him in this new vineyard. Every vessel bound for the East brought small knots of this heterogeneous mob. Chief among them were the merchants who were anxious to carry back in their own ships the rich produce of India and the neighboring countries.

It was not long before the Coast Moors of South India began to realize the perilous conditions of their trade. At first they made some slight show of resistance which in time developed into open defiance. Failing in both these methods of compelling the Portuguese to abandon their designs on the coastal regions, the former tried to create differences between the Portuguese and the Hindus, but without any appreciable measure of success.

By 1504, the Europeans had annexed some possessions in India and were steadily displacing the Arabs both on land and sea. The latter having had to admit the superiority of the Portuguese sailors began to show signs of a disposition to make way for the Westerners. However, the nation which had for so many centuries wielded undisputed supremacy in the Indian seas were reluctant to give up their privileges. As a retaliatory measure, they roved the high seas and plundered Portuguese ships returning to Europe heavily laden. The precarious form of existence did not continue for any considerable length of time. In order to put a stop to further depredation, Francisco de Almeida, the Portuguese Viceroy of India, in 1505 sent his son, Lorenzo, to capture some of the tramp vessels of the Moors and the Arabs. The freebooters, so as to avoid an open engagement with the enemy were passing far to the South of Ceylon, by way of the Maldives Islands. Whilst in pursuit of them, Lorenzo drifted to Colombo by reason of contrary winds. On the eventful day of his landing at Colombo Arab and Moorish predominance along the littoral of Ceylon was doomed for ever. Up to that time the Moors held first place along the sea coast of Ceylon. Since then they have never regained the distinction.

The Portuguese soldiers upon arrival were described to Parakrama Bahu, the King of Ceylon, as a race of men *"exceeding white and beautiful. They wear boots and hats of iron and always move about. They eat white stones and drink blood; they have guns that make a noise like thunder and even louder, and a ball shot from one of them, after flying some leagues will break a castle of marble and even of iron"*

Needless to say the contest between these supermen and the Moors was an unequal one. The Portuguese were trained and disciplined soldiers conversant with modern methods of warfare and equipped with weapons unheard of by the peaceful



and industrious Moor, but the former were too much taken up with the beauty of the country to pay any attention to the Moors. Instead, they sent an embassy to the Sinhalese king asking for permission to trade, and this request was granted.

Percival states that the difficulty the Sinhalese felt in defending themselves against the Moors and the Arabs influenced the former to receive Almeida hospitably, and the Portuguese who were the natural enemies of the Moors did not miss the opportunity to destroy a Muslim mosque which stood near the root of the South-West arm of the Colombo breakwater. The exact site of this mosque is said to be at Gal Baak, where the Harbour Master's office once stood. Tennent says that the spot was held in veneration by the local Muslims as being the tomb of one of their saints. Several Colombo Moors of the older generation to the present day subscribe to this view.

In 1827 a slab of stone which was used as the door step of a dwelling-house in the Pettah of Colombo was found, bearing a Kufic inscription of the Tenth Century. It is still a matter of doubt as to whether this stone originally belonged to the mosque at Gal Baak.

During the twelve years following 1505, nothing is known concerning the Portuguese and their relations with Ceylon. They were busy extending their possessions in India during this time. Having made Goa their capital for India, they went further east till they conquered Malacca. The annexation of that place had the effect of bringing Ceylon into the scheme of things again. From its convenient situation between Goa and Malacca, Ceylon became a desirable possession and the Portuguese decided on its conquest.

In the meanwhile the Moors of Ceylon were happy to be left to carry on their inland trade unmolested by the interference of an outside power. However, tales of the cruelty and hatred of the Portuguese towards the followers of the Prophet in Calicut had reached Ceylon and their co-religionists here were in fear and trembling at the possibility of a second visit from the Christians. The Moors appreciated the extent of loss that would be sustained if the Portuguese established towards them and remembering the wanton insult by the desecration of their mosque in 1505, they had a foretaste of what was in store for them. Even more important than this was the fact that in the event of hostilities between the Portuguese and the Sinhalese, the Moors who were largely domiciled along the sea-coast would be in a relatively closer proximity to a powerful enemy engaged in a bloody war-fare.

Accordingly, they set about ways and means to meet the impending evil. Their behavior the less opulent Sinhalese of the Low-country became more cordial. By this friendly attitude they contrived to ingratiate themselves into the good graces of those in power and succeeded in making a secret treaty with the Sinhalese. They related to the ministers of the State, the avarice and cruelty of the Portuguese in India and grossly exaggerated the stern measures which had been employed to subjugate the Indians. Everything possible was done to create dread and suspicion in the minds of the Sinhalese by tales of the frightfulness and horrors which have followed in the wake of European conquest on the neighboring continent.

At length Lopez Suarea Albegaria arrived at Colombo in 1517 with a fleet of seventeen ships. The Moors of Colombo made a feeble attempt to prevent a landing, but were soon overpowered. The small Moorish fort which was situated at the corner of the crescent forming the bay of Colombo was captured, but not before the Moors made a desperate struggle to defend it. There was much wanton blood shed in the conflict.

The superior arms and training of the Portuguese easily asserted themselves over the antiquated weapons of the undisciplined Moors. As if remembering the Moroccan hordes from northern Africa which over-ran and pillaged the south of Europe, the Portuguese in Ceylon almost out-rivaled the savagery which had been inflicted on them in a past age.

Having established themselves in Colombo, the Portuguese commenced a vigorous campaign of the Cross against the Crescent. The Moors were subjected to every torture and humiliation. It is supposed that it was during this time that the martyrdom of two Moorish saints took place at Mutwal in the north of Colombo. The story has a live legendary interest and is deep-rooted in the neighborhood of the scene where the incident is said to have taken place.

It is said that a party of Portuguese soldier's intoxicated with drink came upon a pretty Moorish girl who had gone to the sea-shore with her brother to pick drift-wood. Terrified by the appearance and demeanor of the strangers she fled calling out to her brother for help. Seeing that resistance would be of no avail he followed his sister. Both were pursued through the wooded jungles of Mutwal and the young Muslim was eventually tracked down to a spot behind the convent of the Brothers of the Christians Schools of today. Here the hunted Moor stood on a rockery crag overlooking the sea. With the enemy gaining on him every second, the faithful follower of the Prophet raised his voice and called on God to save him, where upon the ground opened under his feet and received him.

The unfortunate girl escaped the wrath of her pursuers similarly. She too entered a huge rock at a point about a quarter of a mile away. A small monument has been erected here and the place is held in veneration. This rock is known to the present day as Yongalle, or "Moor's Rock."

Infuriated by the cruelty of the Portuguese and driven to desperation by the oppression to which they had been subjected, the Moors made an attempt to recapture their fort. They delivered a powerful attack on it and kept the foreigners besieged for a short time. After a very plucky fight on the part of the Moors they were forced to own defeat owing to the superiority of arms and heavier ordnance of the Portuguese.

As soon as open hostilities with the Moors had ceased and the surrounding country reduced to tranquility, the Portuguese proceeded to erect a factory and rebuild the old, mud fort of the Moors. News of these material preparations were forthwith despatched by the Moors to the Sinhalese King, Parakama Bahu IX who had been watching the trend of events with grave concern. The defeat of the Moors also contributed to make the situation dangerous and the Sinhlese King demanded to know the purpose for which these arrangements were being made. The Portuguese replied that the construction of a fort had been permitted by the treaty of 1505 and that such precautionary measures were necessary to guard against the activities of the Moors. The extent of the success of this subterfuge is indicated by subsequent events.

Parakrama Bahu was too wise to be satisfied with this explanation. He commenced preparing for war and was engaged with these arrangements for nearly a whole year. A powerful army was collected, and in 1520, 20,000 men, including a large number of Moors, besieged Colombo for a continuous period of seven months. Eventually, the attack was not only repelled and Parakrama Bahu's throne put in

jeopardy, but the Sinhalese were forced to submit and pay tribute to the King of Portugal. Encouraged by this success and fearing a subsequent attack, the fort was entirely re-built with stone, although both the Sinhalese and the Moors did everything that was possible to prevent the work being carried out.

For a time all parties concerned appeared to be tired of fighting. The attention of the Sinhalese monarch was absorbed in the affairs concerning the government of the rest of his kingdom in the hills, whilst the Moors were anxious to retain some of their disappearing trade. On the other hand, the Portuguese themselves were desirous of concentrating their energies in the collection of cinnamon and the spread of the Roman Catholic faith, for they were not only a conquering but proselytizing race as well.

During this interval there followed several developments which affected the security of the Sinhalese throne. When Bhuwaneka Bahu II became King in 1537, two of his brothers, Maya Dunne and Rayigam Bandaara set up separate kingdoms at Sitawaka, or Avisawella and Rayigama respectively. The Kotte King, Bhuwaneka Bahu, had directed that his grandson, Dharmapala should succeed him as king. Mayadunne thereupon openly refused to recognize this order of succession and commenced hostile preparations. Learning this, the King hurried to Sitawaka and with the assistance of the Portuguese succeeded in capturing that city and putting Maya Dunne to flight. Soon afterwards Mayadunne collected an army and in 1538 made another attempt to defy his brother who was the ally of the Portuguese, but again without success. Nothing daunted by his second failure, Mayadunne in 1540 delivered a final attack on Bhuwaneka Bahu before he made his exit from Ceylon history.

On this occasion Mayadunne joined forces with his brother Rayagam Bandara and was also supported by an army of Moors. More than this, Muslim troops had been brought over for the purpose from Calicut and Cochin.

A long, fierce struggle ensued. The combined armies fought desperately, but they were doomed to defeat a third time. The Portuguese with the Royalists completely routed them and burned to the ground the city of Sitawaka. In connection with the outside assistance sought by the Sinhalese against their enemies, the Portuguese, the late Mr. J.P.Lewis, C.M.G. writes as follows concerning the village of Akurana, in the Ceylon Antiquary, Vol : VII, Part of III, p. 187:

*"The tradition is that three Arabs made their way to Kandy during the Reign of Raja Sinha. When the Portuguese attempted an invasion, the King engaged their services to fight the enemy. Ultimately the King was successful and desired the men to settle in the country. They asked for wives among the Kandyan women. The King gave them encouragement, and, during the Perahera, the three men boldly carried three Kandyan young women away, and concealed them in the Palace. The relatives then appealed to the King who advised that, as the Arabs had already taken the women by the hand and led them away, it was best to let them go. The relatives consented. The men went to Akurana and settled there. These were the ancestors of the people of the village."*

The third encounter appear to have been the turning-point in the policy of the Moors in regard to their attitude towards the Portuguese. The former had realized that the Europeans had established themselves firmly in Ceylon by now and that their friendly relations with the Sinhalese King had rendered the position of the Portuguese doubly strong. The prospect of driving the Christians out of the country was remote and nothing

remained to be gained by fighting any longer. Accordingly, the Moors reconciled themselves to the inevitable and once more settled down to trade.

Having decided to quit fighting and concern themselves to more profitable occupation, the Moors discovered the impoverished state of trade and entered into friendly relations with the Portuguese. The frequent contact between the Moors and the Portuguese and the business connections which resulted served to bring about a better understanding by which both parties benefited. It so turned out that during the intermittent warfare between the Portuguese and Sinhalese afterwards, the Moors trade was carried on between the belligerents.

In the process of time, the old wounds of racial and religious difference were healed and so great was the cordiality which resulted that when in 1586, RajaSinha I, the son of Mayadunne, at the age of over a hundred years laid siege to Colombo, we find the Moors this time taking the field as the faithful allies of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese historian, de Couto says of them:

*"The Moors, natives of Ceilayo of whom there would be some fifty villages, fought with as much courage and willingness as the Portuguese themselves."*

He goes on to add that:

*"They always served with much loyalty, upon which they greatly pride themselves, they being the only ones in India in whom we never found deceit."*

These distinctive features in the character of the Moors may be seen even today amongst their descendants, by those who know them intimately and have had the opportunity of observing these national traits. This is accounted for partly by their conservative nature and rigid though simple up-bringing, for the Moor when once he espouses a cause will remain faithful to it with an un-relaxing tenacity.

### **Dealing with the Dutch**

**Although the Portuguese had referred to the bravery of the Moors in most complementary terms, as a race the former are known to have forgotten their best friends and most devoted allies on occasion. Having gained their diplomatic ends in 1586, the loyalty of the Moors and their ungrudging services soon passed into oblivion. The question of religious difference manifested itself again and the position of the Moors was indeed a precarious one. On one side were the Sinhalese whom they had openly fought; on the other side were the Portuguese whose religious fanaticism was stronger than their sense of obligation to an ally. Notwithstanding these hardships, the Moors contrived with the utmost tact and cunning to maintain a considerable inland trade with the Kandyan districts.**

Towards the end of the Portuguese rule we hardly find any mention of the Moors and it would seem that they did not take up arms with the Portuguese against the Dutch in 1656. Thombe, who gives a careful account of the Portuguese capitulation, says nothing regarding Moorish troops and this silence is significant.

When the Dutch had dispossessed the Portuguese of their territory in Ceylon, there commenced one of the darkest chapters in the history of the Ceylon Moors. Although the Hollanders' primary interest in this country was trade, the rigor of their persecution of these unfortunates exceeded that of the Portuguese, who for the most

part were actuated by religious prejudice. Mynheer's chief concern was buying and selling. Finding experienced rivals in the Moors, from the very start, the officers of the Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie entertained a dislike for the former which soon developed into hatred. They considered that the Moors were constantly interfering with what the Hollanders regarded as their special monopoly.

This jealousy led to the enactment of many iniquitous laws calculated to destroy trade and to harass and eventually exterminate the whole race of Muslims. The numerous Dutch records in the archives of the Colonial Secretary's Office, leave no doubt on this point, whilst on the other hand they clearly outline the policy of the Dutch towards their subject races.

Hardly two years elapsed after their arrival in the Island, when a regulation was passed prohibiting the residence of Moors within the gravets of the towns of Galle, Matara and Weligama. This was at the time that Galle was the chief port of call for the island, and the difficulties which this law imposed on the trade of the Moor is easy to imagine. Matara and Weligama were also important trade centers, so that it was sought wherever possible to ruin the business of their rivals. It is suggested that the Netherlanders jealously guarded their rights and were anxious to conceal from their enemies the extent of their trade and the nature of their military strength and fortifications.

As a result of this law a large slice of the trade of the Moors with South Indian ports passed into the hands of the Dutch Company. As a retaliatory measure the Moors endeavored to , and partially succeeded in controlling the export trade from their position as the middlemen who bought from the Sinhalese producers inn the interior districts and sold to the Dutchmen who were now the actual exporters. In order to prevent them from deriving the benefit of their position as the medium of business, the avaricious Hollanders afforded every encouragement to the Sinhalese which would tend to foster a better understanding and direct exchange with the Company's merchants. No very material results accrued from this arrangement and this enraged the disappointed Dutchmen all the more.

On their part the Moors employed every artifice to circumvent the operation of these restrictions. They diverted their commercial activities to other ports in the country to which the regulation did not apply, thus finding an outlet for their accumulated stocks of arecanut and other produce and checking the decadence of their vanishing export trade. Further, the Moors sought to avoid suspicion or detection by conducting a considerable part of their business through the Malabars or Gentoos whose language and customs they had gradually assimilated. This move on the part of the oppressed Moor is supposed to have been the occasion for a second regulation. According to the new law not only the Moors, but the Malabars as well, were prohibited from owning houses or grounds and residing within the Fort and outer Fort of Colombo.

By means of this law, the Dutch Coopman was enabled to go into occupation of the storehouses and godowns of the Moors in the prohibited area-particularly in Bankshall Street, Colombo, where the Harbor-Master's offices and warehouses of the Dutch authorities were situated.

It was hoped that these stringent measures would render living in Ceylon so intolerable to the Moors that they would prefer to return to the land of their origin, or to Kayalpattanam, in South India where was a large Moorish colony already. In order to ascertain to extent to which the foregoing regulations had acted as a deterrent to

permanent domicile in the country, a census of the Moors was taken in 1665. A proclamation was issued making it compulsory for every Moor to register himself under pain of banishment.

In the same year, another law prohibited the sale of lands in any part of the Dutch territory to the Moors. By these means, a campaign of systematic persecution was carried on from the earliest days of Dutch occupation. Each successive law was more oppressive and humiliating than the previous one. The harshest measures which were carried out to them and not even their religious observances escaped attention for instructions had been issued to the Dutch Governors of the Colony not to permit the Moors to exercise the rites of their faith.

According to a translation, by Sophia Pieters, of the instructions from the Governor General and Council to the Governor of Ceylon 1656-1665:

*"Only agriculture and navigation must be left open to them as occupations and they are prohibited from engaging in all other trades, within this country, either directly or indirectly and with a view to gradually exterminate this impudent class of people, Their Honours have prohibited any increase to their numbers from outside. The Dessave must not permit the Moors to perform any religious rites nor tolerate their priests either within or without their gravets."*

On their part, the Moors did not give in to these iniquitous conditions. This was the occasion to elicit the most enduring traits of their character and staying power against odds that would have broken men of lesser stamina. Their dogged perseverance under difficulties, their remarkable resourcefulness and unflinching ingenuity only provoked more ruthlessly deliberate persecution from the enemy who pursued its quarry.

In 1744 a law was passed by which every Moor who was unable to furnish a certificate in proof that he had his taxes or performed the services due from him to the Company, was liable to punishment and to be put in chains. They were not allowed to possess slaves, and any Moor who committed adultery with a Christian slave was liable to be hanged. In addition to the other services to the State which were demanded of them, they were forced to perform undignified menial duties and were employed as porters in the transport of cinnamon belonging to the Company, and as palanquin-bearers.

However, after many years had elapsed, the persecution was relaxed in proportion to the realization of the indispensable worth of the Moor as an economic unit in the society of the Colony and as a source of revenue. In later years, Wolf in his "Life and Adventures" has following in regard to the value of the Moor:

*"These Moors have the art of keeping up their credit with the Company at large as well as with particular care among the Europeans, and a Moor is hardly ever known to be brought into a Court of Justice. The Company often makes use of their talents, particularly when it wants to buy a tax upon any article of commerce. Nobody understands the value of pearls and precious stones as well as they do, as in fact they are continually employed in the boring of pearls; and the persons who are used to farm the Pearls Fishery always rely on their skill in this article as well as in arithmetic to inform them what they are to give for the whole fishery."*

Whilst natural hatred and arrogance always formed a barrier between the Dutch and the Moors the inside history of the Dutch government of Ceylon reveals the true commercial instinct of the Hollander, as the following translation by Mr. R.G.Anthonisz, of the "Resolutions and Sentences of the Council of the Town of Galle," shows:

*"Whereas Adriaen Pietersz, of Madelbeek, Corporal in garrison here, stationed at the point of Vriesland, at present a prisoner, did, without torture or any threats of same, freely confess, and it has become sufficiently evident to the worshipful Council of this Town that, unmindful of the previous misdemeanour and the punishment consequent thereon, he did again last Friday, being intoxicated, buy a piece of cloth of a certain Moor (outside the town gate) for \* .....stivers, wishing to give him a\*....in payment, on condition that the said Moor should return the same to him, which the said Moor was unwilling to do; upon which the prisoner having no linen or doublet upon him, told the Moor to go with him into the town to his house, where he promised to hand him the said doublet; then together going into the town and coming near the house of ensign Leuwynes, the said Moor caught the prisoner by the sleeve, insisting on being paid the four stivers immediately, upon which the prisoner and the Moor having got into words, and the prisoner having pushed him away from his body, the said prisoner drew his cutlass, intending as he says to give the Moor a blow on the back with the flat of the said cutlass, and struck him on the arm and severely wounded him;"*

*"All of which being matters of very dangerous consequence, for as much as by them, the Moors, whom we ought to befriend in all possible ways, seeing that they are of great service to us, might easily be estranged from us, and begin to sell their goods to other nations and thus leave us altogether unprovided."*

*"Which should not be in the least tolerated in a place where justice and the law are administered, but should as an example to others be most rigorously punished;"*

*"Therefore the Lord President and his Council, having considered all that pertains to this matter and has been allowed to move their Worships' minds, administering justice in the name of the Supreme Authority, have condemned and sentenced the said prisoner, as they condemn and sentence him by these presents, to receive a certain number of lashes at the discretion of the Council, and be made to mount guard in heavy armour; also to pay three pieces of eight to the Moor in lieu of the pain he has suffered; cum expensis."*

This incident is typical of the mercenary instinct of the Dutchman who was anxious to gain all the advantages along the line, when it appeared that the Company's coffers were likely to be affected. In many ways the Moors were a source of revenue. Apart from their usefulness as tradesmen, a certain amount of money was derived from them by the sale of licenses which permitted them to reside in their villages. According to an extract from the Wellesly manuscripts published in the "Ceylon Literary Register", Vol II, the takings from this source in 1794-95 amounted to 1,340 Rix-dollars or Pound 100 Sh. 10. Besides this, the Moors were liable according to the laws of the land to render certain services to the Dutch Government, but the majority of them preferred commutation by the payment of a certain sum of money.

In the last days of Dutch rule we find the first mention of the Moors as an organised military body. Although there is reference to their participation in active warfare in earlier periods, there is very little detail available of the actual part which they

played on those occasions. Owing to this fact there has been some difficulty in gathering much evidence relative to the composition of the Moorish troops.

In regard to the Dutch period, however, the list of the garrison of Colombo at the time of its capitulation to the British on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1796, gives the following details concerning the Battalion of Moors:

The Battalion was commanded by Captain Beem and was composed of three companies.

First Company Lieutenant Brahe commanding; one drill sergeant, one captain,

One Lieutenant, three sub-Lieutenants, 94 sub-officers and men.

Second Company , Lieutenant Kneyser commanding; one drill sergeant, one captain, one Lieutenant, one sub-Lieutenant, 31 sub-officers and men.

Third Company, Lieutenant van Essen commanding; one drill sergeant, one captain, one Lieutenant, one sub-Lieutenant, 72 sub-officers and men.

The Moors were also admitted into the artillery regiments and several of them served under Major Hupner who was the Officer Commanding this section. There were altogether 134 of them, divided as follows:

First Company, under Captain Schreuder, amongst other officers and men, 28 Moors.

Second Company; under Captain Erhard, 34 Moors.

Third Company; under Captain Duckrok, 38 Moors.

Fourth Company; under Captain Lagarde, 32 Moors.

The following is an example of the nature of the ranks conferred on the Moors during the later stages of Dutch rule:

*"Whereas the Moor, Seyde Kadie Nainde Mareair Lebbe Naina Mareair was by us recently appointed Joint Chief of the Moors of the Town of Galle, and as now the other Chief of this community in the commandments has appealed to us that he being the oldest in the service should have preference over the other, we therefore in consideration of the request made by him, the said present Chief, deem it desirable to appoint him First Chief over the Galle community of Moors residing within the four Gravets with authority to employ the Moor, Ismail Lebbe Meestri Kader as his Canne Kappel."*

*"Wherefore one and all to whom it may concern are commanded to regard-respect, and obey, as it behaves them, him the said Aghamdoe Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marcair as First Chief of the Moors."*

Colombo, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1757.



The above extract was taken from the "Report on the Dutch Records in the Government Archives at Colombo," by Mr. R.G. Anthonisz, the well known antiquarian and Dutch scholar.

[\*These words are omitted in the translation, perhaps because the original manuscript had been moth-eaten in these places.]

### **British Rule**

For nearly three hundred years, the Portuguese and Dutch, actuated in turn by religious fanaticism and commercial jealousy, subjected the Moors to cruelty and oppression. Each sought by measures of increasing harshness to exterminate the race if possible, but without success. By slow degrees the Moors were ingratiating themselves into the favor of the Hollanders as we have seen in the previous chapter, till in 1796 there commenced an era of freedom and progress.

The Netherlanders in Ceylon capitulated to the British under Colonel Stuart on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1796. This event harbingered political as well as commercial and religious toleration, not for the Moors alone, but as well for all races that inhabited the Island. Even during the short interval between 1796 and 1798, when the government of this country was conducted from Madras by the British United East India Company, facilities were afforded to all and sundry in Ceylon for the purpose of trade. The iniquitous Plakaats which disfigured the administration of the avaricious Dutchman found no place in the British Statute Book, even though the English East India Company, like its predecessor, was to a considerable extent a mercantile organization.

In this connection, it is but fair to state, in justice to the Hollander, that when he had assumed the government of the maritime provinces, conditions were vastly different. The resources at his command had been limited, and so it was with the machinery of civil and military administration. For the purpose of the latter, the Dutchman had to depend largely on the services of mercenary regiments composed of Swiss, Austrian, German and French soldiers, many of whose descendants today masquerade under the designation of Dutch Burghers, so that it was necessary to keep a vigilant eye in order to check the rapacity and excesses of these hirelings. On the other hand, the civil government, for the most part, had to be entrusted to the care of the different classes of merchants such as the Opperkoopman or Hoofd Administrateur, Kiipman, Onderkoopman, Boekhouder, Assistent and Aankweekeling. The majority of these were revenue officers who had no previous administrative experience.

One of the first acts which made the government by the British appear fair and equitable in the eyes of the indigenous population was a proclamation bearing the date, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1799. It runs as follows according to an extract from the Wellesly M.S.S. published in the Ceylon Literary Register Vol:II:

*"And we do hereby allow liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religious worship to all persons who inhabit and frequent the said settlements of the Island of Ceylon, provided always that they peaceably and quietly enjoy the same without offence and scandal to Government; but we command and ordain that no place of religious worship be established without our license or authority, first had and obtained. And we do hereby command that no person shall be allowed to keep a school in any of the said settlements of the island of Ceylon without our license first had and obtained, in granting of which we shall pay the most particular attention to the morals and proper qualification of the persons applying for the same. And we do hereby in His Majesty's*

*name require and command all officers, civil and military, and all other inhabitants of the said settlements, that in the execution of the several powers, jurisdictions and authorities hereby and by His Majesty's command erected; they be aiding and assisting, and obedient in all things, as they will answer the contrary at their peril."*

**By another clause of the same Proclamation, punishment by torture was abolished. Similar laws extending the liberty of their subjects were enacted by the British Administration, in all of which the Moors benefited most since they were the most oppressed class. The freedom to worship in accordance with the rites of any religion greatly overjoyed the Moors to whom their faith means so much. Doubtless, the granting of this privilege served to emphasise the toleration to be enjoyed under British rule, in contrast to the wanton indignities imposed by the Dutch, and the inconoclastic destruction of mosques by the Portuguese.**

By another Proclamation, certain sections of the people were liable to render compulsory personal service to the State. This was really a legacy of the Dutch who based their system of forced labor on the custom obtaining amongst the Sinhalese Kings. In the territory of these monarchs, it was known by the name of Rajakaria, with which the Dutch system was more or less identical. According to this system, the Kandyan Court through a system of feudal laws compelled a certain amount of forced labor from its subjects in return for benefits of doubtful and sometimes negligible value. Abuses crept into the manner in which these services were exacted. The duties demanded of the serfs were often unequal in their incidence and of a humiliating nature, whilst the superior officers appointed to see that each individual performed his obligations to the full, were frequently corrupt and harsh.

In the concluding years of Dutch rule, these services were commuted by a payment of 12 rix-dollars per head, so far as the Moors, against whom the tax was directed chiefly, were repugnant to the British mind and the collection of the tax was discontinued by the authorities at Madras in the first years of British rule.

Shortly afterwards when it was proposed to revive it, the Hon. Frederick North who was the first British Governor of Ceylon, according to the Dispatch of February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1799, condemned it as oppressive and disgraceful. However, Lord Hobart who was the Secretary of State for the Colonies did not share this view. In a Dispatch dated, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1801, he expressed the opinion that there was nothing disgraceful in the tax. Accordingly, the Governor, by a Proclamation dated December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1802 levied the tax, with a modification which reduced the commutation from twelve to eight Rix dollars, making it payable in two installments. The revenue from this source was estimated at 60,000 rix dollars at the rate of eight rix-dollars each, from 7,500 Moors. This last figure, incidentally serves as an indication of the extent of the population of the Moors in Ceylon in early British times.

The report of Captain Schnelder on the Matara and Hambantota districts, dated 1808, contains lengthy references to this tax and urges its continuation. He also states that:

*"Within the Fort of Galle are many houses belonging to private individuals, including Moormen. The latter have a mosque. As no one has any income from these premises, especially those inhabited by the Moormen, who living in the Fort are making great progress, therefore, I think, when an order be issued to pay one pice for each square yard of ground annually to Government, it would not hurt them at all."*

The report referred to betrays the mentality of the Dutchman. It was submitted to Governor Maitland and was published for the first time in the Ceylon Literary Register, Vol I No 10, 1886.

About the year 1804, the relations between the Sinhalese King and the maritime government were so strained that an outbreak of hostilities was imminent. It was therefore considered unwise to press for the payment of the head-tax and thereby alienate the sympathies of the Moors who could be of service to the British in many ways. Those who had already paid the tax due for 1803 had their monies refunded and in the following year, a Proclamation dated October 2<sup>nd</sup>, entirely exempted the Moors and Chetties from the payment of this levy or the performance of forced labor in lieu.

Although the total abolition of Rajakaria did not take place till many years afterwards, this first step towards the realization of that object was received with general approval as an indication of the governing policy of the British. It also tended to beget confidence in the members of the permanent population were wont to regard with suspicion at first, owing to the tactless breaking of faith on the part of the Netherlanders and the errant Portuguese.

The reason for this partiality to the Moors in those days, on the part of Government, is not far to seek. During the periods of warfare between the British and the Sinhalese, the Moors turned out to be of invaluable service to the former. Owing to their position as middlemen and itinerant peddlers, the Moors were able to collect information regarding the State of the country preparations that were going on and the secret intrigues. This knowledge was of utmost importance to the maritime authorities. That they did make use of such information is proved by the existence in those days of a detachment of regular spies, most of whom were Moors, under the command of an officer named Don Adrian Wijesinghe Jayawardana, Thamby Mudaliyar. (See Ceylon Antiquary.)

In these early wars between the British and the Sinhalese, the Moors took an active part. The despatch of February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1801 mentions a Moors Battalion under the command of Captain Martin of the Madras establishment. The battalion was divided into two sections. Of these, the first was intended for internal defence, in the event of the Sinhalese of the Kandyan provinces crossing the border-line at Grandpass, near the Kelani River and marching into Colombo. This natural barrier with its other pass at Pashetal, Mattakuliya, marked the northern boundary of Colombo and was regarded as the most likely direction from which a raid or invasion could be expected from the intrepid hill folk.

The second section consisted of those who were recruited for general service, but it is a noteworthy fact that the fighting ranks were more popular. In a short space of time, the combatants numbered as many as five hundred, which figure can be regarded as a very large percentage, considering that the Moors of Colombo and its environs alone are taken into account.

Henry Marshal, F.R.H.S. in his book, Ceylon, gives a description of the Moors of his day, 1808-1821, which may be regarded as typical of the class that enlisted in Captain Martin's Battalion. Marshall says:

"The Vellasy Moormen, an active, energetic body of Kandyan merchants, were the first portion of the population of the newly acquired territory who became by furnishing carriage cattle to the Commissariat for the purpose of conveying stores and provisions from the coast stations. This class of the population formed an intermediate link between the traders in the maritime district of Batticaloa and the interior provinces. They supplied for example, almost all the salt which was used in the Kandyan country, and as this was an expensive article, being monopolized and highly taxed by Government, the traders required to possess a considerable amount of capital. Although the Moormen had petty headmen of their own caste, they were like the other classes of inhabitants completely under the sub-regal control of the Dissave and other Sinhalese chiefs of the Province of Velassy. These chiefs levied heavy taxes and fines from the Moormen, and insisted upon obtaining from them whatever salt they required, as well as other articles of trade, at their own price, and sometimes as is alleged, without any remuneration. In consequence of extortions of this kind, the Moormen solicited General Brownrigg, through Colonel Hardy, to be placed under a headman of their own religious persuasion, and their request was granted. Hadjee, a Moorman who received the appointment, was a person of superior intellect, and highly respected among his own caste, not only on account of his natural talents, but also in consequence of having made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The Moormen forthwith practically renounced the authority of the Sinhalese or Kandyan headmen and withheld some of the dues which they had been accustomed to pay, either in kind or in money. Being deprived of their usual revenue, the chiefs were greatly incensed with the Moormen, and more especially Hadjee, who had in no small way supplanted the Dissave in authority.

The same writer goes on to describe the nature of the services rendered to Government by Hadjee who by his loyalty and self-sacrificing zeal won for his community the favor of the British. He states:

"On the 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1817, Mr. Wilson, Assistant Resident, Badulla, having received information that a 'stranger' with two old and six young priests, had recently taken up their abode in the jungle in the province of Velassy, it was deemed necessary to dispatch a party to apprehend 'the stranger.' For this purpose Hadjee was selected. He took his brother with him, together with a small party of Velassy Moormen, and left Badulla to execute his mission. On arriving at one of the passes into the Velassy, he was met by a party of men who attempted to prevent his proceeding further. Hadjee secured four of the party and sent them to Badulla. Proceeding on the road he was opposed by a more considerable party, armed with bows and arrows, who after wounding his brother, captured Hadjee himself. The rest of the party effected their retreat to Badulla. The news of Hadjee's capture reached Badulla on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Wilson set out for Velassy with a party of Malay soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant Newman, and attended by an interpreter and some native Lascareens. Having halted at Alipoot, the first night, he proceeded early the next morning towards Velassy. At 3 p.m. he reached Wainawelle, and found that all the inhabitants had fled, except two Moormen, who stated that Hadjee had been flogged and sent prisoner to the man who was called 'the stranger.'"

To return to the civil rights of the Moors; it would appear that as early as 1804 they had so succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of the Britisher that a resolution was passed on the 5<sup>th</sup> August, publishing a code of Muslim Laws which were observed by the Moors residing in the area known as the Province of Colombo. It will be noticed that whilst the Portuguese and Dutch did everything that was possible to disregard the rights of the subjects of this history and wantonly wound their susceptibilities, the diplomatic

Englishman took them under his sheltering protection, with that characteristic solicitude for subject races which distinguishes British rule in the most distant out-posts of Empire. Government's attitude towards the Moors who were only a minority community even in those days could not have failed to impress the Sinhalese themselves who in their territory of their own kings were not infrequently made the instruments of arrogant chiefs and intriguing ministers of the Royal Court.

The next outstanding event relative to the Moors of those pioneering days of British colonisation in Ceylon was the incident of 1814. In the November of that year, ten Moorish cloth merchants from the Coast who had gone into the interior for purposes of trade and barter were seized and punished on the orders of the Sinhalese King. They were so horribly mutilated and dismembered, that seven of them died on the spot. The three survivors managed to escape to Colombo, where their blood-curdling tales of the torture inflicted on them provoked the anger of the authorities. The Governor at the time, General Brownrigg, considered the treatment meted to the Moors who were British subjects as an act of aggression, and Major Hook immediately took the field and advanced as far as Hanwella. It is supposed that it was the commencement of hostilities on this occasion really that terminated in the overthrow of the Sinhalese kingdom and the annexation of the Kandyan Country. However, although the brutal massacre of the Moorish merchants is regarded by some as one of the immediate causes of the last Kandyan War, it is well known that there were numerous other contributory factors, the chief of which may be regarded as the long desire of the Britishers to be absolute masters of the whole of Ceylon. The Moors, of course, regarded the injury done to their kinsmen as the primary *casus belli*, and it is a noteworthy fact that whilst there have been a few petty insurrections on the part of the Sinhalese, since British conquest, the Moors, to the present day have remained loyal to the Union Jack.

It is about this time that Ceylon Moors were for the first time appointed to native ranks. One of the earliest of these was Hadjee off "Velassy" the distinguished, though little known Moor. A more popular individual was Uduman Lebbe Marikar Sheik Abdul Cader, the grandfather of the late I.L.M. Abdul Azeez, who in his day was a prominent member of the Moorish Community. "Sekady Marikar" by which name he was better known was appointed Head Moorman of Colombo by Sir Robert Brownrigg, on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1818. Several other appointments followed soon afterwards and the Moors were not only made chiefs in different parts of the maritime Provinces, but they were also admitted into the Public Service. The names of some of these with the offices which they held are to be found in the "Ceylon Calendar" of 1824 which was an official publication, published in book form those days. These names are mentioned here as indicating the status of the Moors a hundred years ago.

Head Moorman of Colombo, Uduman Lebbe Marikar Sheik Abdul Cader, Interpreter to the agent at Tamankaduwa, Mr. John Downing; Cader Shahib Marikar, Kariaper, or Head Moorman over the Temple at Welasse, Neina Marikar, Head Marikar of the Moormen in the jurisdiction of Tricomalie; Cader Sahib Marikar, Head Moorman under the collector of Galle; Pakir Mohadien Bawa Saya Lebbe Marikar and Samsi Lebbe Ali Assen, Head Moorman of Gindura; Slema Lebbe Samsy Lebbe, Head Moorman of Matara; Sekadi Marikar Sekadi Lebbe Marikar, Head Moorman of Weligama; Kasi Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar, Head Moorman under the Collectors of Chilaw; Omer Marikar Segoo Lebbe Marikar, Head Moorman of Puttalam; Neina Lebbe Bawa Marikar, Head Moorman of Kalpentyn; Sinna Tamby, Clerk and Storekeeper to the Deputy Assistant Commissary of Hambantota; S.A.L. Munsoor Sahiboo, Storekeeper to the Assistant Commissary at Badulla.

In March, 1825, Sir Edward Barnes, Governor of Ceylon, appointed the first Moorish Notary Public, "Sekady Marikar," "for the purpose of drawing and attesting deeds to be executed by females of the Mussalman religion." The fact that there was not a single Moorish lawyer in the island in 1825 and that the community is today represented in all the learned professions and has two elected representatives in the Legislative Council, indicates the advancement of this section of the population during the intervening period of a hundred years. Again, it is worthy of note, that the Moors who had not one among their number in 1825 who was capable of holding a brief before even the Minor Courts of Justice, in the year 1904 wielded such influence as to be able to insist on the rights of their lawyers to appear in their Fez-caps before "My Lords."

The regime of Sir Wilmot Horton, 1831-1837 which is notable for the establishment of the Legislative Council, the running of the "First Mail Coach in Asia," the abolition of compulsory labour and the publication of the first news paper in Ceylon, also saw the repeal on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1832 of the Dutch Resolution in Council of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1747, by which Moors and Tamils were prohibited from owning property or residing within the Fort and Pettah or Colombo.

Up to this time, according to the old order of things, various section of the public had separate residential areas allotted to them. For example, the Moors were, confined to Moor Street which is designated Moors Quarters in old maps of Colombo, the Colombo Chetties lived in Chetty Street or Chekku Street, as it was also known, the brassfounders in Brassfounder Street, the barbers in Barber Street and silversmiths in Silversmith Street, whilst the "dhobies" lived in an area called Washermen's Quarters."

The removal of these restrictions led to an influx of Moors into the business quarters of the City. Gradually they began to acquire property in the Pettah of Colombo and in the process of time nearly all the immovable property here which originally belonged to the descendants of the Dutch passed into the hands of the Moors. It is significant that a large proportion of the shops and other buildings in Pettah today belong to this community, whilst all that remains to the descendants of the Hollanders who excluded the Moors from this area, is their ancient Kerkhof behind "Consistory Buildings."

Having established themselves in business here, the Moors were now able to carry on a flourishing trade without any hindrance whatever, and strangely enough they count amongst their chief patrons, the Burghers who are the descendants of the Dutch. Although all professions and occupations were thrown open to this hitherto oppressed class of people, true to the instincts inherited from their Arab forefathers the Moors largely engaged in trade and amassed fortunes, whilst education suffered. It was in comparatively recent times that the efforts in this direction of the late Mr. A.M.Wapche Marikar, a building contractor, the Muslim Educational Society and the United Assembly were crowned with success. After more than a generation of patient endeavor, the Moors slowly began to realize the extent of the disadvantage encountered on every hand owing to a lack of modern education. The introduction of up-to-date business methods, strongly contrasted with the primitive systems of exchange and barter and it became necessary to be properly equipped in order to meet the competition from other quarters. Other communities were forging ahead in the march of progress and the Moors as a community were badly left behind. These considerations led to a wider interest in education, and the more progressive Moors sent their sons to the best schools at the time. Of these the most popular institution seems to have been Wesley College,

due perhaps to the proximity of this institution in those days to Moor Street still the stronghold of the Moors. There had been no Muslim Schools at the time, with the exception of the small classroom attached to most mosques where the Muslim youth is instructed in the Koran and receives an elementary knowledge of the reading and writing of the Muslim. Zahira College, at Maradana, although it was proclaimed with much gusto, did not for very many years rise above the level of an elementary school. It is only during the last decade that it has mushroom-like sprung into prominence under the energetic direction and untiring zeal in the cause of enlightenment by the then principal, the Hon. Mr. T.B. Jayah, B.A., London.

Of those Moors who engaged in trade, a large majority became shopkeepers. Their chief articles of merchandise were cloth, hardware, crockery, household goods and groceries. A few exported arecanut to South India and still continue to do so, and a few still became planters and made large profits in the days of "King Coffer" which preceded the tea-growing industry. Several continued to be dealers in precious stones, having gained distinction in this line since Dutch times when they were credited with an export knowledge of pearls and gems. To the present day the leading firms which deal in jewellery and precious stones are conducted exclusively by the Moors. One of these had even found it necessary in order to provide a nearer depot for its numerous European patrons.

## **Vathimi (son of Fathima) Kumaraya**

Ibn Batuta mentions another mosque. "Outside this town (Conacar) is seen the mosque of Sheikh Othman of Shiraz."

Some historians identify Conacar with Gampola and Tennent and Pridham also concur to this view. Turnour, on the other hand, points out that Gampola did not become the capital till 1347, where as Batuta's visit to the Island took place in 1342. Skeen fixes the place as some where between Gampola and Ratnapura and Colonel Yule suggests that it was Kurunegala.

Sheikh Othman, it is recorded, received the dues of a certain public market for his maintenance. In referring to the town of Conacar, the Arab writer speaks of a sultan named Conar, but commentators differ as to the identity of this monarch. According to Yule, Conar was the Arab's rendering of Kunwar which is the Sanskrit for "prince." The name "sultan" suggests a Muslim and the fact that the Arabs and their descendants were the only Muslims known to have been in Ceylon at the time confirms the supposition that there had been a Moorish king in the Island at one period. This view gains more support from the fact that Batuta who is generally punctilious about referring to those who do not profess Islam as "infidels," does not in this case speak of an "infidel" sultan.

The last doubt in regard to the existence at one time of a King in Ceylon who was a Muslim is dispelled when the same historian goes on to say that the Sultan and inhabitants of Conar were wont to visit the Sheikh at the mosque and that they treated the Sheikh with great respect.

If further evidence were needed to establish the existence in those days of a Muslim ruler in Ceylon, there is the testimony of Nevill. Since that writer, however, gives no direct evidence to prove this fact, the account of Ceylon by Tennent is available. He states that:

*"The assertion of Abu Zaid as to the sovereignty of the Maharajah of Zabedj at Kalah, is consistent with the statement of Sulaiman that the Island of Ceylon was in subjection to two monarchs, one of whom was a Mohammedan."*

That a Muslim Prince named Vathimi (son of Fathima) Kumaraya did once reign in Ceylon with a certain degree of popularity in Kurunegala, is clearly, though half-heartedly, recorded in Ceylon history. The unfortunate prince is said to have been perfidiously murdered by the priests of a Buddhist temple which was situated on Ettagala-elephant rock. They lured him to the summit of the rock under the pretext that a great and important ceremony had to be performed. In an unguarded moment, the guileless prince was pushed over the precipice and dashed to pieces on the stones below. In later times a small mound was raised on the spot where Vathimi is said to have lost his life, and it was customary to make small offerings here. Some say that the shrine referred to marks the place where the mangled remains were interred and others hold the tomb in reverence as that of the Sheikh, Abou Abd Allah.

The life and circumstances of the death of Vathimi is another point regarding which Sinhalese historians of old leave no details, whilst some of them do not mention the event at all. Likewise, there is the case of the Sinhalese King who was defeated at Sinipitiya near Gampola in a pitched battle with Chinese troops. The King was captured and taken to China as a prisoner, but only obscure reference is made to such a remarkable event by the interested chroniclers of a past age.



It is also recorded that Vathimi Kumaraya was the son of Buvanekha Bahu I by his Moorish queen Vathimi or Fathima. It is said the failure of Turnour to record the incident in his translation of the Mahawansa cannot be argued as conclusive evidence of the non-existence of Prince Vathimi at any period, whilst the traditions of the town of Kurunegale and the assertions of other writers go to prove the facts. Still there is the suspicious silence of the historians of the country which remains to be explained.

In the old days the principal Buddhist monasteries were centers of learning and the recording of the history of the period fell to the lot of the priests. It was an age when religion had a strong hold on the people. What is more likely therefore is that some fanatic priest purposely omitted all mention of Vathimi. The reasons for this supposition is that Vathimi's religious beliefs differed from those of the Buddhists monks and that the priesthood stood to suffer loss of prestige from the alienation of the Court from the principles of Buddhism. In addition to this, certain members of the priesthood are said to have been responsible for the murder of Vathimi and it is but natural that the rest of their order were anxious to screen from posterity the crime of one of their order.

In view of the foregoing facts it is safe to assume that:

There have been Arabs in Ceylon from the earliest periods of which written records have been kept. These Arabs and their descendants, the Ceylon Moors, who were originally merchants and sailors eventually settled along the coastal regions and freely penetrated into the interior of the country. As years rolled on and as trade developed their numbers increased proportionately.

Simultaneously they grew in the power which culminate in their setting up chiefs and princes unto themselves. Of the latter we have definite knowledge of at least two; the one who held sway over the port of Kalah and the ill-fated martyr of Etagama.

If we are to rely more largely on Ibn Batuta - and there is no reason to discredit the great traveller- the Muslims of Ceylon in his day not only openly practiced their religious devotions, but also received a remarkable degree of toleration from the Sinhalese. Without depreciating the native hospitality of the Sinhalese as a race, the manner in which the Muslims of those days were received, whether they were pilgrims to the Peak or permanent settlers, suggests that the former were desirous of living in peace and amity with their neighbors.

With regard to religious indulgence, we have seen how the two Muslim places of worship at Kandy and Kurunegalle had been endowed voluntarily by Sinhalese Royalty or those connected with the court.

The extent of the spread of Islam in the Island is evident from the numerous Muslim settlements which according to Batuta, punctuated the route to Adam's Peak, For instance he says:

*"We left Conacar and halted at a cave called by the name of Otha Mohamoud Alboury."*

In another place he mentions a Muslim ascetic named Khidir, who lived on the road to the Peak, at a point which in those days was a recognised halting place for pilgrims and way-farers.

## **Ancient Marriage Customs of the Moors of Ceylon**

*An interesting account of the marriage rites of the Ceylon Moor community that prevailed in the nineteenth century, based on extracts taken from an article written by Ahamadu Bawa, Proctor SC, and published in the MICH Souvenir III of 1970-1976 and reproduced by the kind courtesy of the Royal Asiatic Society, Sri Lanka Branch and communicated by BW Bawa, Advocate, read February 26, 1888)*

If the pun may be pardoned, it may be remarked with perfect truth that matrimony among the Moors of Ceylon was, merely, a "matter of money", - love and courtship playing no part as factors in the great social institution. This fact was fully accounted for by the necessity of seclusion in which the girls were raised, the Islamic restrictions on the intermingling of sexes, and the total subjection of the youth of the community to the obedience of their parents, guardians, elders, and teachers in all significant affairs in their lives.

Amongst the Moors, initial overtures of marriage, invariably, originated with the relatives of the prospective bride, the amount of funds available as dowry (very much contrary to the Islamic injunction of the bridegroom having to pay the "Mahr" or Dower to his bride, as instructed in the Qur'an), and the status of the lady's family being one of high esteem within the community. As a rule, a girl was considered eligible for marriage at twelve and a boy at sixteen, for a girl was considered an old maid by the time she is eighteen and a bachelor of twenty five was a *rara avis*. But, as a consequence of the dowry system and the entire absence of anything like elopement or clandestine marriage, there existed a situation where a very large number of old maids prevailed. The unhappy condition of these Moor women, deprived of secular education, away from the rest of the world and its material pleasures and delights, obliged to spend their lives within the four walls of their parents home, hoping for a change in their status that their more "fortunate" sisters enjoy, may be imagined in the logical thinking mind; while only a Moor can appreciate the feelings of those parents who, for want of the wherewithal to furnish a dowry, lack the means of emancipating their daughters from their darkness and drudgery. If the intelligent men of the community would have reflected on the consequences of the pernicious South Indian dowry system and the daily increasing misery its perpetuation entails on the masses, they would surely have endeavored to reform it and revert back to the correct Islamic injunction of the bridegroom paying the dower (Mahr) to the bride.. However, it must be remembered that such reform was very far-off at that point of time in the history of the community. It must also be remembered that this form of dowry, where a bride's family has to pay to the bridegroom, originates from Tamil-Hindu and Indian custom which has had a significant impact in the lives of the Muslim community in Ceylon.

Amongst most wealthy and reputed business families early marriages was the rule, and, matches were often made even before the girls enter their teens. In all cases, where eligible "Machan's" (cousins of mothers brothers or fathers sisters) are available, preference is accorded to them almost as a matter of right or first preference. In the absence of any such "machan" cousin available, a young man of similar status is fixed and negotiations between the parents of the two parties commence. This process was referred to as "Sambantham" meaning connection or unification (coming together, sort of). For this purpose, a notable elder amongst the family or community is tasked to mediate the proposal ensuring that all details of dowry and "give and take" are sorted out and agreed fully without any issues. An auspicious hour is fixed (another gross deviation from the correct teachings of Islam), whereby the selected elder proceeds to the home of the young bridegrooms parents in order to initiate the talks. He engages in

espousing the virtues and benefits of the prospective bride and her family and the many advantages that could be reaped by such an alliance. He also stresses on the young lady's beauty, culinary skills, qualifications, complexion and age and also her ability to read the Qur'an, her obedience, manners, and then on to the details of the cash dowry (rokkam) and other lands, houses, estates (thottam), gold, silver, & jewelry (naga nattam), copperware (vangala pattirama), household furniture (veedu taddumuddu) and other goods etc. that her parents have agreed to offer for the union. The grooms father would then, usually, state that they already have had better offers of all such dowries and goods from another source and make attempts to try and increase the value of the offer in a game of trading and bargaining with the elder. Satisfied that the grooms family gave him the opportunity to state his proposition the elder then returns to the home of the bride and discusses the counter-proposition put to him by the grooms parents justifying their claims based on various characteristics and reasons that he states to them in a very convincing manner.

After some convincing on both sides and a suitable agreement is reached and, after a short lapse of time, another auspicious evening is arranged for a small group of the brides family friends proceed to the home of the bridegroom, where they are welcomed by friends of the bridegrooms family and accommodated with seats on a matted floor spread for the occasion with white cloth and served with the inevitable betel leaf. Thereafter an exchange of verbose is exacted where each group solicits the virtues of the other and attempts to home in on to the point of the meeting in a very subtle and indirect manner that amounts to a false role play scenario. The host, or head of the grooms family, addresses the gathering collectively emphasizing his good fortune for having such honorable guests visit him and in what manner he can compensate their visit etc. The leader of the guests then starts his response by espousing, in a philosophical manner, the special occasion by which the two groups have been brought together etc. The audience listen silently without any applause or interjections. After several rounds of palaver of this nature it is finally elicited that the visiting group have arrived to solicit the hand of the groom for the proposed bride in question. Then the host, once again, gives another account extolling the virtues and merits of the bride elect and the mutual advantages to the respective families of the proposed alliance. The opening chapter of the Quran, Al-Fatihah, is then recited by the Imam, Khateeb or Lebbe of the Mosque, who is also present at the meeting, as a means of blessing the outcome of the exercise, another deviated practice adopted by the community which has no bearing on the correct teachings of Islam. This culminates a kind of pseudo engagement of the proposed bride and groom with all parties present as witnesses. A rich feast follows and the visiting party disperse in the best of pleasantries and humor.

From this stage onwards a periodical exchange of gifts, between the two parties, on special religious and other social occasions, keeps the flame of the union from dying out. Special gifts are also sent to the mother and other female members of the brides household by the groom on such occasions as the two Eid Festivals. In return the brides home respond with trays of rice and curries followed with sweetmeats, in the preparation of which the bride is supposed to have contributed.

There is yet another ceremony that takes place before the actual marriage ceremony. This is the payment of the dowry money, referred to as "Sheethanam", which is a function considered very important and takes place some months prior to the nuptials. Cash is the most important part of the dowry for it alone goes to the husband and enables him to meet with the wedding expenses and also purchase the bridal trousseau. This trousseau consists of a richly ornamented gold necklace referred to as the "thali" (again borrowed

from Hindu custom), a silk Cambaya, Rawukkai, and jacket to match with a duplicate set of more ordinary materials. The presentation of this "Shithanapanam" (dowry money) used to be a great event in the life of a young Ceylon Moor, both because it is the first official public announcement of the proposed marriage, and because he then becomes the owner of a very large sum of money that he probably never owned before. On a pre-defined auspicious day (another innovation borrowed from Hindu and Buddhist culture), after partaking of the usual "pachoru" (milk rice) and "paniharam" (sweet oil cakes), a party of the brides family and friends, accompanied by the family Lebbe (religious elder, or Imam or Khateeb of the closest Mosque) and a brother or cousin of the bride who will carry the "Shithanapanam" (a sum of money considered to be the dowry as previously agreed upon between both parties) with some betel leaves, a few pieces of saffron, some lemon fruit, all wrapped up in a silk handkerchief and tied up in a bundle with a knot (all absolutely non Islamic traditions borrowed from other cultures and religions), proceed to the young grooms house. On arrival the party is greeted with a copious sprinkling of rose water, contained in a long pointy container referred to as the "panneer shembu" (perfumed water container), and invited to seat themselves on a white cloth covered floor, each according to his seniority or social position within the family or community. The bearer of the cash dowry handkerchief bundle places it on a brass betel stand (Wathla Sheppu) before the religious elder, Imam or Khateeb, invited by the bridegrooms party, who plays a very important role in the ceremony. After the customary, usual, chewing of betel the religious elder proceeds to untie the handkerchief bundle and reciting the opening Chapter of the Qur'an, viz Al Fatihah (innovated custom or belief borrowed from South India) as a means of blessing the solemn occasion. He then hands the contents of the handkerchief to the intended young groom who in turn passes it over to his father or older brother, who then passes it to the mother of the groom by whom it is carefully locked up for safety. They next proceed to establish a suitable date for the wedding ceremony. The most favored months for weddings are Dhul Qa'da, Dhul Hijjah, Rajab and the favorite days of the week are Monday, Wednesday or Friday (more innovated practices that are totally alien to Islam). Some specific days in the Islamic Calendar, considered to be of ill omen, viz; the day on which Prophet Yunus (Jonah) was swallowed by the whale, that on which Prophet Yousoof (Joseph) was thrown into the pit, or even the anniversary of the day when Prophet Muhammad (sal) lost his tooth during the Battle of Badr, are avoided by local custom and belief which are again of no significance, ill omen, or bad luck in Islam. On fixing the date the Lebbe recites the Fatihah once again and all the congregation raise their hands up, saying "Ameen" at the end of each sentence of a Dua or supplication that follows seeking. At the conclusion of this Du'a each member of the congregation wipe their faces with both hands in a top-down movement signaling the culmination of the supplication. blessings from Allah. These ritualistic practices, again, are an innovated practice borrowed from South Indian and Kerala Muslims. A sumptuous meal is then served and the Lebbe gives the signal for the dispersing of the guests by rising from his place of sitting.

From this moment onwards many an eventful activity takes place in both homes in preparation for the great event that is forthcoming. The houses are whitewashed, Mandapams (tents or enclosures) and Pandals (decorated structures) are erected, and a tinsel throne is prepared in the bridal chamber. The invitations are issued about ten days before the wedding date These do not take the form of the neat and elegant wedding invitation cards that are well known to us - anything more tedious and wearisome than the process adopted can hardly be imagined. The bridegroom, arrayed in his best and attended by a large group of friends, is bound to call at every house of every Moor, high or low, within the radius of several miles, and invite its inmates of both

sexes using the following statement: "Who is in this house?" Someone from within, often an invisible old lady, says, "Who are you?" The spokesman for the inviting party cries out in stentorian tones, "We have come to invite all the males and females inhabiting this house to the wedding of Mira Lebbe, son of Ahmedo Lebbe, of New Moor Street, on the night of Monday the seventeenth of this month of Rajab, and ask all of you to give your attendance early." A single word, "Nallam" (good), is frequently the only response; but in cases a feast is prepared and partaken of, in some merely a light reflection or "pachoru" (milk rice); but as many of these cannot, for physical reasons, be included in the days program, the distribution of these privileged visits is a matter of no small difficulty. It may be imagined that a ten day's peregrination and a daily surfeit of pachoru paniharam (milk rice and sweet oil cakes) and sweetmeats, added to all the worry and trouble incidental to a great Moorish wedding, must be a trial of no ordinary kind; but placidly, contentedly, and even triumphantly do the victims deport themselves, for there is no variation in the pulse of the Moors, no alcoholic perturbation of his brain - provided his stomach is full he is happy.

It is fashionable in the present day not to forget the "infidel" section of the bridegroom's acquaintance. On a memorable occasion, not many years ago, the Governor and many of the elite of society graced one of these weddings in Kandy. How they were entertained and what impressions they carried away with them are matters of history.

The complete circle of friends, patrons, - nay, even acquaintances, - has a few days appropriated to its entertainment. Two or three large square tables are loaded with every kind of sweetmeats (palaharam), cakes (bowl), preserves (dosi), biscuits, sherbets and fruit imaginable, served mostly in glass dishes and plates (borrowed for the occasion, of course, as the Moors in their daily life did not even use a tumbler for drinking). Tea cups are arranged opposite each other in one of the best rooms, or a temporary mandapam (tent or enclosure) hung with white cloth and ornamented for the occasion, where the alien guests, as they arrive, are received and treated to the aforesaid delicacies and tea.

Let us now suppose that the actual date of the wedding has arrived. On that day takes place the great feast at the bridegrooms house, referred to as "mapillai veedu pachoru". By midday all the invited guests from far and near have arrived, and seated themselves on the floor with legs crossed tailor fashion, shoulder to shoulder, according to status and condition, and having their backs to the walls. As each guest arrives he is served with the indispensable betel leaf; but when all have assembled and the rooms are full, large basins of water are placed at intervals along the lines of squatting guests, with a teacup floating in it, and huge brass spittoons by them, where every guest washes his mouth and hands into as a preparation for the meal. The provender is served in trays, each tray consisting, usually, of a dish of ghee rice (kalyanthu shoru - meaning wedding rice), a fried chicken, a dish of cooked mutton curry, another of beef, half a dozen vegetable curries, one or two pickles, soup, tayar (curd), and other things sufficient for eight or ten people. These trays are passed along by about a dozen men standing within arms length of each other in the middle of the assemblage (kalari), and are placed on the floor at such distances from each other as to enable about six men to form a group around each tray (sahan). Once all the guests have been supplied with trays and are seated around them, plates are supplied for eating from, and the religious elder having said "Bismillah" (I begin with the Name of Allah), a simultaneous attack commences, and is steadily and silently continued. All cease eating about the same time, as if by consent, and drink water, warm or cold, after which they wash their fingers onto the plate in which they had been eating. The debris is now cleared away and betel served again, the elder

announces the usual "Fathihah", and the guests disperse, each saying to the bridegroom, "poytu varen", literally meaning, "I will go and come back". The men all gone, the fair sex are entertained in a similar manner.

Around 3 O'Clock PM, the house being clear of visitors, a number of trays, each covered with a white cloth and carried on the head of a coolie, accompanied by some young male member of the bridegrooms family in gala dress, are dispatched to the brides home. On arrival they are received with much cordiality and presented with gold rings as gifts of appreciation.

In the evening there is a fresh assembling of the friends of the families "to do honor to the bridegroom", as they refer to it, that is, to give him the usual "shanthosam" (gift or gratification) and accompany him to the brides residence where the Kavin (marriage rites) are to be solemnized. The guests having again seated themselves in order of status and seniority, and after the chew of betel, at a propitious moment announced by the religious elder, a move is made for the presentation of the "shanthosam". A scribe is improvised, and immediate or intimate friends of the bridegroom head the list with the highest sum (say 50 Rupees), then follow others with smaller sums; never less, however, than a single Rupee. Thus, sometimes a thousand Rupees would be collected in addition to rings of varying value presented by the relatives.

During this ceremony which takes place in the hall or principle room in the house, a very different scene takes place within. The bridegroom, who is seldom present at the giving of the "Shanthosam", is supposed to be attending to his toiletries. To the due performance of this a bath is essential, in the course of which the cosmetics used are some burnt lime, ground saffron, and mi poonac, soap being only used by extreme reformists, and being regarded as far from an improvement on the mi poonac as a purifier.

Under a white canopy held over his head by four-admiring friends, and escorted by a dozen or more others of about his own age, the bridegroom is conducted to the nearest well (a tub being a modern appliance was quite out of the question then), the attendants keeping up a continued chorus of "OLU, OLU" which may have been reference to the Wudu or ablution that a Muslim is required to perform with water for the purpose of his daily five times prayer, recital of Qur'an, performing of Tawaf (circumambulating the Ka'ba) during pilgrimage to Makkah. On arrival at the bath the happy man sits on a chair while his friends bathe him with many pots (chatties) of cold water poured over his shaven crown, and rub him heartily with the lime, saffron and poonac. On return to the house, his ablutions duly performed, he is seated on a chair and arrayed in the most gorgeous attire. A resplendent turban, tastefully folded round the Moorish cap (Surat Cap, Tarboosh or Fez), surmounts his head, a pair of loose silk pantaloons swathes his limbs, fastened at the waist by a rich sash or belt, a flowing silk or satin waist coat (ankarakka) reaching to the knees over a snow white cambric shirt, and a pair of slippers completes the costume. The smiling mans neck is encircled by numerous gold chains and "padakkangal" (chains made of gold coins and pieces about the size of a shilling), so that his chest is one mass of glittering gold. It must be remembered here that Islam totally forbids men from wearing silk or gold, even to the smallest level of a gold ring. The practice clearly shows the degree to which the Muslims had abandoned the teachings of true Islam and taken up to customs, rituals, and practices of Hindu's, Buddhists, or even Christians, amongst whose midst they had to live as one nation. Thus attired gloriously, the bridegroom, receiving gifts and congratulations from his friends, awaits his time of departure to the home of the bride.

At the chosen time, based on local myths and beliefs as dictated by astrology and the stars (another deviant and prohibited practice in Islam), the religious elder pronounces the "Fatihah" at the end of which all present resound with a loud "Ameen", meaning "so be it". They then proceed to move, with a flourish of tom-toms, cymbals, and flutes, under a brilliant display of fireworks, blue lights, and pendant lamps. The bridegroom sits in an open carriage, if the bride's house is a distance away, or else he walks on foot, attended by two boys with fans in their hands dressed for the occasion, one on either side of him. The procession comprises an immense concourse of relatives, friends and "hoi polloi" numbering several hundreds, being the cynosure of all eyes around. On the way, if the procession passes the residence of particular friends or relatives, the bridegroom receives many an ovation with much sprinkling of rose water contained in long metal "paneer shembu" containers. On approaching the residence of the bride a halt is made at some distance away, the remainder of the street being covered with "pavadai" (white cloth), for the party to walk on. This is another tradition or custom peculiar to the indigenous Sinhala and Tamil people very much akin to the red carpet welcome that is usually seen in the many Christian western nations. Numerous "alathees" are then performed on the bridegroom during this final trek over the "white carpet" almost at every few yards. The "alathee" is another pagan custom borrowed from the "infidels" which constitutes of three saucers, one containing yellow saffron water, one with coconut milk, and the last with betel and small copper coins, which are carried by three men accompanied by a relative of the bride, who advances with the rose-water sprinkler. Having sprinkled the bridegroom and his immediate attendants, as a gesture of "sweet" welcome, he proceeds to wave the first two saucers, one after the other, around the head of the bridegroom in three continuous circular motions after which the bridegroom spits three times on each saucer. The third plate is then thrown high over the head of the bridegroom, scattering the betel and the coins all over him and falling to the ground when the poor scramble to pick them up as offerings of charity. This ritual is symbolic of protecting the bridegroom from evil eye, demons, evil spirits, and the like and the offering of betel and coins as charity is another means of appeasing and preventing any possible mishap that may have been destined to occur for him. All such beliefs, customs and rituals being borrowed from the Buddhists and Hindus of that era. This "alathee" ceremony is repeated at frequent intervals, depending on the number of close male relatives of the bride who want to make this offering as a gesture of safety and protection, during the trek of the bridegroom on the white cloth approaching the residence of the bride. The last of them being the bride's father himself or even the older brother or male head of the family of the bride. On arrival at the home of the bride, at the entrance, a young boy, generally a younger brother of the bride, washes the feet of the bridegroom with rose-water for which he is rewarded with a ring. This boy then leads the groom, holding him by his right hand palm to palm in a handshake style grip, to the "Kavin Kalari" (congregation of registration of the marriage), where he takes his seat on his haunches facing the religious elder who is already seated on the floor. The entire gathering also then take their seats and are served with betel and spittoons, as described before, whereupon a "kaduttam" (marriage registration document) is drawn out in the following format:-

***"On the 30th day of the month of Dhul Hijjah, in the year of the Hijra 1299, being the 11th day of November, 1882, on the occasion of the marriage of Mira Lebbe, son of Ahamadu Lebbe of New Moor Street, to Ayesha, daughter of Hassim Marikar, for the Mahar (dower payable by groom to bride) of 100 Kalangi of Red Egyptian Gold, by the Vali (Father or appointed male Guardian of the bride) of the bride's father, to Mahallam Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Hajjar, religious elder (or priest, although there is no priesthood in Islam per se),***

***the dowry (money paid by the bride to the groom as was borrowed custom from the "infidels" then) agreed upon in 10,000 Rds, (viz; comprising 1,000 Rds in cash, and other forms of jewelry, household goods etc. etc.)."***

**(signed) MIRA LEBBE (Bridegroom)**

**(signed) HASSIM MARIKAR (Vali or Brides Father or Guardian)**

**Witnesses: 1. .... (Priest or religious elder performing the ceremony)**

**2.....**

**3.....**

The "Kaduttam" is the only written record of the marriage. It is signed and witnessed by the parties, the religious elder, and two responsible male members of either family (usually one from each), and taken charge by the elder, in whose custody it remains thereafter. The persistency, however, with which this document is executed and the accompanying customs observed during its execution, although not mandated by Islamic Law nor otherwise, was only another indication of evidence of the conservatism of the Moors of that era.

The next function, in the usual order of things, is the Kavin (religious registration or solemnization of marriage). The elder takes the right hand of the groom in his own, palm to palm in a handshake position, recites the opening lines of a Khutba (sermon usually delivered at the pulpit of the Mosque on Fridays which is a part and parcel of the Sunna of the Prophet - sal) and repeats a formula, three times, in Arabic and at the end addresses the bridegroom thus: "Are you Mira Lebbe, son of Ahamadu Lebbe, willing to take Ayesha, daughter of Hassim Marikar, as your wife, for the Mahar of 100 Kalangi of Red Egyptian Gold?" To which Mira Lebbe, the bridegroom, answers in the affirmative. The elder then pronounces another formula in Arabic after which, he, together with two witnesses, enters the bridal chamber, and similarly addresses the bride, substituting the word "husband" for "wife". To this she is expected to answer audibly. However, in her shyness she would normally abstain from saying anything while some elderly female relative saying "YES" on her behalf. The male "Kavin" group then return back to the "Kalari" (congregation) amongst the males. The elder then recites a final "Fatihah" by way of benediction and this concludes the "Kavin" ceremony.

The bridegroom is now conducted to the bridal chamber by her father or brother and the ceremony of tying the "Thali" (gold jewelry neck ornament) takes place. This, in effect, is another borrowed tradition from the Hindu's ery mucyuh akin to the ring ceremony of the Christians and has no place in Islam, whatsoever, by any means. Gorgeously dressed in King-Kalf silk and satin (both allowed for women in Islam), and loaded with gold from head to foot, surrounded by a bevy of old dames chewing and spitting betel, exhausted by heat and fatigue, the bride is seated in her "arakattil" (tinsel throne or chamber), more like an inanimate statue rather than a living young lady, in all her grandeur and glory. There is a sudden stir amongst the ladies at the congregation where they all promptly cover their heads completely and their faces partially, which were grandly displaying their beauty and ornamentations for the admiration of one another, now peeping through the slit in their veils. The sister or nearest female blood relative of the bride then hands over the "Thali" (gold ornament also referred to as Shawadi) to the bridegroom. He then is expected to bend down towards his bride and fasten the Thali round her neck, a task which is seldom accomplished successfully by the groom himself on account of the excitement, anxiety, and buzz of the environment.



hence, he is assisted by the female relatives of the bride in making sure that the piece of jewelry is fastened correctly and properly. It was then believed that this item of jewelry should never be removed during the lifetime of the spouse, another custom borrowed from the Tamil Hindu's of the North and of South India. This ceremony is considered to be the "kattu" or "tying" symbolizing the union of the two.

After this the bridegroom is expected to clothe (udupattu) the bride. For this purpose the female relative hands the bridegroom a silk Cambaya to wrap around the waist of the bride. She is made to stand up and the groom attempts to encompass her waist with the garment but in most cases has to resort to assistance from the brides female relatives to accomplish this task. During all this ceremony the bride neither sees, hears, nor says a single word. It is after this ceremony that the bridegroom, seated on the bed nearby, has his first look at his future life-partner. The situation is quite embarrassing to him as all eyes, mostly critical and many disparaging, are fixed on him, and the accompanying comments are not always inaudible. This custom has also been borrowed from the Sinhala Buddhists who perform this ceremony on the Poruwa, or bridal chamber, during their marriages.

While the bridegroom is paying this painful penalty in keeping with the practices and customs of his people, his friends are enjoying themselves elsewhere. In Moorish circles every breakfast and dinner used to be an exact copy of the other, - the same dishes, the same arrangements, the same drinks (hot and cold water), and the same greetings.

The feast for the males is now over and the females take their turn to eat. They too arrange themselves in a similar manner in the order of status and go through precisely the same routine except that no "shantosham" (gift or gratification) is expected of or given by them. While, however, no male condescends to carry home any of the sweetmeats served for their children, their spouses do not hesitate to share that part of the contents of the tray among themselves for this purpose. At around midnight, or even later, they depart, and then the bridegroom dines for the first time in the brides house, accompanied by a few of her very close family. It is not till, perhaps, 2 AM that he retires to the bridal chamber.

Early next morning the married sisters and female cousins or nearest female relations of the bridegroom visit the brides chamber and prepare her for her bath. Shortly after, the newly weds are conducted under a white canopy, this time held aloft by fairer fingers, and chanting the same chorus, "OLU", "OLU", seated side by side they are bathed. No males are permitted to be present at this bathing ceremony. The bath over, the morning repast, consisting of milk rice, cakes, and plantains (tropical banana), is served. The happy couple are seated on the floor and surrounded by female friends, belonging to both families, and the ceremony of mutual feeding takes place. The bridegroom, helping himself to a portion of milk-rice mixes it with some sugar, mashed plantains and more milk, in his plate, and conveys three handfuls to the brides mouth. This she is made to swallow whether she likes it or not; she in her turn must return the compliment in a precisely similar manner.

This concludes the series of ceremonies that are involved in a Moor wedding and the happy couple are left to themselves until the third day. On this day the bridegroom is expected to go out of the house for the first time since his arrival to his brides residence, in order to purchase "madi manga" (waist mango). He returns home in the afternoon with four or five coolie-loads of all kinds of fruit, vegetables, and gifts for the bride, her mother, sisters. These gifts usually comprise of Cambayas and cloth. On this night the bridegrooms

family are invited to dinner at the brides house and the next night she and her family are similarly entertained at the bridegrooms. From this moment onwards, several feasts are offered at regular intervals in the homes of the close family members of both the bride and the groom for the newly weds. The couple live in "binna" (the brides parents home) until, at least, the first child is born. However, if a part of the house has been appropriated as a dowry the best room is given to the couple.

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***Some random observations, comments, and developments of latter years, related to the above article***

**Ahamadu Bawa**

**Ahamadu Bawa**, Proctor SC, hails from Galle. His marriage to a Dutch Burgher lady, of a respected family, was the outcome of a love affair - a matter of his heart - and the outcome of this union was B.W.Bawa, an astute advocate who made his mark at the bar. Ahamadu Bawa, after his love-marriage, a totally unacceptable situation within the Ceylon Moor community, drifted away from the community. His progeny, although claiming racial identity with the Moors abandoned the religion of Islam for Christianity. The two surviving members of the family at the time the article was written were Bevis Bawa, one time ADC to the Governor of Ceylon and Geoffrey Bawa, an architect of repute. It is remarkable, that notwithstanding consequential change of faith generated by maternal influence from infancy, their pride in their race did not falter.

**Moor Youth**

During the bountiful days of Ahamadu Bawa in the eighties of the nineteenth century, although the youth of the Ceylon Moor community may have been in total obedience to their parents or guardians, as a matter of their customs and religious obligations, in all that relates to matrimonial affairs, the situation gradually changed in the second quarter of the twentieth century in that a girl who did not fancy her intended husband would throw tantrums of various kinds, abstain from eating, and even feign madness, in order to get her parents to accede to her wishes. The mother would usually sympathize with her and persuade her father to agree. The consent of the bride, a mandatory requirement in Islam, during that era, whether she liked the groom or not was indicated by a manual bowing of her head assisted by an elderly female relative in a sort of persuasive mode. In more recent times, many Moor parents have resorted to the correct practice of discussing the proposal with the girl and having her view heard and respected. However, marriage of a son or daughter outside the community, usually, leads to an initial boycott with a possible reconciliation after a passage of time, especially after the birth of children. Most such marriages are the fruit of infatuation, nurtured by an exposure to mixing and moving with other communities who have a tendency to advocate such relationships, and generally the couple get disenchanted after the usual wear and tear of matrimony accentuated by ill-matched conflict of culture, values, and customs of the partners.

Although early marriages are still in vogue within the community the average matrimonial age has increased for both males and females in the past century. The go-between, or broker, still plays an important role in many Moor marriages although many

families are now choosing to initiate direct contact and discussions openly without any embarrassment or issue. Romance, too, is not unusual in modern times although the parents of the two youngsters choose to agree and conclude the matter amicably under the pseudo guise of an arranged marriage with all its frills and fancies. In such cases the un-Islamic method of dowry is dispensed with which makes life much easier on the brides parents.

### **Reverting to the correct methodology of marriage as ordained by Islam**

Many Moor families have, with more insight and knowledge of the correct practice of Islam, dispensed with many of the non-Islamic traditions, customs, and ceremonies. The Nikah, or registration ceremony, is now conducted very much in keeping with the edicts of the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah and the mode and methodology of invitations, feasts, post and pre-nuptial ceremonies have all taken a very modern and more practical turn.

A significant requirement that was not present in the nineteenth century life of the Moors, which has now gained a very important role in Moor marriages, is the feast of Waleema feast which the bridegroom has to host. This feast is the most important event in a marriage ceremony required by Islam as dictated by the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is intended to be the medium of public announcement of the union to the community at large. The groom takes full responsibility for the event bearing all its costs, logistics, and arrangements.

Pre Marital Engagement ceremonies, Christian style, are also now going out of fashion and many families are moving straight into the marriage event after concluding the discussions of proposal and acceptance. Such engagement ceremonies do not have any place in Islam as they were never practiced during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the three generations of pious predecessors who came after him. Families are now meeting one another directly, or even through a common broker known to both parties, and are engaging in direct negotiations of offer and acceptance and discussions of the logistics of the marriage once agreed upon.

Cross cousin marriages are also still prevalent amongst the community although they are not as popular as they used to be in the old days. Islam does not prohibit cross cousin marriages and the practice is still widely seen across many of the Arab and Muslim states across the globe. What is prohibited in Islam is the conditional cross cousin marriage where family A agrees to give their son or daughter in marriage to the daughter or son of family B on condition that family B agree to give another of their son or daughter to the daughter or son of family A. There have been some cases of such types of conditional cross-cousin marriages within the community before but it is not seen much anymore.

Many Muslims, of the present day, are now reverting back to the conditions laid down by the authentic Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) wherein he taught that the criteria for selecting a spouse should be piety, wealth, status, and/or beauty. He taught that those who select the first criteria of piety will be guaranteed the rest by the Mercy and Blessings of the Creator while those who select any of the other three only will benefit from what they selected only.

The "Shavadi" or "Thali" (the gold ornament that is tied around the brides neck by the groom as a symbol of the union with reverence and belief that it shall never be removed until the death of the spouse), a Tamil Hindu custom and ritual is also dying out and many

families are opting to have it replaced by a simple ring on the brides finger. None of the above are mandatory requirements in Islam. Whatever gifts the groom and the bride may choose to exchange are certainly allowed but they play no significant religious rite or requirement in Islam as in the case of Buddhism and Hinduism. Similarly the "udupattu" ceremony where the groom wraps a Cambaya around the waist of the bride, while she stands up from her tinsel throne, is totally absent today.

The chewing of betel amongst the majority of the community, and also the nation at large, a trait that used to be a very popular and enjoyable one in ancient Ceylon, has diminished considerably. Although still prevalent, amongst some sections of the Singhalese and Tamil communities in rural villages, it is rarely present amongst the Moors of today. Thus the betel serving, chewing, and spitting, that has been a significant feature in almost every ceremony described in the article above, has been totally dispensed with and would even be treated with scorn and disgust, by the community, if it is done today.

The paying homage to saints and shrines by the newly weds on the first occasion they leave their homes after the marriage ceremony is also dying down in modern times with the knowledge and understanding that the community has reached that such practices amount to "shirk" or polytheism which is totally prohibited in Islam. No doubt some families who adhere to the Sufi order and beliefs still practice this amongst within groups.

## **Dowry**

The dowry ceremony, ie the payment of cash, gold, and other luxurious goods by the girls parents to the boy, a custom borrowed from the Singhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus, the presentation of the "Shithanapanam" that has been described vividly, is slowly fading away for many valid reasons. Firstly, the community is growing and developing in educating themselves in the correct teachings of Islam based on the availability of correctly translated religious works in many languages today. Next, the influx of thousands of Muslim men and women to the Middle Eastern Arab states for employment has given the youth a new insight to the manner in which Islam needs to be understood and practiced. Contact with many learned scholars from these nations, intermingling and understanding their way of life, and being exposed to an array of knowledge available through published material, radio, TV and the internet, these youth are virtually "coming out of the closet" and making drastic changes to their lifestyles and also the way of life of their families back in Sri Lanka in trying to adhere closely to the true tenets of their religion based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Today, we see more and more families insisting that the proper Qur'anic injunction of the groom paying the dower (Mahr) to the bride be enforced during their discussions of marital proposals. The custom, again alien to Islam, of the brides family having to bear the cost and burden of purchasing jewelry, furniture, the wedding trousseau and other bridal requirements still persists and will certainly take more time to change. Islam puts the onus of all such expenses on the bridegroom to be rather than on the bride.

## **The Wedding Ceremony**

The wedding ceremony, too, has taken many a turn for the better in modern times and has dispensed with many of the traditional social customs and rituals that were borrowed from other communities. On the other hand many of the urban big-wigs have taken the opposite extreme of going over the hill by conducting their weddings in a very modern, western Christian style, atmosphere and manner. Moor brides wearing white, with netted

veils on their heads and faces, five star Hotel ballrooms, mixed gatherings and feasts, the guests, men and women, all shaking the brides hand, and sometimes even dancing in the wedding hall, have become a part of this modern trend amongst the so called "elite" of the community. Bridegrooms, nowadays, are all spruced up and styled according to the latest designer label fashions and clothes from the west. Food is served on tables and some even choose to eat with forks and knives as opposed to using their fingers. The menu of most feasts have not changed much as traditionally the Moors have always been famous and envied for their own delicacies and specialties. A good example of this is the dessert made from eggs and jaggery (brown sweetener extracted from the Kitul Palm), called Watalappan, which is one of the most popular delicacies relished by the whole nation.

With the advent of modern transportation and movement, and also because of time and distance, modern limousines and automobiles are now being used for the movement of the bride and groom to and from their homes or hotels on the event of the marriage. These cars are also decorated with flowers and ribbons as a symbol of a "just married" vehicle, again a stark imitation of the Christian west. Modern Jazz, Rock, Rap, and even Classical bands and music have also entered the wedding ceremony, as a symbol of entertainment and joy, although some families are slowly dispensing with this feature based on Islam's prohibition of vulgar, indecent, and meaningless music, which is the order of the day in the flourishing entertainment industry of the world.

The wedding cake structure, a modern introduction to Moor weddings, still remains where the bride and groom participate, jointly holding the knife together, in cutting a small portion of cake that is kept on the side of the structure and the guests are all served with wedding cake previously prepared and packed in dainty boxes with the names of the bride and groom printed on them. Those Moor families who still maintain a strict adherence to Islam are dispensing with the cake cutting ceremony while they still may choose to serve the cake in boxes as before as a gesture of "sweet" goodwill. which is an old Arab tradition still prevailing in the Middle East.

Many of the post nuptial frivolities of the past, viz; teasing the bridegroom by putting salt in his water, placing pappadam (brittle fried crackers that crackle loud when crushed) under the cloth on the chair selected for him, putting chillie in his desserts, etc. are a mostly out of vogue now. These practices were done in good humor and without any offence in order to settle the young man in his new home and break the ice with him using laughter, humor, and merriment.

## **Going Secular**

The old ways had their own specialty, origins and imitations of the Buddhists and Hindus. The new ones are more leaning towards the US and Europe. In between, there still exist a large number of Moor's who still maintain their required religious conservatism and make every attempt to conform to the rules of the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Sadly enough, a factor that has really worn out amongst a large section of the urban folks since the old times is the segregation of the sexes at such ceremonies. The slow influx of western style English education accompanied by a more western lifestyle that has crept inside the Moor home has taken its toll on many of the necessary Islamic requirements of the family. Basically, a large section of the Moor community have now become secular Muslims, so to speak, using their human logic, freedom, western style democracy, openness, music, dancing, partying, etc. as basic necessities of life without realizing the moral impact of such traits that the community is

grappling with as we speak. No doubt, most or even all of them, still practice the religion observing its obligatory rules like prayer, fasting, payment of Zakat (poor due) and even performing the pilgrimage of Hajj in Makkah. Yet, they have, changed their mode of life to one that is secular and more or less similar to the lifestyle of the other communities within the Island. This change was inevitable due to the basic lack of correct Islamic knowledge and its implementation on the ground by suitably qualified and professional people and, of course, the media and technology that has engulfed the globe in the recent past.

It must also be remembered that many of the so called "elite" Muslim families in the urban cities of Colombo, Kandy, Galle, etc., amongst whom many ventured into legal, accounting, medical, and other professions in the old times, were automatically dragged into politics by the Colonial rulers, viz; Portuguese, Dutch, & mainly British, and thus adopted a more secular form of religion for themselves which suited their political ambitions better in keeping with their self serving motives and intentions. These "elite" folk ended up as Legislative Council members and representatives of the Muslim community in various parts of the nation, and, through this high office were able to inherit and own large acres of property, land, and estates in locations that eventually became prime land. No doubt many of them, being business and tradesmen, furthered their own businesses and developed them into more prosperous ones through the very same connections and situations. Thus, they also ended up gathering large amounts of wealth through all these means, some rightfully and some not so righteously. Although they may have been pious Muslims, initially, in their hearts and minds, the greed and motivation for amassing wealth certainly gradually led their lifestyles into a very secular and non Islamic way of life. Some of them began interpreting the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah according to their own needs in order to be superficially free of the guilt of contravening the edicts and rules of Islam. Two of these, most certainly, was the wearing of the head cover (veil) and the free intermingling of sexes. The justification that they conjured up for non conformity to these two very important rules of Islam was that "evil only lurked in peoples hearts and minds and not outside of them", hence they felt that as long as their hearts and minds were clean and clear it was quite alright for them to uncover the veils of the females and also allow the free intermingling of the sexes just as the west was doing through its development in time. The only problem with this thinking was that they all assumed that their hearts and minds were clean and clear and free from evil, greed, and lust. They, for a moment, did not realize or believe, or maybe want to accept, that all human beings have these characteristics irrespective of who and what they are. It was a clear cut case of a "I am holier than thou" attitude that led them into the abyss of this darkness through which the Muslim community have lost much of their Islamic identity, character, personality, and goodness, and adopted the many of the so called "freedom" and "human rights" evil ways of the Christian West which has brought them immense trouble, hardship and strife. Thus it can be truly concluded that the mistaken cliché of the western "developed" world that scientific development, modern education, and a leading edge in the industrial and technological revolution is hand in glove with morality and goodness is the main reason for the community to have drifted away from its true Islamic values to the prevailing immoral and permissive values of the west.

## **Conclusion**

The Ceylon Moor community, who have been living and contributing towards the development and progress of the Island since 800AD, have been a very enterprising business group whose strengths and skills in trading, business acumen, shrewdness, and a

sense of great devotion to their faith, have grown from strength to strength in becoming an integral part of the nation in almost every sphere.

Today, one will find them, both men and women, working diligently in almost every sphere of education, professions, trading and even sports. The only world champion that Sri Lanka can boast of has, so far, been Muhammad Junaid Muhammad Lafir, who took the title in the World Billiards Tournament some years ago. The community also boasts of a wide range of top quality medical, engineering, accounting, IT, educationists and other professions in addition to still holding sway amongst the business community in the country.

Changes in the way of life of the community has been inevitable, what with the various secular forms of thinking and understanding that is being poured down their throats from every section of the media and globe. The need for more clearer understanding of the religion and implementing same in ones life is still very critical. The availability of translated religious material in all three languages is a great benefit and must be put to good use amongst the budding youngsters and even grown ups. The total Muslim population of Sri Lanka is now near the 8% level showing a significant growth rate in the past few centuries.

The attachment and influence of Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian culture on the community is something that will always prevail based on the interaction and integration of the community within such a mixed society. The need of the hour is to continue to maintain the Islamic identity in close liaison with the rest of the communities maintaining peace, harmony, and goodwill between all groups without having to sacrifice or compromise Islamic values and edicts.

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E-Mail received From: "faris osman" of Singapore <[frovpt@singnet.com.sg](mailto:frovpt@singnet.com.sg)

The Malay community in Singapore (which make up the majority of the Muslim community here - the other main groups are Tamils and Arabs) has Maintained some Hindu traditions of their forefathers in its wedding practices.

The most obvious of this is the "sanding" where the bride and groom sit on the "pelamin" or raised dais with guests sitting on the floor in front. This ceremony takes place after the solemnization of the marriage, usually a day after.

What happened is that the bride, in her traditional wedding attire which often does not cover her hair and accentuates her figure, is seen, nay ogled, by unrelated adult males.

What is interesting is how this tradition is also practiced by the Arab community whose fore-fathers came to this part of the world already as Muslims. This is the result of the 'Malayization' of this particular community which occurs to quite a degree. (To digress a bit, the women of the Arab community used to wear the "kebaya" which is a tight-fitting two-piece Malay garment - once again as the result of embracing Malay culture. Fortunately the "kebaya" is no longer worn by most Arab and Malay women who now wear the more Islamically-correct "baju kurung".)

It is interesting to note that while the Moors of Sri Lanka were Influenced by non-Muslim communities i.e Hindu and Buddhist, the Arabs of Singapore took their non-Islamic wedding practices when it embraced the cultural practices of another Muslim community i.e the Malays.

However the "sanding" is being increasingly abandoned and as in Sri Lanka, it has to do with increased knowledge of Islam among the Muslim community. Another practice - does not know whether it is Hindu in origin - which has been absolutely abandoned by the Malays are the many nights of feasting :

Malay wedding feasts used to last for seven nights.

Malay funerals also used to incorporate non-Islamic practices such as breaking of a coconut just before the "janazah" left the house and again, increased understanding of Islam has effectively eliminated these practices.



## **Red Letter day for Moors' Sports Club**

**by Sa'adi Thawfeeq - Daily News Fri Apr 4 2003**

Today is a red-letter day in the annals of Moors Sports Club who will be celebrating their maiden triumph in division I club cricket with a grand dinner attended by a host of dignitaries at their club pavilion at Braybrooke Place.

For the 95 years they have been in existence, Moors SC had never tasted success as during the recently concluded 2002-03 domestic cricket season where they went on to clinch the Blue Riband of division I club cricket - the Premier trophy.

Over the years Moors SC had been a force to be reckoned with, but they showed only glimpses of what they are capable of and, whenever it came to the crunch games they were known to wilt. Not so this time around.

Under the able leadership of former Sri Lanka left-arm spinner Rangana Herath, and with the guidance of former captain and coach cum player Chandika Hathurusingha, the club raised their standard of cricket to a new high to record four successive outright wins over Panadura SC, Galle CC, BRC and Colts to earn a semi-final place. This was achieved after they had lost their first three games of the season (on first innings) to NCC, SSC and CCC. But where it mattered most Moors SC was able to turn things around. They knocked out CCC (on the first innings) in the semi-finals, and then went onto score a thrilling one-wicket win over Bloomfield in the four-day final played at the R. Premadasa Stadium to clinch the title.

If Moors SC is celebrating its first-ever title win in a big way, no one can begrudge them that. They deserve every bit of their success.

Apart from Hathurusingha who made over 800 runs and captured 30 wickets, there were other individual performances of brilliance like the 800-plus runs scored by former Colts all-rounder Bathiya Perera and the success of their two new ball bowlers left-artermer Nandika Ranjith who took 49 wickets for the season and Chanuka Welagedera who finished with 38 wickets.

However individual brilliance was not sufficient to bring the kind of success they had achieved. The Moors SC also had a sound set of selectors comprising A.R.M. Arooz, A.K.M. Rizwie, K.S.M. Zarook and Dr. Aziz Mubarak, father of Sri Lanka batsman Jehan Mubarak.

These four men along with the captain and coach were able to pick the right combination to bring them the required wins. For years, Moors SC had been beset with internal problems over selection, but no so this time.

"One of the key reasons for our success was the 100 percent discipline maintained at all times. We must take our hats off to Hathurusingha for that," said Arooz, a former Moors SC captain and present ground secretary.

It was due to Arooz's efforts that Moors SC veered away from their usual practice of preparing slow pitches to one with grass and pace, which eventually paid dividends.

Arooz had been in the business of preparing pitches for the past 16 years, but what brought him great satisfaction was to see his own club players putting the opposition to the sword and making maximum use of the strip, which he had laboured to produce.

Incentives for the players were also doubled from what it was the previous years and they lived upto the challenge thrown to them by the Moors SC hierarchy when they said they would stand to win Rs. 11.2 million or a trip to Sharjah if they won the title.

"The players took up the challenge and won us our first major trophy, but we had to cancel the Sharjah trip due to the ongoing Gulf war, but the players will be given their Rs. 11.2 million," said Arooz.

Arooz said that the club spent close to Rs. 3.5 million on cricket alone for the season and the expenses included incentives of Rs. 6,000 per player per match and an additional Rs. 2,000 if they won outright and Rs. 1,000 if they won on first innings. "Such emoluments also gave the players the motivation to aim for higher honors," said Arooz.

At tonight's reception, a further Rs. 25,000 each will be presented to the Best Batsman, Best Bowler, Best Fielder and the Most Promising Young Cricketer the club has identified as those who deserve recognition for the contribution they've made during the season.

Throughout the season The Phone Company sponsored the club, which had under the presidency of Shafeek Rajabdeen, has expanded its sphere with the construction of a new scoreboard, a modern gymnasium, and upgraded pavilion and dressing rooms. They also have plans of starting work on a swimming pool shortly.

From small beginnings at no. 11, New Moor Street, Pettah in 1908, the Moors SC have made vast strides since moving to their present home at Braybrooke Place in 1931. Winning the Premier trophy would be just the catalyst they need to broaden their horizons further.

# The Malay Community of Sri Lanka

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Borneo Bulletin

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 2001

## Malays in Sri Lanka

By B. A. Hussainmiya, Ph.D

### Malays in Sri Lanka series - Part 1



**Ceylon Rifles in action.**

#### **A corporal of the Ceylon Malay Rifle Corps.**

Sri Lanka, hailed as the pearl of the Indian Ocean, is in the throes of a long drawn out ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese population and the minority Tamils who form nearly 70 per cent and 20 per cent respectively of the population.

However, the island nation does not belong to only these communities as highlighted in the international press coverage. The island is blessed with an interesting cultural mosaic that has enriched its history and civilisation in the past.

Known in the ancient times to the Arabs as the Serendib, and Taprobane for the Greeks, the mango-shaped island of some 25,000 square miles of natural beauty has been a home for a mosaic of several ethnic minorities.

Some are indigenous people like the Veddas, others were lured to the island by trade like the Arab-Moors, while some others such as Chetties Borahs and Memons settled during the colonial period beginning from the 16th century.

Not the least interesting of these is the Malay community, now totalling about 80,000 people out of a total population of about 18 million. This article deals with this colourful community, especially the cultural contributions of the Malays to both Sri Lanka and the larger Malay-speaking world.

## **The Early Contacts**

Unlike Indians and Chinese Diaspora, the Malays did not engage in mass scale migration in search of a livelihood. They roamed freely within the Nusantara region of Malay-Indonesian archipelago. In the early Christian era there is evidence of some sea-faring activities by the Malays whose ancestors sailed to and settled in as far West as Madagascar in the Indian Ocean.

It is likely that the original sea-farers also touched down in the southern coast in Sri Lanka situated centrally in the sea lanes linking the east and the west. The sea coast town of Hambantota (a Sinhalese variant of Sampan and Tota standing for landing bay) probably had welcomed the Sampan-sailing Malays who settled and merged with the ancient Sri Lankan population.

Medieval Sri Lankan historical chronicles record an invasion by a Javaka 'Malay' ruler Chandrabhanu from the Nakhon Sri Dhammarat or better known as Pattani who was keen to possess a relic of Lord Buddha revered by the Sinhalese rulers. Chandrabhanu not only defeated the Polonnaruwa Kingdom, but also established his own Java kingdom in the North of Sri Lanka which forms the present day Jaffna region. The Pandyan Ruler in South India killed the son of Chandrabhanu according to the Kudumiya Malai inscription, and that ended the brief episode of Malay monarchic rule in Sri Lanka in the early 13th century.

## **The Origins**

The ancestors of the present day Malay community of Sri Lanka arrived mostly during the period of the Dutch colonial rule. The Dutch had ousted the Portuguese from the coastal regions of the island in the middle of the 17th century.

The Malay/Javanese soldiers served in the regular army of the Dutch led by the princely class of Malay/Javanese families. Aside from these soldiers, the early Sri Lankan Malay population was comprised significantly of the Javanese/Malay ruling class who were exiled to the island by the Dutch in Java.

An important Javanese ruler thus banished to the island in 1707 was Susunan Mangkurat Mas who lived in Sri Lanka with a large retinue of royal families. A host of other rulers from the Dutch East Indies, presently Indonesia, spent their time in Sri Lanka as political exiles.

The list is a long one from Rajas and nobles from as far as Goa in Celebes, Tidore, Ternate, Bacan, Kupang, Timur and other spice islands. There were so many political exiles in Sri Lanka that in the Indonesian language the word 'disailankan', or to be sent to Ceylon came to mean banishment. The other place of exile was the Cape Town in South Africa where a similar Malay community emerged in later years.

When the British fought the Dutch in 1796, the Malay soldiers in the latter's service provided stiff and brave resistance. The bravery and discipline of the Malay troops appealed to the British who decided to retain their services and formed a full battalion in Sri Lanka. Thus was born the Malay regiment of Sri Lanka, the first ever Malay regiment to be formed and receive Queen's colours in 1802.

Later the name was changed to the Ceylon Rifle Regiment composed of the Malay majority, some Indian Sepoys and some Kaffirs. During the 19th century, Malay life in Sri Lanka was dominated by the military that became their family occupation until the Regiment was disbanded in 1873.

The original Malay population of Sri Lanka consisted of diverse East Indian nationalities, preponderantly of Javanese origin, while others belonged to Sundanese, Bugis, Madurese, Minangkabaus, Amboinese, Balinese, Tidorese, Spice Islanders, and not the least the Malays themselves.

In Dutch records they are referred to as Oosterlingen, or Easterners. Most of them already formed their own kampongs outside the fort of Batavia (now Jakarta) founded by the Dutch Governor Cohen in 1619. When the Dutch fought wars in Sri Lanka and in the Malabar coast these kampongs became depopulated due to heavy recruitment to serve in the Dutch army.

Though the Batavians spoke different dialects within their own communities, they used a common lingua franca, namely the Batavia Malay, or Pasar Melayu to interact among themselves. Besides, they were bound by the common Islamic religious bond. Based on these two strong markers of identity, a strong localised Malay community emerged in Sri Lanka with its own culture and characteristics. It is this community which the British came across when they occupied Lanka in 1796.

The British not only 'martialised' the Malays like the Gurkhas to serve in their native army, but also took firm steps to strengthen the numbers of Malays in Sri Lanka by inviting Malay families from the areas in the Peninsular Malaya which were under their control.

In 1802, the Sultan of Kedah had sent a contingent of his Malay subjects to serve in Sri Lanka who were also joined by a number of Malays from Penang, Malacca and Singapore. Reinforced by new blood from Malaya, the Sri Lankan Malay community truly gained roots in Sri Lanka and was thoroughly indigenous with its own culture and language.

[Borneo Bulletin](#)

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 11, 2001**

## Malay Heroism in Sri Lanka

By B. A. Hussainmiya, Ph. D

### Malays in Sri Lanka Series - Part 2



**Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe, the King of Ceylon.**



**Aside from the colonial army, the Malays also found employment with the local Rajas.**

The transformation of the Sri Lankan Malay community into a martial race became more complete under the British rule than under the Dutch who surrendered their coastal possessions in 1796. Strangely enough, while the soldierly capabilities of Malays in Sri Lanka came in for their praise, the British treated the Malays in the peninsular as unfit for military duties. Similarly in Sri Lanka, they considered the indigenous Sinhalese as unsuitable to bear arms and preferred to employ the Malays.

The first Governor of British Ceylon, Frederic North (1798-1805) made elaborate plans to establish the Malay Regiment, modelled on the Sepoy Regiments of India. The Malays were dressed for the first time in scarlet and white uniform of a regular regiment of infantry on line. Special military schools were founded to teach them and their children to be proficient in both Malay and English. A special library for the soldiers lent books, publications and manuscripts in Malay. The regiment also had its own Malay chaplain to perform their religious rites. In short the Malays enjoyed full facilities to practice Islam and their culture.

More Malays were encouraged to immigrate to Sri Lanka with their families and paid bounty money. Aristocratic Malay families were especially welcomed, enjoying higher ranks in service depending on the number of their followers they brought along.

Several exiled Malay princes had held commissions in the Army. For example, three out of five male children of the Makassarese King of Gowa, Batara Gowa Amas Madina II,

from Southern Celebes who was exiled to the island in 1767 by the Dutch, had joined the regiment. His eldest son Captain Abdullah fought valiantly and died during the British-Polygar Wars in South India in 1800. His younger brothers Princes Karaeng (a Makassarese title for nobility) Mohd. Nuruddin and Karaeng Mohd. Saifuddin were both captains in the Ceylon Malay Regiment.

Aside from the colonial army, the Malays also found employment with the local Rajas. The Malays served the Cochin Raja in the Malabar coast of India who later were recruited by the British for service in Sri Lanka in 1799. More importantly, the last independent Ruler in Kandy in the central hilly region of Sri Lanka also had his own Malay army, known as Padikara Peruwa (paid levies) originally formed by the last Sinhalese Kandyan Ruler Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe (1747-82). In 1800, there were nearly 400 of them. They ran away from the Dutch oppression into Kandy and welcomed at the Kandyan court, some of whom became the King's bodyguards. Their chief was decorated with the highest title of Muhandiram, (like Pehins of Brunei) reserved for local chieftains. A half brother of the Bugis Princes, known as Sangunglo, who escaped to the central hills and described as 'fat tall prince' by a contemporary British account, was the Commander of the Malay Army in the Kandyan Kingdom.

During the first British-Kandyan war of 1803, British sources reveal an interesting but a heart-rending saga of sibling bravery and princely honour involving the Malay-Bugis princes. When Kapitan Nuruddin and his brother Saifuddin led the British-Malay army into the heart of Kandy to fight the Sinhalese troops, their half brother Prince Sangunglo in the enemy ranks tried to lure them to join the Kandyans, and vice versa. Both parties refused the offers but remained loyal to their masters, the British and the Kandyan kings respectively. The Malay royal brothers fought each other as enemies in the service of their kings.

The brave Sangunglo, the Kandyan Malay commander created havoc by his daring exploits against the British enemies who advanced into the heart of Kandyan capital during the first British-Kandyan war. He fought bravely, engaging in hand to hand combat with his own brothers. Sangunglo lost his life in the battle at the hands of the British commander, Major Davy. The enraged Kandyan forces massacred and annihilated the British troops and brought victory to the Kandyan King, Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe.

Following the British defeat in Kandy, their Malay commanders Princes Captain Nuruddin and Saifuddin were captured and brought before the Kandyan king. During the audience the royal brothers refused to prostrate themselves in front of the King in the manner of customary obeisance. Ignoring their temerity, the Kandyan king offered them the position as his own commanders and to become princes among his Malay subjects. The princely brothers refused the offer, explaining that they had taken an oath to the King of England, and the acceptance of such an offer was tantamount to treachery. The Kandyan king gave them time to reconsider. After three weeks in prison the Malay princes refused to budge even under torture.

The enraged king put them to death and threw their bodies into the forest to be devoured by wild boars. The ill treatment of their princes and the denial of decent Muslim burials to the Malay martyrs sent a chilling message to the King's Malay subjects who had served and fought for him loyally. Governor North was especially aggrieved to learn about the sacrifice and martyrdom of the Nuruddin brothers, and set up a special Malay committee to compensate the widows of the slain soldiers.

The Kandyan king was becoming notoriously paranoid and engaged in cruel acts against his own people. During the second war in 1815, his discontented Malay subjects decided to turn the tables on him. The role played by the Malays in the Kandyan wars certainly did tilt the balance of power. The British could not win the first war, due to the Malay backing to the Kandyan king. During the second war he lost their support and the war. The centuries old Sri Lankan monarchic rule ended with him and the British became masters of whole of Sri Lanka in 1815. Now they had the entire Malay population in the island to serve them.

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## **Borneo Bulletin**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2001**

### **What lured Malays to Sri Lanka?**

By B. A. Hussainmiya

#### **Malays in Sri Lanka Series Part 3**



**Mastan, a Malay trader. Robert Brownrigg, Governor of Ceylon 1812-1818.**



**Areas of origins of Sri Lankan Malays.**

There were some good reasons for the Malay migration to Sri Lanka until the early half of the nineteenth century. They moved not just as individuals, but brought along their families and children by uprooting themselves from their indigenous environment.

No other Eastern community did so in such numbers. For instance, when the British administrators enticed the Chinese into Sri Lanka to take advantage of their



industriousness, only very few of them could be attracted, and those who did were confined to dentistry.

The Chinese sought good fortunes in Singapore, Malaya and even Brunei.

Malays, on the other hand, found affinity with Sri Lanka owing to climate, promise of good living and guarantees to practise Islam and their traditional ways of life.

During Dutch times (1656-1796), they came as sailors, storekeepers and in other minor occupations. However, many had been conscripted to fight the Dutch wars in the colonies when the entire 'Malay/Javanese' villages surrounding the Dutch Fort of Batavia became depopulated to fill the army.

Malays who came to Sri Lanka under the British patronage did so voluntarily, except in rare cases of being 'Shanghaied'.

The roaming Malay families of the Archipelago searching for better livelihood in the Straits Settlements were easily netted in to work in Sri Lanka.

Unsettled conditions in the early 19th century Nusantara region made life for the ordinary Malays miserable compounded by internecine wars, colonial inroads and rapacious chieftains who squeezed everything out of their subjects. Those who dared sought solace elsewhere.

The Malay settlers expected to find peace and wealth, albeit by joining the military in Sri Lanka, considered the new El Dorado. As a local Malay folk song indicated "the Malays came to Sri Lanka in order to purchase two elephants for a price of one cent"! But soon they discovered the deception while in the island when they were offered the British one-cent coins that carried the imprint of elephants on both sides!

At any rate, the Malay recruits to the army received generous terms of enlistment in the beginning. For example, when first joining the men received bounty money, a sum of (Spanish) Rix dollars 21 and Pice 34 besides the monthly pay of 3 Rix dollars and 74 Pice. Their wives and children also received additional bounty monies.

When the men become unfit for service because of injury or old age they were placed in an invalid establishment and thus assured a comfortable maintenance during the remainder of their life. Those who fell in battle had their families placed under protection of the Government. Their children could take their fathers' places and good education awaited them in the regimental schools.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the hapless Malays who led miserable lives under some of the rapacious Malay Rajas must have found these terms very attractive, especially the prospects of earning cash remunerations and a degree of social security.

They were recruited in special depots set up in Penang and Singapore. Additionally, the British Governors sent special naval missions to comb the East for suitable Malays. In 1803 Lieutenant Rofsi's mission to Prince of Wales Island received the blessings of the Sultan of Kedah who sent nearly 300 of his subjects to Sri Lanka.

The second governor, Thomas Maitland (1805-1811) became prejudiced against the Malays treating them as scapegoats for the defeat of the British in the 1st British- Kandyan War of 1803. His attempts to abolish the Malay Regiment failed due to resistance from the community and the military officials.

Nonetheless, in 1808 he forcibly repatriated more than 300 Malay royal exiles and their families to their original homes, as they were a pecuniary burden on the government. Thus the community lost its cream.

Some relatives and the descendants of royals who married other local Muslim-Moors did stay behind. And that reinforces the claims of some present-day Malay families to royal lineages.

The next governor Robert Brownrigg (1812-1818), having an eye on annexing the last Sinhalese Kingdom of Kandy, boosted the numbers of the Malay settlers. In 1813, his agent Captain de Bussche visited Lieutenant Governor Stamford Raffles in Java requesting help to enlist Javanese soldiers.

A reluctant Raffles argued that "the Javanese were needed more for agricultural pursuits than for becoming soldiers." Yet, he contacted his friend the Raja of Madura. As a result, 412 fine soldiers (accompanied by 214 women and 208 children), mostly Sumanapers from the island of Madura left to Sri Lanka from the Javanese port of Surabaya. They remained by far the best quality recruits in the Ceylon Malay Regiment, followed in 1816 by a further batch of 228 Javanese from Semarang and Gresik off the northern coast of Java. This was the largest groups to arrive and integrate well into the existing Malay community. Thereafter until about 1850 there were irregular arrivals annually an averaging of about 30 or so Malays from the Straits Settlements.

A soldier earned 8 pence a day in 1815, which increased only by a penny in 50 years. Rising prices of commodities shrink the soldier's income, making the profession less attractive. Hence few Malays volunteered to go to Sri Lanka after 1840s.

During the hard times when the Regiment faced closure owing to a dwindling number of recruits, Captain Tranchell of Ceylon Rifle Regiment came all the way to Brunei in 1856-57 in the hope of recruiting Malays from Kampong Ayer, who were the last to leave their homes for greener pastures.

The obliging Brunei Sultan Abdul Mumin ordered his harbour master Pengiran Shahbandar to assist the English Captain who succeeded in collecting only seven Malays from his entire tour of East including Labuan, Pahang, Trengganu and Kelantan.

As a pungent British officer put it: "This expedition and the expenditure compared with the net proceeds of it must show these four or five Malay recruits to be about the most expensive in the British army."

Another writer commented that "the old Malay birds.picking up corn worth a dollar or so on their own feeding grounds were not to be caught with the chaff of nine pence per diem from the soil of Ceylon." And that was the beginning of the end to Malay migration to Sri Lanka.

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## **Islam and learning among Malays**

By B. A. Hussainmiya

### **Malays in Sri Lanka Series Part 4**



**Baba Zain Jurangpati, a Malay alim from Kandy, and his family, c.1900.**



**A Sri Lankan Moor gentleman, Hon. M.C. Abdul Rahman.**

The Sri Lankan Malays are among the strongest adherents of Islam on an island where a 70% of the population are Buddhists while others follow Hinduism and Christianity. Unlike the South African Malays who underwent religious crisis during 18th and 19th centuries as a result of settling in a remote part of the world where Islam was hardly known, the Sri Lankan Malays, lived among a strong Muslim community in the island -the Moors - whose ancestry dates back to the early days of Islam.

The Muslim Moors, an ubiquitous minority of nearly 8% of the current population in the island numbering more than one and half million people, have lived throughout the island with major concentration is in the Eastern province.

The Moors are mainly the offspring of Arab and South Indian Muslims who speak Tamil as their mother tongue. The Portuguese who first met the dark Muslim 'Mouros' of Mauritania in the African coast in the early sixteenth century, applied the term pejoratively to other Eastern Muslims, including the Moros of the Phillipines.

The Arab and Persian ancestors of the Moors had dominated the entire maritime route from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to Canton in China. Many of them married into local communities forming settlements in the port cities of Malabar and Mabar Coasts in the southern India. Their descendants moved to Sri Lanka virtually dominating the island trade. Seeking commercial prosperity, the Sinhalese kings offered them settlement privileges.

A tenth century Arabic Text, *Ajaib al Hind*, (Marvel of India) composed by Ibn Shahriyar, says that the Sinhalese King Aggabodhi III sent a fact finding mission to Arabia during the time of the Prophet to know more about his teachings. After hazardous ocean travel, the delegation reached Arabia only during the reign of Caliph Omar (654-664). The Arabs had been attracted to the resplendent island, known as Serandib or Seilan, well-known for its gem-riches and serenity. Another major attraction was the Adam's Peak where Prophet Adam is believed to have set foot as attested in medieval Arabic writings. The renowned Muslim traveller Ibn Batuta who visited Sri Lanka in the 14th century to see the Adam's Peak, lists other Muslim visitors from the 10th century. Such was the esteem in which Sri Lanka was held among the Arab West and through them in the Malay East.

The presence of Moor - Muslims in large numbers certainly proved a great boon to the newly arrived Malays. More importantly, the island was also a centre of Islamic learning where celebrated religious teachers and Islamic mystics attracted traders and intellectuals. For instance, Shaikh Nuruddin ar Raniri, the Gujerati scholar who founded Malay-Islam in the court of Alauddin Ri'ayat Shah of Aceh in the island of Sumatra in the 17th century perfected his knowledge of Islam during his sojourn in Sri Lanka as attested by the text *Tuhfah-e-Serandib*, (Ar. Key to Serandib). Various Javanese chronicles make references to Islamic activities in Sri Lanka. Professor M. C. Ricklefs, leading expert on Javanese history, points out that the Javanese exiles who learnt Islam in Sri Lanka carried high esteem in their own country. For example, Radin Adipati Natakusuma, the Javanese chief minister who was banished to Ceylon in 1743, after his return to Java in 1768 was made chief of Islamic officials in the court of Jogjakarta. Likewise, Pengeran Wirakusuma, born in Sri Lanka to a leading Javanese noble and acquired Islamic knowledge in the island, became the leader of another Islamic group in 1781 and then the religious advisor at the Jogjakarata court.

*Babad Mangkubumi*, the famous Javanese chronicle mentions that in the 18th century the Javanese exiles became spiritual pupils to two Ceylonese Muslim Sufi masters namely Sayyid Musa Ngidrus, and Ibrahim Asmara. It further narrates the experience of the wife of Pengeran Natakusuma describing her husband's religious experiences in Ceylon. She told King Pakubuwana III that the royal exiles, became the students of the above Sufi masters, "whose magical powers achieved wonderous things." As the story goes, at the great recitations of the Quran each Friday, Javanese fruits and delicacies were "magically transported to Sri Lanka". She also related how the merchants and ship-captains from such far away places as Surat, Bengal, and Selangor sat at the feet of these teachers in Colombo.

Despite the legendary overtones of these tales, the Dutch records testify that such religious gatherings did take place in Sri Lanka albeit banned by the Dutch government who feared the power of Islam. They tried to prevent the gatherings in their maritime territories by imposing severe punishment on those involved - the [Muslim]'yogis' and 'heathen mendicants'- by chaining them for life.

Indeed the recent discovery of Malay manuscripts in Sri Lanka shows the existence of dozens of significant Islamic/Malay Kitabs, scriptures and works of Islamic jurisprudence. These include the famous works of *Sirat al Mustaqim* and *Bustan As Salatin*, by Syaikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri and other well-known Malay-Islamic writers such as Samad al-Palembani, Shamusuddin al-Pasai, Dawud al-Pattani and so on. The local Malays also avidly read Islamic epics such as *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah* and *Hikayat Amir Hamza*. Some rare Malay-Islamic texts, some written by the local Malays Ulama found

only in Sri Lanka. Almost certainly some of these texts did form part of the library belonging to Javanese-Malay royal exiles from the 17th century.

The Malays, patronised by the British, built their own mosques in the military cantonments of Colombo, Kandy, Badulla, Kurunegalle, and Hambantota so that they could conduct their sermons in their own language. However, they could also congregate in mosques in the Moor areas. Occasionally there had been disputes among the congregations about belongingness to mosques of certain social groups.

The strength of Islamic practices among the community has contributed at times to an exaggerated claim that most saints, (Walis) in Sri Lanka have hailed from the Malay community. Particularly famous are the tombs of Saint Tuan Bagus Balangkaya buried at the Colombo grand mosque and Pengiran Adipati at the Kehelwatte Peer Saibo mosque in Colombo. Tombs of Malay saints abound in other Malay localities in the island as well. Whatever the case may be, it remains the fact that the strength of Malay Islam in Sri Lanka has been reinforced by their co-religionists, the majority Tamil-speaking Moors, who shared their resources, mosques and religious texts with their Malay brethren.

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Borneo Bulletin

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2001

## Elite and cultured Malays<sup>1</sup>

By B. A. Hussainmiya

### Malays in Sri Lanka Series Part 5



**A leading elite Malay family of Sri Lanka, Hon. M.K. Saldin, the first Malay Legislative Councillor, (Centre) his children and sons-in-laws.**

By the early 19th century the original Malay community (the "Ceylon Malays") that had gradually formed during the previous century had firmly established itself within Sri Lankan society. Many of them came from cultured families around the Archipelago.

Their descendants had been driven by the ambition that often activates migrants and supported by closely-knit kinship groups. They rose to elite status taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the regimental schools and occupied high ranks in the Regiment.

As a British officer remarked in 1839, "the non-commissioned officers of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment are to a man almost all Ceylon Malays for which service the foreigners (i.e. the later Malay immigrants from the Peninsula) have not the smartness nor intelligence."

As this quote shows, the fate of the Malay recruits who came during the early 19th century from Malaya is a different story. They were mostly half-hearted and desperate

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<sup>1</sup> The Editor has changed my original title 'The Malay Elites and Simpltons'!

job-seekers who roamed in the Straits Settlements only to be lured by the few dollars offered as bounty money on enlistment.

On one occasion in 1841 onboard the ship 'Baroque la Fellies', the Malay recruits waiting to be transported from Singapore to Sri Lanka even murdered the Sri Lankan Malay recruitment officer and escaped with the bounty money.

In a few rare cases unscrupulous sergeants even 'shanghaied' their recruits, i.e. drugging and transporting men without their agreement. Nonetheless these later immigrants were far less sophisticated and motivated than the early ones and ended up as low achievers. Many did not take advantage of regimental education and remained at the rank of private.

These later immigrants never really assimilated into Sri Lankan Malay society, even though many married local women. The established elite Malays looked down upon them and often treated them as simpletons. Being less established and privileged than the older Malay community, some tried to return to their home country. Thus in the 1860s a return movement began when the regiment offered them repatriation, though some of them decided at the last minute to remain with their families in Sri Lanka.

There is no better way to sum up these events than by reproducing verbatim an account from the 1865 biography of J.T. Thompson, government surveyor of Singapore, that chronicles the sad tale of a Peninsular Malay recruit to Sri Lanka.

"Oamut was a true Malay; and, I was more in contact with him than with any other person for a whole year, I will describe him as well as I am able. ..Oamut might stand about five feet four inches. He dressed in the usual manner of Malaya, viz., in the sarong (olaid), salvar (trousers), and baju (coat). On his head he wore a Bugis handkerchief; and on his feet he wore sandals. By his side was a kris, with which he never parted for a moment. At a distance he might have been taken for a Scottish highlander; when near, his copper-coloured skin, black twinkling eyes, Mongolian physiognomy, proved that he was a Malay. He was independent in his tone, but respectful in his manners; and, during my long intercourse with him, he neither betrayed a tincture of low breeding, nor a sign of loose and improper thoughts.

"Indeed his sense was delicate and keen: his ideas had a tone of high standard. He was unmindful of money or any other object than what was necessary to maintain himself and family. He gradually commanded my friendship. I felt I could not but respect him. His conversation was intelligent on the affairs of the surrounding states, his information was deep in the characteristics of his own race; and his descriptions of past and passing events interesting and instructive. Yet he could neither read nor write - a defect he bewailed with much sorrow. His age might have been forty-seven to fifty. In our many rambles and rides together, he used to relate the history of his own life; and as an illustration of these social incidents I will put down what I can remember.

"...He was born near Bukit Tingah, on the Juru river; he once pointed out to me the remnant of his father's coconut grove, standing in the midst of a plain of lalang (high grass) close to the mangrove jungle. Now only three trees served as a mark of the spot - circumstance which drew a sigh from the Malay; for these melancholy remembrances brought back the memory of a doting father and fond mother, as he knew them in his

sunshine of childhood. But he soon turned aside: grave thoughts crossed his brow; for time had dispersed the members of that family, and scattered them to and fro.

"Oamut was a wild young man, and wanted to see the world; so, in a moment of unguardedness, he was caught in the meshes of an enlisting sergeant of the Ceylon Rifle Corps. Dosed with narcotics, and before seeing either father or mother, he was carried on board a ship bound for a long foreign service."

"It is not wonderful,' said Oamut to me, 'that an amok takes place; for the bereft and frenzied youths see the land of their love still in view and are maddened at the parting.' An amok did not occur on this occasion; Oamut was borne off; and he landed safely in Ceylon, was drilled and stiffened into the shape of a British soldier. He was also sent to school, but could never learn the difference between a and b; he however progressed so far in English as to speak it, parrot-like; but what he said was better understood by himself than by his white friends.

"While in Ceylon he assisted in the reduction of the hill tribes [a reference to 1848 Kandy rebellion]; and on one occasion stuck by his wounded captain for three days. He concealed him in the jungle, and bore him out in safety.

"This gave Oamut a step; but he was bodo (unlearned), so could not be made a sergeant. He served for twenty-seven years, after which he yearned to return to his native land. He got his discharge without pension (the reason for this I could never satisfactorily learn). So he returned penniless to Polo Pinang to find father and mother, sisters and brothers, gone. The very posts of his father's house had rotted away."

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**Borneo Bulletin**

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## **Life after the Regiment**

By B. A. Hussainmiya

### **Malays of Sri Lanka Series Part 6**



**A Malay in the fire-brigade uniform (seated) flanked by sons in jail-guard uniform in the 1920s.**

The Malays in Sri Lanka gradually began to shun military service, the mainstay of their sustenance, after 1850.

Nearly one third of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment (CRR) positions, some 500 out of 1600 positions fell vacant by 1860. Unable to enlist Malays from the Peninsula, the military authorities extended their search in vain for recruits from as far as the Cape of Good Hope among the Hottentots, Sepoys of Mysore, Arraccanese from Burma, and even Bajaus from Borneo.

Malay antipathy to military profession arose due to several reasons. First, they resented the fact that some non-Malay Companies of Indian Sepoys and African Kaffirs were attached to the Malay battalion when the CRR was restructured. Second, Malays were no longer engaged in combat duties, but in civilian pursuits like guard duties and providing security services in government offices.

As all resistance to British rule in Sri Lanka ended after 1848, there were no more wars to fight.

Malays also disliked foreign service when six companies were sent to garrison Hong Kong from 1847 to 1854. Many died in the insalubrious conditions in Hong Kong. Labuan also received a contingent of Sri Lankan Malay soldiers from 1869 to 1871 which they did not mind. They appeared to have fraternised with Malays of Brunei who lived not far away. (Some soldiers went to collect Malay manuscripts from Brunei.)

Many opted for early retirement under the new military regulations of 1847 that allowed soldiers to retire after 10 years of service instead of being recruited for life. The pensioners were welcomed in the expanding Police Department. With regiment experience, a number of them also filled fire-brigade services as well as security related employment such as jail-guards in the country's Prisons.

With the expansion in plantations of export crops such as coffee, tea, cocoa and rubber under colonial stimulus, increased job opportunities became available in the estate sector.

While another class of immigrants - the Indian Tamils from Tamil Nadu - flocked in as estate labourers, Malays with rudimentary English education availed themselves of the opportunities for supervisory roles in the hill country estates and office jobs in the European agency houses.

In 1873, the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, the principal arm of the British colonial military establishment was disbanded due to operational reasons. Governor Sir William Gregory justified the action as Sri Lanka enjoyed times of peace and prosperity that had reduced the need for any substantial native military force.

The governor also justified the decision by reference to Tamil population in northern Jaffna region whom he opined were by nature a docile people more prone to agricultural pursuits and not capable of bearing arms to require any policing by the army. Later the history would prove otherwise as armed Tamil youths, the Liberation Tigers of Sri Lanka did build one of the ferocious guerrilla fighting force the world has ever seen!

After the Regiment, it was the Ceylon Police Department that absorbed most number of Malays. In 1879 they formed nearly one third of the force, some 493 out of strength of 1692 men. The police took over the civilian duties of the disbanded CRR, and the Malays moved into the vacated barracks of the CRR soldiers built in outstations like Badulla, Kurunegalle and Trincomalee where the Malays continued their own kampong life. The Fire-Brigade and Prison services also provided steady sources of employment to the Malays.

The disbandment of the CRR in 1873 indeed ended a most remarkable era in the history of the community. Apart from acting as their major employer, the CRR contributed in other significant ways by reinforcing social cum cultural cohesion among the Malays who lived in large clusters in the cantonments. In contrast, the Malays who entered other occupations became scattered in isolated parts of the island, although a substantial civilian Malay population, known as Priman (Malay Freeman) lived in the major towns of Colombo and Kandy.

The disbandment of the CRR also meant loss of other facilities which countenanced educational and cultural life of the community. For example, the Regimental schools

which provided valuable free education for Malay children had to be closed down along with the CRR library which housed Malay books and manuscripts.

It was the CRR that had linked the community with their Malay fatherland. Local Malays who went on recruitment duty to Malaya refreshed ties with their long-lost cousins. They brought back Malay educational and literary material, which helped in keeping alive in Sri Lanka a vibrant indigenous Malay literary tradition during most part of the 19th century. The colophon of a Sri Lankan Malay manuscript described how a CRR Sergeant Shamsuddin, while on duty in Singapore in 1847, spent time in the Malay royal Kampung Gelam to copy down famous Malay literary works which he brought back to Sri Lanka. Such opportunities vanished once the Regiment was disbanded.

The military men, as distinguished pensioners, no longer enjoyed elite or privileged status in the community. Civilians took over the management of Malay regimental mosques in the cantonments, especially in Colombo's Slave Island and Kandy's Bogambara wards. The documents of the period indicate emerging conflicts, tensions and legal disputes between the civilians on the one side and proud soldiers on the other who insisted on their special status for elitism.

The literary life of the Malays suffered most following the disbandment of the Regiment. Malay language had been taught as a compulsory subject in the regimental schools. In the new occupations there was hardly any need for the Malays to pursue their vernacular. As a result the indigenous literary activities slowly faded away when Malays could no longer read Jawi script, known among them as Gundul.

Furthermore, it became difficult to sustain a refined Malay lingo, a hall mark of the Malay literati. The Malay language spoken in the community became increasingly creolised by having veered away from language spoken in Malaysia and Indonesia.

In the absence of the Regiment, the community was thus forced to fend for itself to survive as a separate and identifiable community amidst great odds. If not for the Regiment, the Sri Lankan Malays would have embraced the same fate of identity loss that took place among the nominal Malays of South Africa.

## **Orang Melayu: The story of Sri Lanka's Malay folk**

### **Asiff Hussein**

Renowned for their martial prowess and happy go-lucky attitude, Sri Lanka's Malay folk have but a relatively short history in the country, albeit a very fascinating one.

This small Muslim community which comprises of about 50,000 persons are mainly descended from Javanese political exiles (nobles and chieftains), soldiers and convicts, who arrived in the island from Dutch-occupied Java during the period of Dutch colonial rule in Sri Lanka from 1658 " 1796.

Although the vast majority of Sri Lankan Malays are of Javanese ancestry, there are also considerable numbers descended from the folk of other islands in the Indonesian archipelago such as the Balinese, Tidorese, Madurese, Sundanese, Bandanese and Amboinese.

Thus the ethnic term "Malay" should not be misconstrued as indicating their origin from the Malayan peninsula. Although there do exist Sri Lankan Malays descended from the folk of the Malayan peninsula, their numbers are very few indeed.

The local Malays refer to themselves as orang Java (people of Java) and orang Melayu (Malay people) while the majority Sinhalese community call them Ja-minissu (Javanese people).

Indonesian political exiles comprised a significant portion of the early Malay population brought hither by the Dutch.

These exiles posed a serious political threat to the Dutch East India company (or "vereenigde oost indische compagnie", known as the VOC for short) which had its headquarters in Batavia (the Dutch name for Jakarta).

Sri Lanka and the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa were the principal centres of banishment for such exiles.

According to B.A. Hussainmiya (Lost cousins, the Malays of Sri Lanka. 1987) there must have been at least 200 members of this eastern nobility including the younger members of aristocratic families born in the island, in the latter part of the 18th century.

This is indeed a significant number considering the fact that during this time, the entire Malay population in the island amounted to about 2400 persons.

However, during the early British period, Governor Maitland (1805 " 1811) who believed the exiles to be "a great pecuniary burden to the colonial revenue, besides being a danger to the British interests in the island", took measures to expel them.

Although the Dutch authorities in Batavia were reluctant to take back the exiles, Maitland's threat that he would forcibly "send them in one his Majesty's cruises to the Eastward to be landed among these islands", sufficed to change their minds. However, a

few exiles who had espoused local women stayed back and gave rise to a small community of Malays claiming aristocratic status.

However, it was the Malay soldiers brought hither by the Dutch to garrison their strongholds, who comprised the bulk of the Malay community in the island.

By the turn of the 18th century, there were about 2200 Malay soldiers in the island.

Malay troops are said to have taken part in the wars of the Dutch against the Portuguese such as the storming of Galle (1640), the siege of Colombo (1656) and the capture of Jaffna (1658).

The Malays also served in the Dutch wars against the Kandyan Kingdom (17th "18th centuries).

With the surrender of the Dutch to the British in 1796, the Malay soldiers were absorbed by the British military, and so served them as they had done their predecessors, the Dutch.

The British authorities who were not unaware of the martial prowess of the Malays, imported over 400 Madurese soldiers and about 228 Javanese soldiers along with their families from 1813 " 1816.

This was during the brief period of British rule over Java from 1811 " 1816.

Following the Dutch takeover of Java in 1816, the British had to turn elsewhere for the supply of Malay soldiers and set up recruiting offices, which were however a miserable failure.

Captain Tranchell's mission (1856 " 1857) which travelled extensively in the East Indies including stopovers in Brunei, Lubuan, Pahang and Kelatan, managed to recruit only seven Malays, which prompted a contemporary British officer, Cowan, to remark:

"The expedition and the expenditure as compared with the proceeds of it must show these four of five (Malay recruits) to be about the most expensive in the British army." He says that everyone of them were subsequently set at liberty as they were physically unfit for fighting when they arrived at headquarters.

As for convicts, these comprised petty officials and commoners deported by the VOC. However, these were very few compared to the soldiers. It has been shown that in 1731, there were 131 of these convicts serving the VOC in Sri Lanka, besides those convicts serving in the army and those who had been set free.

Although it appears that the majority of Malays did not bring their womenfolk with them, there is evidence to show that a good many of them did.

Christopher Schwitzer, a German resident of Dutch Ceylon alludes (1680) to Amboinese soldiers in the Dutch service who had Amboinese Sinhalese, and Tamil wives, so that we may assume that some of the Malays, especially the soldiery, brought their wives with them.

However, as borne out by later Dutch records, the Malays preferred to marry local Moor women, due to their common religious background.

Intermarriage with Sinhalese women has however also been considerable since the 19th century.

It is for this reason that local Malays somewhat differ physically from their brethren in the Indonesian archipelago.

As for Malay culture, we know that the Malay language (known to local Malays as "bahasa Melayu") is still a living one and is spoken in Malay homes, though there is evidence to show that it is being fast replaced by Sinhala.

The local Malay language which somewhat differs from standard Indonesian (bahasa Indonesia) and standard Malaysian (bahasa Malaysia) was however a thriving one in the olden days, so much so that two Malay newspapers, *Alamat Lankapuri* and *Wajah Selong* in Arabic script (known to local Malays as the Gundul script) were published in the latter part of the 19th century.

As Hussainmiya (Lost cousins 1987) has noted, Sri Lanka's Malays have belonged to a fairly literate society.

Although a great part of their literature, which includes "Hikayats" (prose works) and "Syairs" (works in verse) have had their origins from classical Malay works popular throughout the Malay world, a considerable number of such works have had their origins amongst the local Malay community.

The Hikayats which have derived from Arabian, Persian, Indian and Javanese sources, comprise of fantastic tales including romances, legends and epics.

Some of the notable Hikayats found in Sri Lanka are the Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Hikayat Isma Yatim and Hikayat Indera Kuraisy.

According to Hussainmiya (1987) the Hikayat Indera Kuraisy is peculiar to Sri Lanka.

This fantastic Malay romance, which is interspersed with pantuns (traditional Malay quatrains) relate the adventures of the hero Indera Kuraisy who departs from his homeland Sarmadan in order to win the heart of the inapproachable princess, Indera Kayangan.

The Syairs are Malay classic poetry that have for long captured the fancy of local Malay folk.

Two notable local syairs are the syair syaikh Fadlun, a romance-epic narrating the story of the pious Fadlun who lived in Arabia during the times of the Caliph Omar, and the syair Kisahnya Khabar Orang Wolenter Bengali which describes the armed skirmish between Malay and Bengali soldiers in Colombo on New Years Day 1819.

These Hikayats and Syairs were also written in the Gundul script.

However, despite attempts at reviving the Malay language, it is fast dying out and giving way to Sinhala. The vast majority of vernacular- educated Malay youth today speak Sinhala at home.

In spite of all this, it can still be said that the local Malays have been much more conservative than their brethren domiciled in South Africa (Cape Malays) who have had similar beginnings but have ceased to speak that Malay language long ago (as far back as the 19th century, as evident from John Mason's "Malays of Cape Town" 1861). This is despite the fact that the Cape Malays constitute a community three times as large as the Sri Lankan Malay community.

There have of course been numerous attempts at reviving the local Malay language and culture by such organizations as the Sri Lanka Malay Confederation, an umbrella organization of the local Malay community.

The second Malay world symposium held in Colombo in August 1985, and co-sponsored by the Malay Confederation and Gapena, the Malaysian Writers Federation, is a case in point.

To this day, the Malays have jealously retained certain aspects of their culture, examples being the honorific Tuan which precedes the names of Malay males, their family names, social customs and culinary habits.

Today there exist many Malay family names that have fiercely resisted the inroads made by Islamic Arab names; these include Jaya, Bongso, Tumarto, Kitchil, Kutilan, Kuncheer and Singa Laksana.

Although Malay social customs such as those pertaining to births, circumcisions and marriages are not significantly different from those of their Moorish co-religionists, there nevertheless do exist a few practices that do differ. A practice peculiar to the Malays until fairly recent times was the singing of pantuns on such festive occasions.

The Malays have also retained some of their traditional fare such as nasi goreng (Fried rice), satay and Malay Kueh (cakes and puddings). Pittu (rice-cake) and babath (tripe) is another favourite dish that has found much favour amongst other communities as well.

Traditional Malay dress has however ceased to exist for some time. Local Malay women, like their Moorish sisters, dress in sari (Indian-style with a hood left at the back to cover the head when going outdoors) instead of the traditional Malay Baju and Kurung.

However, it is possible that the sarong which Malay men as well as those of other communities wear at home is a recent introduction from the archipelago.

It appears that in the olden days, Sinhalese, Moor and Tamil folk wore a lower garment similar to the Indian dhoti and not exactly the same garment we know as the sarong, whose name itself is of Malay origin. The arts of batik printing and rattan weaving, both lucrative cottage industries in the country, also owe their origins to the Malay.

Source: Explore Sri Lanka

## CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF SRI LANKAN MALAYS

by Tony .P. Miskin - Former Senior Lecturer, University of Moratuwa

- 6-7 Century** **Iconographical finds in West Java point to a connection between Java and Sri Lanka** - Ref (i) Prof Kekulawala's article in Kalyani-Vol.1. Oct 1982 p: 209 (ii) Pierre Dupont
- 1214** **Kalanga Magha arrived with 24,000 Malay soldiers and took over the country.** Ref: Fergusons Sri Lanka Directory 1985-88. 123rd Edition, p: 43
- 1235-1275** **King Chanrabhanu, is said to have ruled the Jaffna kingdom during part of this period** Ref : Daily News of 14th Nov 1983-Article by Henry.P Abeysekera, on " Historical Basis for national unity
- 1247** **King Chandrabhanu, a Malay King invaded Sri Lanka with a battalion of Malay Soldiers.** Ref : Mrs G Dains paper presented at the World Malay symposium " Duniya Melayu"- in 1985
- 1256** **Magha the Malay Conqueror was driven out of Polonnaruwa with Pandya assistance.** Ref: Fergusons Sri Lanka Directory 1985-88,123rd Edition p: 43
- 1505-1656** **Malays beleived to have been brought to Ceylon by the Portuguese.** Ref: (i) H.M. Said's article on Ceylon Malays in 1926 Journal of Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society. (ii) John Crawford - History of Indian Archipelago
- 1640** **The storming of Galle by Admiral Coster and Malay troops.** Ref: E.Reimers Govt. Archivist- Jubilee book of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club
- 1657** **Malays under Captain Raja Talella accompanied Rycklof Van Goers and took part in the capture of Mannar and Jaffna.** Ref: (i) Ibid (ii) E.Reimers Govt archivist -p: 158 of Jubilee book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1706** **Susuna Mankurat Mas- Ex King of Java landed in Ceylon** Ref: Page 160 of Jubilee book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1708** **Javanese Prince Pangeran Adipathi Amang Kurat 111, with family and retinue was banished to Ceylon.** Ref: De Graf (1949 pp 238-241) for this event in Javanese History
- 1722-1723** **Group of 44 Javanese including Princes and Chief's sent to Ceylon.** Ref: Article by CH Mantara- p: 166 of Jubilee Book of Colombo Malay Cricket Club.
- 1723** **Chief Minister Danuraja was banished to Ceylon.** Ref : Page 160 of Jubilee book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1728** **Arya Mankunegara, a brother of king Pakubuwana banished to Ceylon by the Dutch.** Ref: Dr Husseinmiya's -Paper presented at the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic studies Beruwela in 1984- p: 10
- 1737** **Death of Susuna Mankurat Mas in Colombo, and his family sent back to Java.** Ref : Page 160 of Jubilee book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1743** **A Javanese Noble, Radini Adipati Nata kusuma was banished to Ceylon by the Dutch.** Ref: Dr Husseinmiya's Lost Cousins Page 45 (some historians gives this date as 1738)
- 1745** **Susuna Kuning - King of Java surrenders himself to Dutch and is banished to Ceylon.** Ref : Page 160 of Jubilee book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1761** **More troops sent to reinforce Malay troops in Ceylon.**
- 1763** **Formation of Malay company consisting of deportees and 31 slaves.** Ref: Dutch Political comment of 1786
- 1765** **Arrival of Malay battalion from Batavia led by Captain Baba Lye with the intention of capturing the Kandyan capital.** Ref: Article " History of Malay " by F E Gooneratne p: 160 in Malay Jubilee book.



- 1767 **Batara Gowa Amas Madina 11. the former King of Gowa was exiled to Ceylon by the Dutch.** Ref: Dr Hussainmiya Lost Cousins p: 44
- 1783 **Javanese Pandan Balie donates land in Wekanda, Colombo to build a Malay Mosque. The Mosque was built in 1786.** Ref: CH Mantara, Jubilee Book of Colombo Malay Cricket Club (p: 167)
- 1795 **The death of the King of Goa after 30yrs of life in exile in Ceylon.** Ref: Dr Hussainmiya's Lost Cousins (p: 44).
- 1798-1811 **The appointment of a Malay Committee by Frederick North, the first British Governor of Ceylon to inquire into the grievances of the Indonesian Princes and Noblemen.**
- 1803 **Capt. Noureddeen, Commander of Malays, executed by the Kandyan King for refusal to sever his allegiance to the British, and enter the Kandyan King's service.** Ref: p: 163 of Jubilee Book of Colombo Malay Cricket Club
- 1813 **Arrival of 413 men from Surabaya to join the Ceylon Malay Regiment during the governorship of Robert Brownrigg.** Ref: Dr. Hussainmiya's article "Exiles No Longer" in the publication Hemisphere
- 1816 **Arrival of 228 of Javanese soldiers and thier families to Ceylon from Semmreng and Gresik in Java.** Ref: Dr Hussainmiya's Lost cousins (p: 61)
- 1834-1841 **Migration of Malay's to Ceylon. Total of 332 Malay's migrated to Ceylon.** Ref: Dr Hussainmiya's Lost Cousins (p: 62).
- 1840 **Setting up recruiting depots in Penang and later in Singapore for Malays from the Malay Peninsula for Permanent settlement in Ceylon.** Ref: Dr Hussainmiya's Lost Cousins (p: 12)
- 1869 **Publishing of Alamat Lankapuri, a fortnightly Malay language paper by Baba Ounus Saldin in Colombo. Newspaper published in the Jawi Script.** Ref: Dr. Hussainmiya's article "Exiles No Longer" in the publication- Hemisphere
- 1872 **Formation of Colombo Malay Cricket club. The first ever Malay sports club in Ceylon.** Ref: Durham Saldin's paper presented at World Malay Symposium of 1985, titled "Malay Organisations and Social Movements in Sri Lanka"
- 1873 **The disbandment of the Ceylon Rifle regiment of Malays.** Ref: CH Mantara's article- Jubilee Book of Colombo Malay Cricket club
- 1922 **Formation of all Ceylon Malay Association. The patron being his Highness the Sultan of Johore. The first President being Mr. MK Saldin.** Ref: Jubilee Book of Colombo Malay Cricket Book of 1924
- 1924 **Election of first Malay, Dr TB Jayah to the legislative council.**
- 1924-1965 **A Malay was nominated to the legislative Council / Parliament except in the year 1952. Among those nominated were :- Dr TB Jayah -1924, Mr M K Saldin - 1931-36, Dr. M F Drahman -1956-60, Mr Zahierye Lye- 1960-65, Ref: Dr Hussainmiya's Lost Cousins p: 20-25**
- 1985 **Establishment of the Sri Lanka Malay Confederation abbreviated "SLAMAC" in English. The Malay name being Konfederasi Rakjat Melayu Lankapuri abbreviated "KORAMEL" . SLAMAC consists of 23 Malay organisation and a Presidium of 6 Malays.** Ref: Durham Saldins paper- "Malay Organisations and Social movements in Sri Lanka.
- 1985 **The 2nd World Malay Symposium- " Duniya Melayu 85 " was held in Colombo from 4th-6th August 1985. The President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency J R Jayawardene was the chief guest.**
- 1987 **Publication of the book " Lost Cousins " -the Malays of Sri Lanka by Dr Hussainmiya- a Sri Lankan Malay University Lecturer.**
- 1989 **Nomination of Mr MH Amit as a member of Parliament by the United National Party**

from the National list.

**20 Century General - Malays play a more important role in the economic and social development of Sri Lanka. The Malays of today include Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Accountants, Architects, Company Directors, University Lecturers, Administrators etc.**

Ref: Malay Directory , published in 1990 by the Sri Lanka Malay Association.

**Note** This is an extract of the Malay Directory, written by Tony. P. Miskin and published by the Sri Lanka Malay Association

## **THE MEMON COMMUNITY OF SRI LANKA**

### **Introduction**

The Memon Community are one of the many widely dispersed peoples of Asia across the globe. This erstwhile business community claim their roots from the state of Gujarat in Northern India and have migrated through time in search of greener pastures, settling down in many nations establishing their very own smaller Memon communities within these lands. They are found in very large numbers in the bustling business cities of

Karachi, Mumbai, Surat, Chennai, Dhoraji and Hyderabad in south Asia. Sizeable communities are also found in South Africa, particularly in Pretoria, Pietersburgh and Pietermaritzburg, and also in Burma, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Others are scattered across Europe, the UK, the USA and particularly in the western parts of Portugal.

The total Memon population across the world is estimated to approximately over 1 Million with the vast majority located in the Indian subcontinent. The breakdown is as follows:-

India - 550,000  
Pakistan - 415,000  
South Africa - 25,000  
United Kingdom - 22,000  
Sri Lanka - 6,000  
Burma = 5,000  
Bangladesh - 3,000

### **The Lohana Theory**

The Lohana Theory on the origin of the Memon community states that they were originally from the Hindu Merchant Community of Lohana's living in the Sind who were converted to Islam sometime circa 1423 in the early part of the fifteenth century. The story goes on to say that the conversion was carried out by a Muslim Saint and the community was given the name "Moomin", which means "believer" in Arabic, which then has evolved into the present day "Memon" name. No doubt this theory has many varied versions attached to it based on the fact that the community never kept written records of their history and culture during those times. Most of the versions of the varying stories were passed down from generation to generation through oral communication imbued with folklore for more spice and passion.

The Encyclopedia of Islam, a well known work on Islam and Muslim Communities across the globe published in London, states that the Memons are a trading community of Gujarat who claim to have embraced the religion of Islam around the 12th Century. They are said to have been converted to Islam from the trading Lohana and Kutch Bania castes living in Sind and Kutch either by a son or a descendant of the famous saint Abdul Qadir Jilani (Vol VI.1990). This statement seems to be derived from the original legend of the community published in the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency in the latter part of the 19th Century as follows:-

"Maulana Abdul Kadir Muhi-yud-din Gilani, the Saint of Saints, died at Baghdad in AD 1165 (H.561). On his deathbed he ordered one of his sons, Taj-ud-din, to settle in India and to display to its people the light of Islam.

In AD 1421 (H.838) Sayad Eusuf-ud-din Hadri, fifth in descent from Taj-ud-din, in a miraculous dream was ordered to set sail for Sindh and guide its people to the right way of Islam.

When Sayad Eusuf-ud-din reached Sind, its capital was Nagar-Thatta and its ruler was a chief of the Samma dynasty (AD.1351-1521) with the title of Markab Khan who received

Sayad Eusuf-ud-din with honor and treated him as his guest. At this time, Ma'nekji, the head of the eighty four nukhs or divisions of the Lohana community was in favor at the court of Markab Khan. Markab Khan became a follower of the Sayad and Ma'nekji with two of his three sons and 700 Lohana families followed their rulers example. Of the two sons of Ma'nekji, who became converts, Ravji was called Ahmed and Ravji's sons Sundarji and Hansraj were named Adam and Taj Muhammad. In their conversion, the saint changed the name of their community from Mota and Lohana to Mu'amin or Believers and investing Adam with a dress of honore, appointed him hereditary head of the new community with his seat at Wara near Thatta".

Many may ask the pertinent question as to from where the Bombay Gazetteer derived its narrative? The Gazetteer does mention that the source of the story is attributed to an Urdu booklet titled "Nuzhat-ul-Akbar" (aka the Abrajul Haq) written by one Sayad Amir-ud-din Nuzhat in 1873. Nuzhat himself claims to have been given the story by a rather obscure figure named Pir Buzurg Ali of Mundra in Kacch. The authors of the Bombay Gazetteer were however of the view that the story was probably true because it had been derived from three respectable sources, viz "the pedigree of the Holy Sayad Buzurg Ali; sanads, or patents, of the headship of the community conferred on Ma'nekji, the first Lohana convert to Islam and in the possession of Seth Shabena Bhuj, Manekji's descendantg in Bombay; Sanads, or Patents, in the possession of Joshi Bhojaji, a descendant of Hansraj, son of Ramani, the caste priest of the Lohanas at the time of their conversion".

## **Other Theories**

Besides the Lohana conjecture there are also many other alternate theories on the origins of the Memons. One, propounded by Abdul Rahman, holds that the Lohanas who converted to Islam were not an insignificant trading community, but rather rulers of Sind who had their capital at "Brahmanabad" or "City of Brahmins". They are said to have converted as Muhammad bin Qasim the Arab Conqueror of India arrived in that country in 712 AC.

Yet another, popularized by Naz Mongroli, holds that the Memons were originally not a Hindu but a Buddhist caste engaged in the weighing of precious stones and that their name is, in fact, derived from 'mai', meaning one who weighs and 'man', meaning precious stones. This caste is said to have converted to Islam upon Bis Qassim's victory over the Hindu King Dahir in the early 8th century.

Another theory, publicized by Muhammad Qassim Barla, holds that the Memon converts to Islam originated not from the Lohanas, but from some low caste Hindus settled down around the Sind and Kacch coasts who were given protection by their Muslim rulers at a spot between Makran and Sistan. These protected subjects became known as Ma'maum meaning 'protected' subsequently changing to Memon.

Finally, there is the theory postulated by Karimbaksh Khalid which holds that the Memons were originally Arabs hailing from Qa'tif near Ta'if in the Arabian Peninsular who belonged to the tribe of Banu Tamim. They are said to have constituted the right-wing of the army of the army of Bin Qassim, the Arab Conqueror of Sind known as Maymenah or "rightwingers" which designation later became Memon.

All the alternative theories, however, do not have as much credibility as the original Lohana theory on account of their lack of substantial evidence and inferior sources whose integrity is questionable.

### **'The Memons - Important Muslim minority of Sri Lanka'**

Hameed Karim Bhoja - DN Wed May 31, 2006

**Community:** The Memons of Sri Lanka constitute a small but important minority community in the island, numbering a mere 7000 persons in a nation of over 20 million. Their contribution to the national life of the country has nevertheless been significant.

They have contributed immensely to the economic life of the country, not only as importers and traders of various essential goods, but also as manufacturers and exporters of high quality garments that have today become a major source of foreign earnings.

They also have their own member of parliament, the Hussein Bhaila who presently serves as Deputy Minister of Plan Implementation under the UPFA Government and is in charge of all matters connected with the implementation of the Mahinda Chintanaya, President Mahinda Rajapaksa's vision and aspirations for National Development Programme.

#### **Early origins**

The Memons though now a Muslim people, trace their origins to a Hindu trading community known as the Lohanas who lived in Sind in present-day Pakistan. They are believed to have embraced Islam around the fifteenth century.

The story of their conversion finds mention in the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency as follows: "Maulana Abdul Kadir Muhi-yud-din Gilani, the Saint of Saints, died at Baghdad in A.D. 1165 (H.561). On his deathbed he ordered one of his sons, Taj-ud-din, to settle in India and display to its people the light of Islam.

In A.D. 1421 (H. 838) Sayad Eusu-uf-din Hadri, fifth in descent from Taj-ud-din, in a miraculous dream was ordered to set sail for Sindh and guide its people in the right way of Islam. When Sayad Eusuf-ud-din reached Sindh, its capital was Nagar - Thatta and its ruler was a chief of the Samma dynasty (A.D. 1351-1521) with the title of Markab Khan who received Sayad Eusuf-ud-din with honour and treated him as his guest.

At this time, Ma'nekji, the head of the eighty-four nukhs or divisions of the Lohana community was in favour at the court of Markab Khan. Markab Khan became a follower of the Sayad and Ma'nekji with two of his three sons and 700 Lohana families followed their ruler's example.

Of the two sons of Ma'nekji who became converts, Ravji was called Ahmed and Ravji's sons Sundarji and Hansraj were named Adam and Taj Muhamman. On their conversion, the saint changed the name of the community from Mota and Lohana to Mu'amin or Believers and investing Adam with a dress of honour, appointed him hereditary head of the new community with his seat at Wara near Thatta".

The Memons subsequently migrated southwards to the Kathiawad Peninsula of Gujarat where they formed settlements such as Kutiyana, Porbandar and Upleta. It is from this region that the Memons domiciled in Sri Lanka have their origins. The early Memons who resorted to Sri Lanka did so to engage in textile trading.

They would purchase textiles from India and sell them locally as they had a good demand here. The first Memon arrival in the island is said to have been an individual named Abdul Rahman who arrived here in 1870. This early migrant also known as Manna Seth began here as an itinerant peddler of textiles in Jaffna before settling in Pettah and building up a considerable business.

With time, Memons originating from Kutiyana and other parts of Gujarat had begun to steadily resort to the island for business purposes, but it was only the men who came here.

The women were left behind in their homes in Kathiawad. However, with the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, those Memons who had their businesses and families here became citizens. They looked upon Sri Lanka as their own country and set about giving their best to it.

### **Social Life**

The Memons are on the whole a religious community and have established mosques and madrasas in many parts of the island for the benefit of the larger Islamic fraternity. They also have their own mosque, the Memon Hanafi Mosque in Pettah, where Friday sermons are delivered in Urdu language with which many of them are familiar. They also have their own Madrasa, Faiz-e-Raza established a little over ten years ago to meet the religious needs of the community.

The Memons, unlike the majority of the country's Muslims who follow the Shafi School of Islamic jurisprudence are zealous adherents of the Hanafi School of law founded by Imam Abu Hanifah. They have their own Quazi or judge who settles civil disputes according to this school. The Memons also have a distinct cultural identity, which closely resembles that of other Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. Their Memon language is an Indo-Aryan tongue believed to have derived from Sindhi, though heavily overlaid with Gujarati elements. Many however understand Urdu, which serves as a lingua franca among the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Even the practices relating to the major events of life such as marriage closely resemble those prevailing among Indian Muslims. These include the Viaji Raja, the formal seeking of the bride's consent shortly before the marriage ceremony and other prenuptial practices such as the Mehendi ceremony where a red dye Mehendi (*Lawsonia inermis*) is applied on the bride's hands and feet to form beautiful designs. Even the attire is similar. Men prefer the long shirt and ijar (pyjama) while women commonly wear the shalwa-khameez, a most feminine two-piece garment of Indian origin.

The womenfolk are extremely fond of typical Indian jewellery. Thus the Memons could be said to represent a typical Indian migrant community who have jealously preserved their traditional way of life. Memon Association

It is opportune to mention here that the Memon Association of Sri Lanka (MASL) today celebrates its 50th Anniversary. The Association formed in 1956 by well-known Memon personalities of the day such as Prof. Rauf Pasha, Dr. Ibrahim Dangra and Haji Usman Bhaila. It was then known as the Memon Association of Ceylon and based in Hulftsdorp.

Today, as the Memon Association of Sri Lanka celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is worthy to mention the immense contribution made towards community by Dr. A. A. M. Haroon, the present President of the Association and his young and dynamic team, particularly for their bold decision to host the 4th World Memon Conference held in Colombo from May 19-21.

In 1907, the leading Memon firm in Colombo was that of Janoo Hassan, with headquarters in India and branches all over India and Burma (Wright 1907: pp 494).

### Family Names of the Memon Community

Abdul Ghany	Bhutta	Helablivala	Mandhai	Sattar
Abdul Karim	Botcha	Hingora	Mandhu	Sayani
Abdul Rahim	Budhani	Iliyas	Mandwawala	Shivani
Abdul Sattar	Chalchal	Jamku	Mansuri	Sikiladha
Admani	Chana	Jardhi	Masidiya	Silat
Ali Mohamed	Chatni	Kaaba	Mayariwala	Suriya
Bafia	Chippa	Kaloodi	Mengrani	Surti
Bagha	Chomasa	Kandhoi	Moti	Sutarviya
Bandhani	Coli	Kasala	Moulana	Tar
Bandhukra	Dadia	Katliya	Mundiya	Thowfeek
Batviya	Dangra	Katchi	Nagariya	Vaid
Batwawala	Dhaga	Katkodia	Noor Mohamed	Vali Mohamed
Behera	Dhandh	Katvaliya	Padiyar	Varindh
Bahabhu	Dhedhi	Khakhu	Paghi	Zandula
Bhaila	Eliyas	Khiyani	Pakhali	Zolka
Bharda	Fatani	Kutaya	Patel	
Bhatki	Fazal	Laheri	Radhiya	
Bhiriya	Fudha	Lakhana	Rah	
Bhoja	Gadar	Lakhani	Rahila	
Bhukan	Gadit	Machchar	Ranawaya	
Bhundi	Godil	Machchiwala	Rangila	
Bhungra	Gumra	Maghoora	Sami	
Bhuri	Hadfa	Manchala	Sangani	

## THE BOHRA COMMUNITY

### Introduction

Of the six main Bohra firms in Ceylon, the oldest was that of the Carimjee Jafferjee family. The firm had been in Sri Lanka since 1831 with branches all over India and even extending to Mauritius. The Company exported all types of local produce and imported rice, sugar, flour, pepper, and groceries. The leading Bohra firm of that time, however, was E G Adamaly, owned by the brother, E M Adamaly, G M Adamaly, and A M Alibhoy. It was the largest importer of rice, sugar, flour, matches, kerosene and grain, with its import of rice in 1905 amounting to 400,000 bags a year. The firm owned extensive property in Colombo, Kandy, and Nuwara Eliya, including the 300 acre Fairfield Estate of Rubber and Tea in Avissaewella. With its *buggalows*, the firm did extensive trade with the Maldives and a barter trade with the Nicobar and other Islands in the Indian Ocean. From 1920 to 1925, a family member, E G Adamaly, was one of the "Indian Members" of the Legislative Council.

The other important Bohra firms were, Hebtulabhoy, Jeevunjee, Noorbhai, Dawoodbhoy, and Moosajee. The Hebtulabhoy family in Sri Lanka goes back to 1864, when a Bohra from Kutch, Sheikh hebtulabhoy, started a business in the Pettah. The firm, called Sheikh Abdulabhoy AbdulAli, was a family business managed by Hebtulabhoy and his sons, dealing in food imports. A few years later, Hebtulabhoy, expanded his business and his two vessels traded in India and the Maldives. He invested in property in India and Sri Lanka, which included premises in the Pettah at Fourth Cross Street, worth Rs 27,000 in 1897, 3 acres of land on Bambalapitiya Road worth Rs. 20,000, 23 acres of coconut land, 18 acres of cinnamon, 5 acres of paddy, and unplanted land. In 1896 he purchased 1/2 acre next to the Wellawatte Railway Station. After the founders death in 1897, his sons continued the business. One son, Moosbhai Hebtulabhoy started his own firm M S H AbdulAli, in 1907. The same year, the three other brothers, MohamedAli, TyebAli and AbdulHussein, started a firm under the name M S Hebtulabhoy, importing food and hardware and exporting local produce, especially concentrating on tea and breaking the monopoly on tea exports (Island Mar 14 1982).

Among Bohra Merchants were A H S Jeevunjee, who had branches in India and the Maldives. This firm exported tea, arecanuts, coconut oil, and other local produce, and imported dried fish, grain, cereals, and flour from India and Burma, including 200,000 bags of rice a year. Another leading importer cum exporter and General Merchant with contacts all over Asia was the firm of T A J Noorbhai, which exported local produce to many parts of the world and was one of the largest importers of grain, textiles, and cotton manufactured garments. Noorbhai, who was described in 1907 as a "liberal supporter of schools and charities, and one of the best known figures in Colombo commercial circles", also owned sailing vessels and pioneered steam ships between Sri Lanka and the Maldives; He had also once owned the Wellawatte Spinning & Weaving Mills (Wright, 1907: pp 495-504).

M S Hebtulabhoy AbdulAli was a nother leading importer of rice, curry stuffs and sugar, who had a prosperous trade (started in Colombo by his father and uncle), exporting local produce to Africa, Mauritius, Singapore and HongKong, where he had trading contracts. He was also the owner of tea, rubber, and cinnamon plantations.



Other Bohra merchants and export import traders in Colombo around 1900 were A E S Jeevunjee, a large importer of rice for the plantations, M M Ibramjee, Hassanaly Dawoodbhoy, and H M Moosajee (ibid: pp 496 & 502).

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## **A spiritual togetherness**

Sunday Times January 28 2007:

With the leader of the Bohra community, Dai-UI-Mutlaq, Dr. Syedna Mohammad Burhannudin now in Sri Lanka to observe the Ashara Mubarak period, the Bohras here have opened their homes to their brothers and sisters worldwide

**By Smriti Daniel**

On January 9, this year, one man made a decision that would affect the immediate future of thousands of people all over the world; a decision that would have them packing their bags, shutting down their businesses and booking their tickets – all in preparation to spend 10 days in a foreign, possibly unfamiliar country. Entire communities of Bohras from near and far, numbering in the thousands would, within weeks, be on a plane to Sri Lanka. Finally gathered together, on January 19, they would begin the observance of Ashara Mubarak.

A Burhani guard in action

The Ashara Mubarak period described as one of the most important and holy events in the Islamic calendar, commemorates the martyrdom of Prophet Mohammad's grandson, Imam Hussain. Every year the first 10 days of Moharram, (the first month of the Islamic calendar) is spent in mourning, in recognition of Imam Hussain's sacrifice. After 10 days comes Ashurah, the actual anniversary of his passing in the Battle of Karbala. Meaning, 'the tenth', Ashura is a day of voluntary fasting. This year, Ashara Mubarak began on the 19th, and Ashura will be observed today, January 28th.

At the head of the Dawoodi Bohra community is the 52nd Dai-UI-Mutlaq, Dr. Syedna Mohammad Burhannudin. Chosen by his predecessor, the current Dai-UI-Mutlaq is the very heart of the Bohra community. Each year, he picks a city in which to commemorate Ashura Mubarak, be it Houston or Ahmedabad...this year it was Colombo.

"We were all in tears...finally we could see him arriving in our country, stepping onto our soil," says a media spokesperson for the local Bohra community, explaining that it has been eight years since His Holiness last came here.

When the Dai-UI-Mutlaq's decision was made known, Colombo's 2,500 strong Bohra community immediately swung into action. They knew that ahead of them lay a gargantuan task – they had to prepare to host not only the man they most deeply revered but also the many thousands of faithful believers who would follow him to Sri Lanka.

The local Bohra community are - as is traditional - exemplary hosts, and have arranged transportation, accommodation, and food for all their visitors over the entire period of

Ashara Mubarakata at their own expense. Today hotels all across the city, and even up to Beruwala, are filled with visitors. In addition, the 800 odd Bohra households scattered across Colombo are on average playing host to 20 people each. A fleet of buses transports people to and fro, while a train has also been placed at their service. "All we say is 'Come, His Holiness is here, come, and we will provide everything for you,'" explains the spokesperson, adding that "thousands have come from all parts of the world and thousands more are expected." This is tradition, but making this operation smooth and efficient are the wonders of modern technology. "Everything is computerised, that's why it's so easy for us," explains the spokesperson. She adds that "even before the announcement, you have to go online [the Bohras have their own well-organized website] and register that you intend to come for this year's Ashara, no matter what country it is in." Key to the registration process is the number on the I.D card that all Bohras carry.

Great attention is paid to detail. A temporary table erected at the airport holds a welcoming committee. Arriving Bohra guests are asked to swipe their I.D card through a machine at the airport as soon as they arrive, automatically registering their presence in Sri Lanka in the computer. "Now we know they are in the country – and now that they are here, they are our responsibility," explains the spokesperson. From the airport transport is arranged to take them to the old passport office near Majestic City, where the organizers have set up offices. Here, they are allocated accommodation and provided transport to their hotels.

Bohras congregate atleast twice every day for prayers at the Bohra Mosque in Adamaly Place, Colombo 4. Approximately 5,000 can be seated in the mosque, and the organisers have extended the seating area further, erecting several tents with speakers adjoining the main building. A comprehensive medical centre, with over a 100 doctors on call is just down the road, while two large sheds on Marine Drive are used at meal times. Teams from all over the world that include cooks and security personnel (known as Burhani guards), work in sync to meet the not inconsiderable needs of the gathering.

Many see the Dai-Ul-Mutlaq's visit here as a beacon of hope amidst the escalating conflict. "We never expected His Holiness to choose Sri Lanka, because of all the trouble in the country," says N. Khanvohy reverently, "but he says there will be peace."

"Deedar – that what people come for," says Zueb Yusuf Ali, explaining that he draws sustenance and inspiration simply from looking upon the countenance of His Holiness. Many feel the same, choosing to go wherever His Holiness decides to observe Ashara Mubarakata. "I have been following him for many years now," says F. Khilawala. She and her family will stay not only for the required 10 days, but like many others may extend their time here to take in some of the sights and do a little shopping.

Understandably, this annual gathering serves to bind an already close community even closer together. "25 officially, but I have a 100 people coming over for tea every single day," says a delighted Umme Salama, whose house seems to be a hub of activity. M. Thayabally reveals that he originally knew only one of the 20 people who would be living with him, however, time and proximity has taken care of that. "These are people from all over the world, they unite and get to know people from other parts of the world," he explains.

In a world where people are cautious about opening the door to strangers, a strong sense of community seems innate to the Bohras. Young children, in sequin laden caps,

the women in their colourful two piece ridas decorated with patterns and lace, and the men in their white and gold topis seem to mingle with the ease of long familiarity. Somehow, they seemed to have attained an enviable balance, where tradition blends into modernity, and faith withstands the test of time.

### **Who are the Dawoodi Bohras?**

The Dawoodi Bohra community has its roots in the west Indian state of Gujarat and are strong Ismaili Shi'a belonging to the Fatimid tradition of Islam. The word Bohra is derived from a word of Gujarati origins, meaning "to trade" and most Bohras were in fact businessmen, though in recent years they have spread out to pursue numerous other professions. Despite being of a number of different nationalities, Bohras all speak Dawat-ni-zaban – a dialect of Gujarati.

With an estimated world wide population of nearly a million, the Dawoodi Bohras are reputed to be the best organized and wealthiest of all Muslim communities. The Bohras regard their leader, the Dai-Ul-Mutlaq as their touchstone for guidance in all aspects of life. Interestingly, Bohras consider loyalty to the land they reside as part of their faith.

### **Family Names of Dawoodhi Bohra's of Sri Lanka**

Abbasbhoy
Adamjee Lukmanjee
Akbarally
Davoodbhoy
FazalAbbas
Fazleali
Hebtulabhoy
Jafferjee
Jeevunjee
Miajee
Moosajee
Nathani
Rehmanjee
Shethwala

**Muslim Personalities in Sri Lanka,  
then and now  
Part I**

**People**

Compiled by  
**Fazli Sameer**

A revised and updated sequel to  
**“Personages of the Past (Moors, Malays and other Muslims of the past in Sri Lanka”**

(First published by the Moors’ Islamic Cultural Home in 1982)

by

**Mohamed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi**  
(paternal grandfather of the compiler)

**To Dad, Mum & Aunty Shireen**

This work is based on "Personalities of the Past", originally compiled by Mohamed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi in 1982, being 50 years of his extensive study and research. This revised and updated version, undertaken by his grandson, Fazli Sameer, has been re-compiled in order to accommodate and include another 30 years of additional research and study by him on the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

A separate section on Muslim Businesses and Trade, of old, and Muslim members of Legislative Councils, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Municipal Councils, Professionals, and significant contributors to the building and establishment of Mosques, Schools, and Muslim Burial Grounds, has also been added.

If not for the tiring efforts of these researchers into the lives of past Muslim personalities many of these valuable facts would have easily been lost in the limbo of so many forgotten things.

Title: Muslim Personalities in Sri Lanka, then and now

Compiled by: Fazli Sameer

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## CONTENTS

A. M. M. ABDUL CADER .....	107
M.A.S. ABDUL CADER .....	109
M C ABDUL CADER 1879 (?) -1946.....	111
ABDUL LATIFF, Abdul Majeed 1932-1987.....	114
ABDUL RAHMAN .....	116
Noordeen Hajjar Abdul Caffoor Hajjar (NDH Abdul Caffoor).....	116
Noordeen Hajjar Muhammad Abdul Cader .....	119
M C ABDUL RAHMAN .....	123
Honourable Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman.....	123
M. S. ABOO BAKR .....	129
M. L. M. ABOOSALLY.....	130
ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD ibn ABDUL MALIK ibn THUFAIL AI-MADANI.....	131
ADAMJEE LUKMANJEE.....	132
ADMANI.....	133
AHMED ARABI PASHA of Egypt.....	135
MAAS THALEP AKBAR .....	145
Maas Thajoon Akbar, KC 1880-1944.....	145
SULTAN ALBDIN (of Koniya, Turkey - arrived in Ceylon in 800 AD).....	148
Periya Mudali Maraikar of Beruwela.....	148
Basthamiyar Lebbe Maesthiriyar Meera Lebbe Maesthiriyar .....	148
Meera Lebbe Maestriar Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar (Shekadi Marikar) .....	149
First Sri Lankan Moor Lady on Supreme Court Bench .....	152
Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar (Shekhadi Marikar) .....	153
Cassim Lebbe Marikar (Casie Lebbe Marikar Mudaliyar) .....	154
Cassim Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Ali Marikar .....	156
Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez (ILM Abdul Azeez) .....	158
M S ALIF.....	161
Sir ABDUL W M AMEER .....	162
ASSEN ALIYAR MUHAMMAD NAGOOR MEERA .....	164
A M A AZEEZ .....	166
The best of CV Gooneratne and AHM Azwer.....	179
AI Haj M A BAKEER MARKAR.....	182
Deshamanya AI Haj Bakeer Markar .....	185
BHAILA .....	188
BHIRIYA .....	190
BHOJA.....	190
BHUTTA.....	196
I A CADER .....	196
SITHY CADER.....	198
MUHAMMAD CASSIM.....	199
Seyadu Abdul Raheem 1921-1989 .....	199
CHANA .....	199
DADIA .....	200
DANGRA .....	200
Dr. ABDUL RASHEED DEANE .....	201
P T S DEEN .....	203
ZACKY DEEN .....	204
DHEDHI.....	205
.....	206
AI Haj Dr M P DRAHAMAN MP, JP, MBE .....	206

Fathima YASMIN FAIZ (nee) ANVER .....	208
FATANI .....	208
Aunty FATHUMA of Galle .....	211
M T A FURKHAN.....	211
GADIT (CHOMASA) .....	212
GADAR.....	212
GODIL .....	213
HADFA.....	214
A C S HAMEED .....	214
ASSENA MARIKAR HAMID .....	216
T M HANAN .....	216
HALEEM ISHAK .....	219
NAGOOR MEERA MOHAMED HANIFFA .....	225
M.C.A. HASSAN .....	226
Sheikh HASSANALLY ESUFALLY .....	228
AVUDUCANDU MARIKAR HASSEN (Ossen) LEBBE .....	228
WAPU MARIKAR HASSIM .....	230
HEBTULABHOY.....	232
The Akbar Brothers Story.....	239
All-conquering Akbar Brand .....	240
M A M HUSSAIN & his Mansion called "Mumtaz" .....	242
AMEENA HUSSEIN .....	245
HINGORA.....	247
'Araby' IBRAHIM.....	248
HUSAIN J IBRAHIM.....	250
Life and times of Alhaj H.S. Ismail .....	251
Al Qutb Al-Sheikh ISMAIL AI-YAMANI AI-SAILANI - Family.....	254
Muhammad Cassim Muhammad Ismail .....	255
IZZADEEN MUHAMMAD QC 1919-1977 .....	255
JAFFERJEE .....	256
JUSTICE M JAMEEL.....	257
UNOUS LEBBE MUHAMMAD JAMEEL .....	257
JANDULAH (CHOMASA).....	258
RADEN THURTHO PERMA JAYAH .....	258
Tuan Branudeen Jayah, Dr. 1890-1960.....	258
Mohammed Murad Jayah .....	271
Dr. M C M KALEEL .....	273
AL HAJ S M KAMALDEEN .....	274
MUHAMMAD HASSIM MUHAMMAD KAMIL .....	278
KANDHOI .....	279
E A KAREEM .....	279
AHMEDU LEBBE KARIAPPER.....	279
THAMBY NEINDA KARIAPPER.....	280
KASSIM.....	282
KATLIYA.....	283
KHAKHU .....	284
Y M KHALID.....	284
A. C. M. LAFIR .....	286
A L M LAFIR JP.....	290
MUHAMMAD JUNAID MUHAMMAD LAFIR .....	292
Al Haj M. LAFIR CASSIM .....	296
LAKHANY .....	297

<b>LYE FAMILY HISTORY .....</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>B ZAHIERE LYE .....</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>AI Haj AHMED HUSSAIN MACAN MARKAR.....</b>	<b>301</b>
Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar (AH): his life was exemplary.....	301
Sithy Macan Markar, wife of Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar .....	302
<b>MADAR LEBBE MUHAMMAD MACKEEN .....</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>MAGHOORA.....</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>T. H. MAHAMOOD .....</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>SINNA LEBBE MAHMOOD HAJIAR 1868 - 1940 .....</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>ABOBUCKER ISMAIL LEBBE MARIKAR 1907-1992 .....</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>MARIKAR of Kandy.....</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>CHINNA LEBBE MARIKAR.....</b>	<b>310</b>
Ismail Lebbe Marikar Sultan Marikar .....	310
<b>HAIJIE MARIKAR (Wairooshi).....</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>KASILA MARIKKAR.....</b>	<b>311</b>
Kasila Marikkar + Mohideen Patumuttu Natchiya.....	311
C.A.S.Marikkar (Sinhala Marikar) 1911-1970 .....	311
<b>M E MARIKAR.....</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>T C H MARIKAR .....</b>	<b>314</b>
AYESHA MARIKAR .....	316
IBRAHIM KUTTY & ABDUL KHADER OF KANNUR .....	316
H O L MARIKAR.....	317
<b>MUHAMMAD LEBBE SIDDI LEBBE MARIKAR .....</b>	<b>320</b>
<b>NOTARISLAGE AWOO LEBBE MARIKAR.....</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>SHEIKH JAMALUDEEN SALIHUE MARIKKAR.....</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>MEERA LEBBE SLEMA* LEBBE COMOSTER 1817 .....</b>	<b>322</b>
Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar Hajjar (#42 Main Street, Pettah) .....	322
Sahib Doray Naina-Marikar Hajjar .....	323
<b>TONY PREENA MISKIN - FAIQS, FIQS (SL), ARMIT. ....</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>ZAHEER MOHAMED.....</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>Maththicham SALEEM LEBBE MUHAMMAD THAMBY Vidane (1819-1884) .....</b>	<b>328</b>
Muhammed Thamby Samsudheen Vithane-Arachchi alias Dheen Arachchiar (1860 - 1915) of Negombo. ....	329
Yoosoof Lebbe Vidane – of Negombo .....	329
Omardeen Police Vidane d 1921 of Negombo .....	329
Proctor Ismail Dheen JP (1894 – 1968) of Negombo.....	329
Proctor Samsudeen Abdul Raheeman JPUM (1896-1965) of Negombo. ....	330
Al Haj M. Ali. M. A. Hassen JP (1903-1997) of Weweldeniya.....	330
Marikar Abdul Razak Vidane of Negombo.....	330
Yoosoof Lebbe Mubarak Vidane of Negombo.....	330
Omardeen Abdul Wahab Vidane of Negombo.....	330
Mrs Safa Abdulla Ismail (1914 - 2007) of Puttalam .....	330
Proctor H. S. Ismail (1901-1974) of Puttalam .....	331
Mr. Anis Sheriff JP (1922 - 2003) of Negombo.....	331
Dr. M. Thassim Abdulla (1926) of Negombo.....	331
Advocate Kaleel Raheeman (1933- 1998) of Negombo. ....	331
Mrs. Fareeda Abdul Cader Raheeman (1939) of Negombo.....	331
Proctor Mahroof JPUM (1919-1990) of Negombo.....	331
Dr. Rifdhy Dheen (1942) of USA.....	331
Mr. Abdul Raheem. M. Rafeek JP (1927-1989) of Warakapola,.....	332
Mr. Saleem Marikar (1925) of Negombo .....	332
Mr. Ismaildeen Marikar (1941) of Mount Lavinia .....	332



Mr. S. M. Sabry FCA (1940-2008) of Ratmalana .....	332
Mr. S. L. M.Farook (1937- 1996) of Mawanella.....	332
Dr. M. Shareef M. Mihlar JP (1946) of Warakapola .....	332
Mr. M. A. Caesar Reyan (1947) of Katugastota .....	332
Mr. Ajward Cassim (1955-1995) of Belgrade. ....	333
<b>MUNNA HASSAN NAINA LEBBE .....</b>	<b>333</b>
The Ancestors of Abdul Cader Sheikh Muhammad Ajward of Matara .....	333
<b>Colonel MUTHALIF .....</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>NAGRIYA .....</b>	<b>338</b>
<b>Al-Alim NAINA-MARIKAR Khaleefathul Khadiry.....</b>	<b>339</b>
<b>M I M NALEEM HAJIAR .....</b>	<b>342</b>
<b>FIROZ NILAM .....</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>O'DEANE .....</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>ODUMA LEBBE MARIKAR .....</b>	<b>349</b>
Haji Sir Muhammad Macan-Markar Effendi.....	349
<b>Alim ODUMA LEBBE MARIKAR AHMED LEBBE MARIKAR (Millionaire) .....</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>PATEL.....</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>RADEN SINGHA NOORI .....</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>Genealogy of Malays exposed .....</b>	<b>354</b>
<b>RAHILA .....</b>	<b>356</b>
<b>RANGILA .....</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>GULAMHUSSEIN H REIMOO .....</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>MEERA LEBBE MUHAMMAD REYAL .....</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>S H M RISHAN.....</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>FAHIMA SAHABDEEN.....</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>A perceptive script-writer - Sunday Observer Dec 30 2007 .....</b>	<b>366</b>
<b>BABA OUNOOS SALDIN 1830-1906.....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>MASHMOON SALDIN (LYE).....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>M.S.M. SALEEM.....</b>	<b>370</b>
<b>SALIE (Australian) .....</b>	<b>372</b>
<b>Brigadier T S B SALLY CSR.....</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>MUHAMMAD SAMEER.....</b>	<b>377</b>
Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi .....	377
<b>MUHAMMAD THAHIR SAMEER.....</b>	<b>380</b>
<b>SANGANI .....</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>SHABIR SANGANI .....</b>	<b>384</b>
<b>SEGU PILLAI MARIKAR.....</b>	<b>385</b>
Al Haj M.A.M.A.Hassen JP (1903-1997) of Hassen Villa Weveldeniya .....	385
Mr. M.L.Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala .....	385
<b>SHAMSI LEBBE MARIKAR.....</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>SHEIKH MOHIDEEN.....</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>SHEIKH MARIKAR .....</b>	<b>387</b>
Wapu Marikar Hassim .....	387
<b>KHATEEB SHEIKH OMAR (of Yamani) (aka Lebbe Sinne Lebbe) .....</b>	<b>388</b>
Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Abdul Latiff (Levve Sinna Levve) .....	388
<b>SHEIQ FAREED - I.....</b>	<b>390</b>
Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar 1829-1925 .....	390
Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman 1868-1933.....	395
Sir Razik Fareed Kt. OBE, JP UM (1893-1984) .....	399
The women who influenced Sir Razik's Family .....	405
<b>A M SHERIFF of Kattankudy.....</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>Amir Arslan SHERIFF.....</b>	<b>407</b>

<b>CASSIM SHERIFF</b> .....	<b>409</b>
<b>JAMEEL SHERRIFFDEEN</b> .....	<b>410</b>
<b>M A M SHUKRY</b> .....	<b>411</b>
<b>SILAT</b> .....	<b>413</b>
<b>SINNA LEBBE MAHMOOD Hajjar (1868-1940)</b> .....	<b>413</b>
<b>SINNE LEBBE MARIKAR SAHIB DORAI</b> .....	<b>414</b>
Sahib Dorai Haji Ismail Effendi .....	415
Travels of Haji Ismail Effendi in 1884 .....	416
<b>SAYANI</b> .....	<b>424</b>
<b>SINGA LAXANA</b> .....	<b>426</b>
<b>SOMAR</b> .....	<b>426</b>
<b>SULAIMAN ALIM</b> .....	<b>427</b>
<b>MEEGAHAYATA GEDERA GURUNANSELAGE UDUMA LEBBE</b> .....	<b>429</b>
<b>MUHAMMAD UVAIS SULTAN BAWA</b> .....	<b>430</b>
<b>ISMAIL LEBBE MARIKAR SULTAN MARIKAR</b> .....	<b>431</b>
<b>SURIYA</b> .....	<b>432</b>
<b>SUTARIYA</b> .....	<b>432</b>
<b>THOWFEEQ</b> .....	<b>433</b>
<b>POOTHAN BOOTHIL UMBICHCHY</b> .....	<b>433</b>
<b>PEACE OFFICER UNUS of Nelundeniya 1845-1898</b> .....	<b>434</b>
Peace Officer (Muladani) U. I. M. Ismail (1871-1918) of Warakapola.....	435
Mr. U. I. Abdul Samad – 2d of Nelundeniya .....	436
U. I. M. Abdul Razzak Town Arachchi (1885-1972) of Nelundeniya .....	436
A. R. L. S. Abdul Cader Lebbe Mathicham (1882- 1954) of Warakapola .....	437
Mr. M. I. M. Usman (1899 - 1957) of Warakapola. ....	437
Mr. M. I. M. Usuf (1903-1972) of Warakapola.....	437
Mr. M. I. M. Haneefa (1906 - 1958) of Warakapola.....	437
Mr. M. I. M. Shareef (1913-1968) of Warakapola.....	438
Mr. S. A. C. L. M. Shaheed (1912-1984) of Warakapola.....	438
Mr A. H. L. Abdul Cader of Colombo .....	438
Mr. A. L. M. Thawus JP (1930) of Thulhiriya .....	438
Dr. M. Shareef M. Mihlar JP (1946) of Warakapola. ....	438
Mrs. Fareeda Abdul Cader Raheeman (1939) of Negombo.....	439
<b>YUSUF LEBBE IDROOS LEBBE MARIKAR Hajjar</b> .....	<b>440</b>
<b>M S M ZAHEER</b> .....	<b>441</b>
<b>MUHAMMAD LEBBE MARIKAR ZAINUDEEN Hajjar, MMC</b> .....	<b>441</b>
<b>YASMIN ZAROOK</b> .....	<b>443</b>
<b>ZHOLKA</b> .....	<b>445</b>
<b>COLEND A MARIKAR MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR, Dr</b> .....	<b>445</b>

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## **A. M. M. ABDUL CADER**



Abdul Majid Muhammed Abdul Cader was the founder of two well known business establishments in the Pettah, within the city of Colombo as follows:-

### **A.M.M.Abdul Cader West End Drapery Stores**

He was born on the 14th of July 1888 in Messenger Street, also in the city of Colombo, and belonged to one of the leading families of Ceylonese merchants who had their business establishments in Main Street, Colombo.

He had his primary education at St Paul's English School, Colombo - at that time one of the foremost training and preparatory school - particularly for Wesley College, which was located during that period, in the Pettah.

At the age of fifteen, he showed a reluctance to proceed further and ended his studies and joined a well established firm specializing in men's clothing where he acquired practical knowledge of management and became an experienced assistant in the trade.

When he reached the age of twenty-one, he felt he had become proficient in this trade and decided to stand on his own.

With the help of his maternal grandmother who provided him sufficient funds to serve as a nucleus with which to commence his new enterprise, he bought the entire stock-in-trade in the premises, No 101, Hameedia Building, Main Street, and in this way laid the foundation for his independent business venture on the 14th of July 1909. It is no flattery to state that the retail business of the firm grew and expanded considerably and attracted to itself a variety of customers from all parts of the island.

On the first of September, 1922 he bought premises No 122 in Main Street, Pettah and moved in with a change of name in the business which he now named West End Drapery Stores.

In September 1927, he bought the entire stock-in-trade at No 114, Third Cross Street, Pettah and began a Builder's Hardware business under his own name.

The firm West End Drapery Stores was turned into a private limited liability company in 1944 with him as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

He travelled widely through the Middle East, Turkey, Europe and Great Britain.

On one of his business trips, he had the good fortune to meet Kemal Ataturk founder of modern Turkey.

Besides his business interests, he was deeply interested in the social amelioration of the Ceylon Moors.

He made philanthropic donations to schools, orphanages and other institutions.

Among the donations, he gifted a block of prime land at Messenger Street on which the present Masjid Muhiyadeen Thakiya has been constructed.

His other known gifts included a fully equipped Dental Institute to Zahira College and a well equipped Billiard Table to the Moors Sports Club.

After an illness of a very short duration, he passed to his rest on the 14th of July 1949 which was not only his 61st birth anniversary but also the 40th anniversary of the founding of his business enterprise.

A M M Abdul Cader was married to Howla Umma Madar Lebbe, daughter of S L M Madar Lebbe. (aka "Thadian" Madar Nana) General Merchant & Landed Proprietor and Habiba Umma Ossen Lebbe Marikar. His wifes paternal ancestor was Yousoof Lebbe Marikar, a famous Pearl merchant in Ceylon. Abdul Cader's parents were Abdul Majeed Mohideen Lebbe and Pathumuthu Avoo Lebbe Marikar. He had two daughters and two sons. The sons were Mansoor Abdul Cader and Muhammad Fuard' Abdul Cader.

Mansoor Abdul Cader has two sons and one daughter. The oldest, **Muhammad Farid Abdul Cader** was married to Mehfuza Ariff, who passed away in 2008. The second son, **Abdul Majeed Abdul Cader** is married to Ilham Muhammad. The daughter, **Ummu Habeeba Abdul Cader** is married to Muhammad Jazeed Ariff, brother of Mehfuza Ariff, and son of the AJM Ariff.

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## **M.A.S. ABDUL CADER**

<http://www.geocities.com/abdulcaderfamily/f0.htm>

**BIRTH:** Seyed Abdul Cader, son of Muduney-Adappayaleygedara Abdul Rahuman Lebbe "Maththisam" (Mosque trustee) was born on 16th November, 1896 at Akurana, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

**FAMILY:** He was the third child and second son in the family of five , the eldest being Mohamed Cassim Marikkar of Akurana. The other three were female.

**EDUCATION:** Seyed Abdul Cader received his education at Akurana Govt School in the Tamil Medium. Later he attended Sri Pushpadana Night school and studied English there. He possessed a very command of the Tamil language and was very proficient in English as well as in Sinhalese. He attended Quran Madhrasa and learnt to read the Holy Quran according to ' Thajweed ' system of recital. He also possessed a very good knowledge of the Islamic Law..

**MARRIAGE:** He married Balkis Nachchiya the second daughter of Pangaragammanagedara Mahmud Lebbe of Neerella, Melchenagama of Akurana.

**CAREERS:** He successfully ran a textile establishment. Along with this business he managed to open a Receiving Post Office with the permission of the Postal Department. Since then he had been known and called as

"Post Master". After much persuasion and show of interest he made the Postal Dept to upgrade the Receiving Office to the status of "B" Grade Sub Post Office which was ceremonially declared open by Hon. Sir John Kotalawala at Akurana town in 1940's. Thus M.A.S. Abdul Cader became the first Sub Post Master of Akurana. Subsequently this Sub Post Office was upgraded to the "B" level and then to "A" Grade Sub Post Office. He saw to it that telephone facilities were provided to this Sub Post Office around 1952. The people of Akurana as well as those of the surrounding areas appreciated his services as the Sub Post Master. He was always helpful to the poor, the needy and the sick.

**CHILDREN:** Six children were born of him and his beloved wife Balkis Nachchiya. Four of them were boys and two were girls. He saw to it that his children received the best of education. His eldest son Mohamed Zubair passed out of the University of Ceylon in 1958 as an Electrical Engineer - the first Engineer and Science Graduate of Akurana. Two of his other sons, Mohamed Mubarak and Mohamed Zuhyle, obtained Degrees in Arts from the University whilst the other, Mohamed Mohideen, passed out as a Specialist English Trained Teacher in 1962 - the first such teacher of Akurana.

He was an ardent follower of Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W.) saying "EDUCATION IS AN INDESTRUCTIBLE TREASURE". His endeavour to educate his own children had a strong effect on the grand-children of his wife's sister - his immediate neighbour. They were so influenced that one of these girls passed out as a Civil Engineer and another as a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Ceylon., while others too pursued their studies upto the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) . While attending to the welfare of his own family and the immediate relatives, he played a vital role in social service in uplifting the conditions of the village of Neerella and the villagers.

**SOCIAL SERVICE:** With a view to providing the infrastructure to the Neerella village, he contested Harispattuwa Village Council Elections for the Neerella Ward in 1940's. He comfortably won the elections and was returned to this Village Council as the member for Neerella. During his tenure of office, he successfully argued his case at the Council for a permanent foot bridge to be built across Pinga Oya at 6 3/4 mile post off the Kandy-Matale Road at Akurana. He also saw to it that about a hundred yard long flight of stone-steps was built from this bridge so that the people of Neerella could use the road very comfortably. Along with these he told the Council that proper drinking water should be provided to the people of Neerella and identified two springs which always supplied water through out the year, even during the severe drought season. Close to the foot bridge over the Piga Oya, the necessity of building a small dam with sluice-gates was proposed at the Council Meeting by M.A.Seyed Abdul Cader, the Member for Neerella. This recommendation was accepted by the Council. So all these three important proposals were accepted by the Council and the required funds allocated for the construction of these work and they were completed within a short period of time. The people of Neerella began to enjoy the fruits labour done by M.A.Seyed Abdul Cader. He continued with his social service unabated

With the noble mission of providing the long felt need of a motorable and a school to

Neerella and Melchenagama, he formed an association called Neerella Rural Development Society in 1955. Through this Society he made contacts with the Ministries and higher authorities concerned. He was able to make this dream a great success. A Government school called the Neerella Muslim Vidyalyaya was opened in mid-1960's and the Neerella-Dippitiya motorable road was opened up in 1962. These two achievements stand as monuments to Alhaj M.A.S. Abdul Cader's thirst for social service and service to society.

An incident can be quoted which served as the foundation to English Education at Akurana Government School.

As there were no facilities or staff to impart English education to the students of Akurana Government School, he made representations to the Department of Education, in Kandy and requested them to appoint an English Teacher to Akurana Government School. Promptly the Department of Education, Kandy, responded by sending a Tamil Education Officer to inquire into this matter. This Officer had met Abdul Cader and commended his concern for the teaching of English at this school and had told him that he would recommend appointing a teacher of English to this school. After a few weeks, M.A. Seyed Abdul Cader had come to know to his dismay that the Education Officer contrary to his verbal recommendation, had written to the Dept of Education Kandy, that posting an English teacher to this school was not necessary. This information astounded Seyed Abdul Cader and met a Higher Officer at the Education Department Kandy, a Sinhalese gentleman - Mr. Weerakoon, who took a personal interest in this matter because of M.A.Seyed Abdul Cader's show of interest and on investigation found the latter's intentions true and immediately posted an English Teacher to this School. Thus started the English education at Akurana Government School.

He also opened a branch of the Ceylon Moors' Association at Neerella. He came in close contact with Sir Razik Fareed and was able to do lot of service to the Moors of Neerella.

Alhaj Abdul Cader was very pious and was always in the forefront in religious matters and activities. He had been serving on the Board of Trustees of Akurana Grand Mosque and as the Trustee of Juffriyathul Quadiriya Thakkiya at Akurana Town. He performed Haj in 1960.

When he returned from Makkah after performing Haj he wanted to give vivid information about performing Haj to would-be Haj pilgrims as to the manner in which they should perform it. He brought out a book-let containing all the relevant details in simple language so that anyone could understand it on reading it. He distributed it free of charge.

One Muslim who was past his 60's got one of these book-lets and read through it thoroughly. He was so impressed by the contents that he immediately decided to perform Haj the following year. He did go for Haj and returned despite his infirmity and physical weakness. This inspiration of performing Haj, he got after reading the book-let put out by Alhaj Abdul Cader.

Alhaj Abdul Cader was very careful in his food habits and strictly followed the Islamic Law when selecting food. Although he was not a qualified Moulavi, he possessed a good knowledge of Islamic Law. He also had memorised "Suras" from the Holy Quran.

As Muslim ladies had no opportunity of going to the mosque for "Tharaweeh" prayers he had been conducting these prayers at his home not only for his family members but also to the families of the neighbourhood He had been conducting these prayers for more than two decades.

Alhaj Seyed Abdul Cader breathed his last very peacefully on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1996. MAY ALMIGHTY ALLAH GRANT HIM JENNATHUL FIRDHOUSE for guiding his children in the right path and also for his yeomen service to his brethren ,AMEEN .

The above was prepared by Alhaj M.A.S.Seyed Abdul Cader's second son, Mohamed Mohideen and contributed towards

<http://www.geocities.com/abdulcaderfamily/f0.htm>

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## **M C ABDUL CADER 1879 (?) -1946**

**Muhammad Careem** of Jaffna, father of MC Abdul Cader, was engaged in business and was very orthodox in his outlook and views. He feared that western education would mitigate an Islamic way of life. His wife, however, held a contrary view and thus helped young Abdul cader to receive his early education at the New Chetty Street High School, in Jaffna.

Noting his brilliance in his studies at the school his teachers strongly urged the young man to continue his higher studies. Having performed excellently at the Matriculation of the Madras Presidency Examination held in Ceylon, he won a scholarship for admission to the University.

Asfter graduating from the Presidency College in Madras he returned to Ceylon and taught mathematics at his "alma mater" for a short period. Law attracted him and he passed out as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of the Island of Ceylon. He took his

oaths before the Supreme Court Judges on October 7, 1904, clad in his western best, resplendent with his red Fez on his head.

He held a double distinction of being the first Ceylon Moor graduate and Advocate. They Ceylon Moors were then known as "Mohammedans" by the Colonial regime of the time.

He was building a lucrative practice in the Supreme Court, Colombo. When he appeared before Justice Sir CP Layard on that eventful day of May 2, 1905, to argue an appeal case, he was rudely shocked when the learned judge asked him to either remove his Fez Cap or take off his boots in order to show his respect to his court.

But Mr Abdul Cader was made of stronger stuff, unawed by the rebuff of the Court, he refused to do either. He explained that the wearing of his national headgear was a sign of Islamic respect to the Court and the removal of his boots being out of the question, walked out of the Court. Though being defiant, as a practical lawyer, he explained to the Judge subsequently in his chambers but without success.

He thus manifested to the legal world of the time that he regarded the preservation of his community's heritage more than his profession and felt it was worth risking even his legal career. His defiant and courageous stand evoked, not only the admiration of his people but also of the general public against the rebuff of a Colonial Judge. It further aroused an indifferent community to galvanic action, with the leadership of Mr ILM Abdul Azeez, Chairman of the Moors' Union. They planned an organized action initially to lead a deputation of the Moors before the Justice Layard to justify the stand of Abdul Cader. The judge, with the Colonial trait in his character relaxed to see them of the matter was discussed on a personal (but not official) level and received them to hear their views at his residence, "Torrington House", on June 17, 1905. The selected few of the deputation explained in detail their views and of their fear of implications in the future unless he revoked his provocative order that adversely affected a heritage of the community.

The Judge, however, asked the deputation to submit its representations in writing for the issue of a formal decision. Mr Abdul cader submitted a memorandum to the Supreme Court, but influenced by Justice Layard to maintain his earlier order, it decided on September 19, 1905, to prohibit the wearing of the Fez before the Court.

Quite naturally, the community was stirred to take an united action and initial meetings were held to organize an effective campaign of mass protest.

A Fez Committee, comprising of the following, was formed to pursue action at a high level:-

1. Mr MLM Zainudeen Hadjjar, MMC (grandfather of MMI Kariapper)
2. Mr Muhammad Macan Markar, Consul for Turkey (father of A Hussain Macan Markar)
3. Mr MI Muhammad Ali, JP, Vice Consul for Persia (gradfather of Ummuna Azeez, wife of AMA Azeez, Sithy Fathma Cader, wife of Jabir A Cader, and Advocate Mahdi Hussain)
4. Mr SLM Mahmood Hadjjar, JP, (father of MHM Yousoof)
5. Mr ILMH Noordeen Hadjjar (grandfather of Mohideen Jalaldeen, JP)
6. Mr Carimjee Jafferjee (father of Alibhoy Carimjee)



7. Mr SL Naina Marikar Hadjar, Treasurer, Fez Committee (grandfather of M Ibrahim & M Zain Naina Marikar)
8. Mr CM Meera Lebbe Marikar (father of MLM Reyal, ex MMC)
9. Mr AL Abdul Careem (grandfather of Jabir A Cader, ex Mayor, ex MP)
10. Mr OLM Ahamed Lebbe Marikar Alim Sahib (grandfather of M/S MTM Hassim, Marzuk A Rahim, MHM Kamil, Barrister Hamavi haniffa, and Mrs Raliya Umma Noordee, wife of Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi)
11. Haji Ibrahim Bin Ahamed (father-in-law of Sir Razik Fareed)
12. Mr ILM Abdul Azeez, Secretary, Fez Committee (father of Rashard A Azeez)
13. Mr ILM Muhammad Meera Lebbe Marikar (grandfather of MI Azhar Ghouse, BA Ceylon)
14. Mr NDH Abdul Ghaffoor (father of Faleel A Ghaffoor, MP)
15. Mr PT Meera Lebbe Marikar (father of MLM Mohideen, Jaward & Junaid)
16. Mr NEM Packeer (grandfather of Abdul Raheem)
17. Mr Muhammad Abdul Cader Alim Sahib
18. Mr K Abraham Sahibo (general Merchant of Nuwara Eliya)
19. Mr MKM Muhammad Salihu
20. Mr MA Katchi Muhammadu
21. Mr PB Umbichchy

Even non Muslims joined in what was regarded as an infringement in the personal liberty of Muslims to adhere to approved Muslim wear from head to foot.

With the indefatigable Mr ILM Abdul Azeez at the spearhead, the Fez Committee, on the suggestion of Seth Carimjee Jafferjee, invited a reputed Indian Muslim barrister-at-Law, Mr Raffiu-ud-din Ahamed (Moulavi), to address, what was then the biggest mass meeting of Muslims in Ceylon. The meeting was held on December 31, 1905, at the grounds of the Maradana Mosque, Colombo 01000, with the Honourable WM Abdul Rahman (father of Sir Razik Fareed) in the chair.

In an inspiring address, Mr Raffiu-ud-din Ahamed, mentioned that he had always appeared before the High Courts of India wearing his headgear on his head and had never been questioned. He further stresses that he had even attended an audience before the late Queen Empress Victoria in her Chapel, with his Fez Cap on his head and failed to understand how Justice Layard could, in such circumstances, take it as a disrespect for his Court. He praised the British sense of fair play, Justice, and spirit of religious sentiment. He criticized the order of Justice Layard as one completely alien to the British outlook of administration. The Mass Meeting, by unanimous decision, resolved to appeal to the British Crown. Consequently, the Colonial Secretary conveyed to the President of the Fez Committee that the Fez could be worn by Mohammedan lawyers before Court if clad in the conventional attire of lawyers.

Thus was a fight bitterly fought and rewardingly won, to preserve and safeguard a heritage of the Moors of Ceylon, on the defiance of Mr Abdul Cader even to disobey the order of a British Judge of the Supreme Court, in those days of Colonial rule.

Mr Abdul Cader was more than just a practicing advocate. He identified himself in various activities in the promotion of Muslim education and took up the offered appointment of Manager at Al-Madrasathul Zahira (presently Zahira College, Colombo), for sometime. The call to the Bar was too strong an urge for him to suppress any more and on the advice of his Proctor friend, AM Sheriff (ex MLC) of Kattankudy, he settled down at Kattankudy to actively practice at the Batticaloa Bar.

Although legally engaged, he yet found time to serve as a useful member of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society and the Mohammedan Registration Ordinance Amendment Committee, which included several Muslim leaders, viz; Hon WM Abdul Rahman, Hon Muhammad Macan Markar. His political sagacity was so well known that he was included in the deputation of the Muslims composed of leaders like TB Jayah, MM Mahroof and FE Ghulam Hussain, who went to the Colonial Office in London to amend the constitution for the retention of at least three communal seats in the State Council through election by Muslims only. Mr Abdul Cader was also a member of the Committee, on the basis of whose recommendations, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act No 13 of 1951 was passed.

His public spiritidness made him a member of the "Friend in Need Society" and the Provincial Road Committee. He was also a member of the first Urban Council, Batticaloa, and the First Board of Quazis. Wherever he served, he dedicated himself to the work involved and gave of his best in the best interest of all. He, however, devoted more of his time in the legal profession and practiced for nearly four decades at the Batticaloa Bar.

Of his five children, first was a daughter, Salma, who married a kinsman, Mr Samsudeen. They both died early in life without issue. The second child, a son named Muhammad Careem (named after his grandfather), had a brilliant start as a Sub Divisional Officer in the department of Irrigation and would have risen high in the profession had he lived. But fate took him away when he was in his late twenties. His two daughters married Dr HM Mahuroof of Akurana and Dr AZ Abdeen of Madawela.

Abdul Cader's two other daughters, Salha (mother of MIA Qamardeen & MIM Noordeen), and Mymoon, were well settled in life having married two landed proprietors and the last son, ACM Mohideen (named after Abdul Cader's father-in-law) served in the Ministry of Local Government. Abdul Cader's wife, Sulaiha, lived up to the age of a nonegenarian after having seen her fifth generation.

Abdul Cader was versatile in his career, which occupied most of his time in various locations. Yet, as a devout Muslim, he never missed any of his daily five times obligatory prayers. A feat not easily achieved by many Muslims in their religious duty at that time.

Steadfast in his stand, dedicated in his devotion, and decisive in his deliberations, Abdul Cader passed away, having suffered a heart attack at Kattankudy on May 27, 1946.

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### **ABDUL LATIFF, Abdul Majeed 1932-1987**

Born: 15-Nov-1932

Educated at Sivananda Vidyalaya, Batticaloa, Hindu College, Trincomalee.

Later entered Wadia College, Bombay and Presidency College, Madras.

Awarded Gold Medal for oratory in Tamil.

Principal, Kinniya Senior School, Trincomalee.

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Contested Muttur multi-member constituency as an Independent candidate in 1960 and lost. Won seat as second member under the SLFP in July 1960. Retained seat at the March 1960 and May 1970 elections.

Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Public Works 1964 and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting 1970-1977.

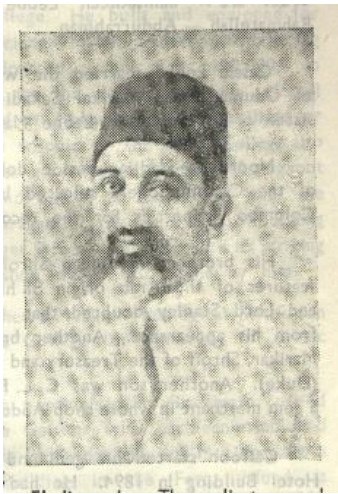
District Parliamentary Authority, Trincomalee, 1974.

Represented Sri Lanka at the second World Islamic Tamil Literature Conference, Madras.  
Died:14-Nov-1987

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## ABDUL RAHMAN

### Noordeen Hajjar Abdul Caffoor Hajjar (NDH Abdul Caffoor)



<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen080.html>

The Arabs who settled in the maritime coast, particularly in Beruwela, had expert knowledge of gems and precious stones. They penetrated into the gemming centers and did considerable mining for these precious stones. The ancestors of **Abdul Caffoor** started gemming in this area. They took their stones to Colombo where the Arab navigators bought Ceylon produce in the warehouses of the "**Yons**" or "**Yonakas**", later known as "**Moors**".

This family made Colombo their permanent residence and continued their gemming activities at Asthen Korale at Eheliyagoda. The earliest known record of **Abdul Caffoor's** ancestors name in a public document is in 1840 where **Samosothen Lebbe Cassim Lebbe** appears in a list of seventy four contributors for the purchase of a property for Maradana Mosque.

**Cassim Lebbe** had several sons:-

- **Noordeen Hajjar** - father of N.D.H. Abdul Hameed, Caffoor, Careem, Cader & Wahab
- **Samsudeen Shroff Mudaliyar** of Colombo Kachcheri - father of Haji Cassim, a Trustee of Maradana Mosque, who had two sons, Mohideen Cassim and Ilyas Cassim
- **Rahmatullah** alias Periya Thamby - father of P.T.M. Kiyas of St. Joseph's Street, Grandpass
- **Abdul Rahman** - father of Dr. A.R.M. Waffarn

**Cassim Lebbe's** male lineal ascendants in reverse chronological order are:-

**Samsathen Lebbe - Bahaudeen - Noordeen - Rahmatullah - Abdul Rahman**

**Cassim Lebbe** married the widow **Ummu Hany**, a daughter of **Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sekadi Marikar**. She was the younger sister of **S.M. Cassim Lebbe Marikar** (Mudaliyar).

Noordeen Hajjar, besides carrying on his own business, was one of the Commissioners selected by the Municipality to value Colombo properties for the recovery of rates.

His brother, **Samsudeen Shroff Mudaliyar**, carried the stately features of the Arab origin of his family that Governor Gregory and Lord Stanley doubted that he was a native of Ceylon, based on his appearance. Another brother was **Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar**, Shroff of the Treasury and grandfather of **Nazli Samsudeen** (Duke). Another son was

**C.L.Rahmatullah**, alias **Periya Thamby**, a gem merchant in whose shop **Abdul Caffoor** learnt the gem trade.

**Abdul Caffoor** started his gems and jewellery business at Bristol Hotel building in 1894. He had special permission to board the ships that called at the Colombo harbour and sell his gems and jewellery to the sailors. By special command, **Abdul Caffoor** was allowed the privilege of exhibiting pearls, diamonds, rubies and sapphires and art works to the Prince and Princess of Wales at the Kandy Pavilion, during their Royal visit in 1901. His stall was given a prominent place at the Wembley Exhibition in 1924 and Her Majesty Queen Mary personally visited his pavillion and made purchases. It was by sheer merit that he achieved success.

At his own expense he took part in a series of world exhibitions which, while increasing his own reputation, brought publicity to the Island. Some of the exhibitions in which he participated were, the St. Louis Exhibition in USA in 1903, All Ceylon Exhibition in 1912, the British Empire Exhibition in 1924 and the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1925. His gems were considered some of the finest collections to be exhibited in the USA. When he returned to Ceylon after the Wembley Exhibition, the then Governor of Ceylon congratulated him on "**the valuable work done**".

Among the many Muslim institutions that benefited from **Abdul Caffoor's** philanthropy was the Zahira College. He built and equipped a complete Science block, in addition to building sixteen classrooms for the school. Further he donated a sum of Rs. 100,000 to inaugurate a building scheme for Zahira College Hostel and also donated 18 acres of land at Maharagama to be utilized for practical schools. The branch schools of Zahira College also received his generous gifts, as also many Mosques throughout the Island, the Deaf and Blind School at Ratmalana, and the Boy's Industrial School at Maharagama. The major cost of building Masjid Muhiyadeen at Messenger Street, Colomso, with its striking Minarets and Saracenic horeshoe arches, was borne by him.

Later, in 1932, he established a Muslim Theological Institute, known as the Ghaffooria Arabic College, for the study of Arabic, at Maharagama. He has endowed the institute with a premises at Grandpass valued at five hundred thousand rupees. The Ghaffoor Trust has been established for the purpose of promoting the education of Muslims. It is endowed with the Gaffoor building in the Fort, valued at four million rupees.

When His Excellency Governor General Sir Henry Moore unveiled the portrait of **Abdul Caffoor** at Zahira College on March 1, 1949, he said, "**that the portrait would not only be a lasting memorial but also serve as an encouragement to others to emulate him**". Further His Excellency said, "**Wherever he travelled, he maintained the highest traditions of business and promoted the best interests of Ceylon, and, despite his great business acumen and the wealth he acquired, he lived a simple life according to the devout Muslim tradition, and he was always happy to share his wealth with the needy and the less fortunate**".

Mr. A.M.A.Azeez, Principal of Zahira College, said referring to **Abdul Caffoor**, "**his charity was not the kind that was alloyed with local or Imperial honours or with places in the Councils of the realm. In his charity there was no ostentation displayed and there was no applause sought. In the true Muslim way he concealed his charity so much that his left hand did not know what his right hand spent**".

Comparing him to the Carnegies and the Rocerfellers, **Mr. Azeez** added that he had not only given abundantly in his lifetime but had also provided for abundant giving even after his death.

Relating an incident in which the late **Abdul Caffoor** had proved his integrity and sense of fair play, Mr. A.F.Molamure, Speaker of the House of Representatives, stated at a meeting at Zahira College, that, as a businessman it was difficult to find his equal in honesty. His father had offered a stone to Abdul Caffoor and had wanted forty five thousand rupees for it. **Abdul Caffoor** had given him sixty five thousand insisting that that was its correct value.

In the Memorandum of the Ceylon Moor's Association to the Chairman and Members of the Royal Commission on Constitutional Reform, submitted on January 20, 1945, the following reference is made to the munificence of **Abdul Caffoor**: **"the endowment of a property worth 20 lakhs of rupees in the heart of the city of Colombo by a Ceylon Moor as gift to the nation is unprecedented in the history of the Island"**.

At a lecture in 1945, at the Moor's Islamic Cultural Home, Dr. W. Balendra LMS (Cey), FRCS, LDS (Eng), LRCP (London), referring to **Abdul Caffoor** stated,

**"you come up to this Island from abroad. When the ship approaches the harbour I have come several times and what is it you find the Gem Palace (Gem Museum) standing over-looking the harbour. You go past from the harbour and you go along Galle Face and you find a series of flats, the creation of Moor business integrity, but there is something more in the Gem Palace"**

**"Here is a man, a native of this Island, creating wealth from unpolished stones, taking these stones to far off lands in New York, Paris and other parts of the world, bringing wealth to this country, putting up buildings (Caffoor Building) which are some of the highest in this land, but at the end giving a part of his wealth for the benefit of his fellow-men. A civilization which can produce such a man is a very high type of civilization"**.

**"It is different from the civilization of the other races of the world. It is a civilization which asks you to look forward to some other world, a civilization which advises you to exploit the useful to man, and after exploiting it, after using it, not to possess it but to divide it among the fellow-men is a very high type of civilization"**.

**Abdul Caffoor** had a unique collection of precious stones and jewellery. In 1929 **Abdul Caffoor** established a Gem Museum at Church Street, Fort, Colombo. Sir Herbert Stanley, then Governor, when opening he Museum paid tribute to him for his presentation for permanent exhibition, at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, of a valuable exhibit of Ceylon stones.

His devotion to religion was deep and profound. He never missed his daily prayers even when travelling in mid winter and his entire life was characterized by piety. He had travelled extensively around the world and he visited the placeses of Islamic interest in Makkah, Madinah, Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo and India. many travellers enjoyed his lavish hospitality during their stay in Colombo. **"Icicle Hall"** (now Sri Kotha), in Colombo, was latterly his residence.

**Abdul Caffoor** will always be remembered, besides other things, for his philanthropy. His name is well known in many a foreign land.

He breathed his last at his residence at Colpetty, at the age of 73, and was given the honour of being buried at the Maradana Mosque ground.

His eldest son was **Al Haj Falil Abdul Caffoor (1907-1980)**, MP (Colombo), MMC, MBE and Honorary Consul for Iraq. Falil was educated at St. Thomas' College, Colombo. He held a Gem Exhibition in England and also founded the All Ceylon Muslim League of which he held the position of Deputy President. He entered politics in 1954 by contesting the CMC election and winning in 1965. Was elected MP Colombo Central in 1965. President YMMA Sports Club. Director, Bank of Ceylon. Died:31-Mar-1980

Another son **Mohideen Caffoor** was resident in England and **Muhammad Rafi Caffoor** succeeded in carrying on the business. His other sons, the genial Yusuf Caffoor and the upright Zubair Caffoor pre-deceased him.

### **Noordeen Hajjar Muhammad Abdul Cader**

born in 10-Feb-1879, d:29-Aug-1938 (NHM Abdul Cader)



**Noordeen Hajjar Muhammad Abdul Cader** was the younger brother of **Noordeen Hajjar Abdul Caffoor**. He was educated at Wesley College. He continued his studies and qualified as a Proctor & Notary Public in 1907.

**Abdul Cader** led a full life. He was one of the leading proctors of the day and represented the Muslims in the Legislative Council for fifteen years. He was Senior Municipal Councillor at the time of his death. He was also the President of the All Ceylon Muslim League at a critical period of its history. As a businessman he was one of the pioneers of the cinema business in Ceylon.

**Abdul Cader** succeeded **W.M.Abdul Rahman** as the Muslim Member of the Legislative Council in 1915. He was in the center of every activity which concerned the Muslim community. He was always ready to enter the fray and fearless in expressing his sentiments and feelings.

**Abdul Cader** entered the Colombo Municipal Council for the Pettah Ward in 1908 and continued to be a member for the next thirty years, and except during the last term in council, He was always returned uncontested. Among his contemporaries were outstanding men like Sir James Peiris, Arthur Alvis, Hector Jayawardena, T.L.Villiers, C.P.Dias and H.L.de Mel. Member Legislative Council 1916-1930. Manager Zahira College 1921-1938.

Both in the Legislative and Municipal Councils, **Abdul Cader** advocated equal educational facilities for Muslims as was available for the more progressive communities in the Island. He was convinced that there can be no progress without education even if the boys in the families inherited their fathers business. His eldest son, **Dr. Marzook Abdul Cader**, who passed away at the early age of 49, had a brilliant career in England and qualified as an ENT specialist.

His position as President of the Muslim League was never challenged while he held it. In all negotiations with the Government and with other communities for constitutional reform, the views of the Muslim League commanded respect with a man like him at the helm.

He was also President of the Maradana Mosque Executive Committee for twenty five years, taking over from **Aboobucker Lebbe Marikar Ibrahim Lebbe Marikar** (uncle of M.L.M.Reyal ex MMC Colombo). In 1921 he became the Manager of Zahira College, the leading Muslim school in the Island. The College progressed rapidly under his capable management and the principalship of Mr. T.B.Jayah.

Schools in Muslim areas received much less Government help than they do today. Abdul Cader introduced a motion in the Legislative Council for an annual grant of Rs. 150,000 towards the promotion of education among Muhammadans. The motion seconded by K. Balasingham was defeated. However the motion succeeded in obtaining a grant of Rs 25,000 from the Government for Zahira College.

**Abdul Cader** represented the Muslims in the Legislative Council from 1915 to 1931, safeguarding their interests with great care and watchfulness, while undertaking more than his fair share of work in matters pertaining to the welfare of his country.

He was a popular member, noted for his sturdy independence, tenacity and outspoken views. It was mainly due to him that the Muslim marriage Ordinance was enacted. In educational and religious matters he was a tower of strength to his community.

Sometimes his bluntness led him into trouble, as when he was sued for libel after he had denounced, in the legislative Council, a high official for what is believed was an injustice done to a Muslim doctor. He fought the case until the intervention of the Colonial Secretary, Sir Arthur Fletcher, led to a settlement. As a result of the case, Sir Vaitilingam Duraiswamy introduced in the Legislative Council a bill to confer immunity, on all speeches and statements made in the Council, from the process of the Courts.

In all things he did, **Abdul Cader** showed determination and foresight. He foresaw a successful field of activity for his sons in the cinema business and his sons have more than justified the confidence reposed on them.

**Abdul Cader's** statement at an interview to the Ceylon Independent in 1917 is very characteristic of the man,

***" among the Muhammadans, they had a very undesirable system of charity, that of giving feasts of Kanduri, with no beneficial results. It would certainly be charity if the poor are fed, but that is not what is done at these feasts. Men like myself, others equally prosperous, are feted. I have not the slightest objection to the feeding of the poor, but my experience has been that the poor are the least thought of at these feasts, so called***



***charity. A portion of the money spent on these feasts may with advantage be diverted to better purposes, such as education".***

His demise after an operation on August 30, 1938, came as a rude shock to his many admirers.

His sons are **Dr. Marzuk A Cader** (deceased), **Mohideen A Cader**, **Jabir A Cader** MP, MMC, (former Mayor), **Hamza A Cader**, **Ansar A Cader**, Chartered Accountant, **Shafeek A Cader**, **Shuhaib A Cader**, **Ashroff A Cader** (All Ceylon Rugby player), **Zachroff A Cader** (Dental Surgeon), **Huzaim A Cader**, **Huzair A Cader** and **Iftthikar A Cader** (Cost Accountant). His daughters are **Ayesha Cader** (wife of HE Mr. M.M.Maharroof High Commissioner in Malaysia), **Thufa Cader (w/o Aamir Sheriff)** and **Aynul Rifa Cader**.

**Death of Jabir A. Cader a big loss for the community and the nation - AHM Azwer Sat Jun 29 2002**



The demise of Alhaj Jabir A. Cader is a big loss for the community and the nation - A. H. M. Azwer, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs states in his condolence message sent from the State of Kerala in India.

Further in his condolence message, the Minister said Alhaj Jabir A. Cader not only touched the hearts of Colombo civilians but hearts of all other communities in the island by his service rendered through the community development projects and social service.

Being a close associate, I have worked with him for 45 years. I greatly remember the services he rendered to the community being a founder member of All Ceylon Muslim League. He started his political career as Member of Colombo Municipal Council and became Mayor of Colombo, Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister of Health and Rural Industrial Development.

He was instrumental in initiating many community development projects and gave good leadership to the youth. When the United National Party was formed at "Palm Court" he represented the All Ceylon Muslim League with President of ACML Mr. T. B. Jayah, Mr. M. H. Amith, ex-MP, and Mr. M. T. Marikkar Bawa. He made use of his political career to serve the community in poverty alleviation and rural upliftment. He also always in the forefront when it came to enhancing social activities. He was also loved by people of all

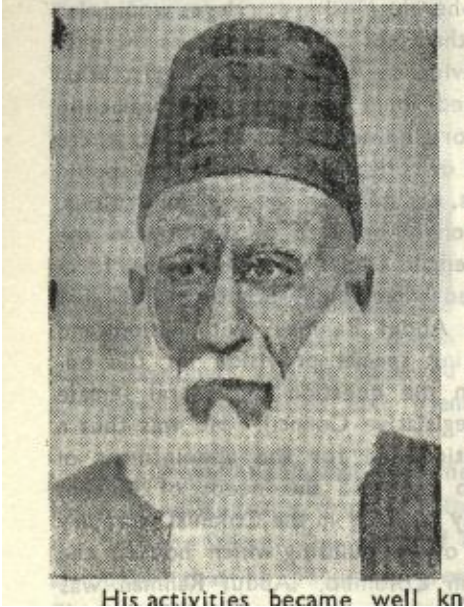
communities who referred to him as leader of the Colombo citizens. He was 86 years at the time of his death. His demise is a great loss for the community.

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## M C ABDUL RAHMAN

Honourable Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman

Merchant, Reformer, Legislator, Leader



**Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman**, son of **Fathima (& Cassim Bhoi)**, the daughter of the renowned **Qutb Sheikh Ismail Yamani** who is interred by the side of the Weligama mosque, married **Khadija**, daughter of his maternal uncle **Qutb Sheikh Yehya Al-Yamani**, also known as **Hajar Appa** of Matara. **Qutb Sheikh Ismail** and **Qutb Sheikh Yehya** are revered by many Muslims in the southern province as saints even until today.

**Abdul Rahman** began life as a businessman, both in the Colombo Fort as a mercer of silk and soft goods in Pettah, and as a purveyor of groceries for homes. He had a large clientele, mainly, because of his fair dealing in business. His head was erect because his honour was perfectly above board at all times. He owned shipping vessels for the transportation of the goods that he imported. SS "**Rahmaniya**" was a vessel named after him. The more he earned the more he distributed to deserving cases and laudable causes. That was **Abdul Rahman**, the Merchant.

The "White Horse" building at Chatham Street, Fort, in Colombo was the head office of his business empire. He had a distribution center at Pettah, in Colombo, and a warehouse complex at Slave island, also in Colombo. The British firm of darley Butler & Company acted as one of his agents in those times.

His activities became well known and recognized by all. He was nominated to a seat in the Colombo Municipal Council in 1876 to look after and promote the interest of the local Ceylon Moors (Muslims). He made such an impressive mark, that, while a Counsellor he was also appointed as an unofficial Municipal Magistrate. The Moors of Ceylon of the time, incoherent though, yet made calls for representation in the Legislative Council to

which **Abdul Rahman** was appointed on October 29, 1889, as the first Mohammedan member, by Governor Gordon. His indispensability received such recognition, that, at the end of his five year term, he was re-appointed for a further five years by Governor Havelock. However, he did not live long enough to fulfil that extended term.

During that period appointed members were generally more or less stooges of the British Colonial rulers and were silent warmers of their seats. **Abdul Rahman** was different. In proposals or debates that concerned the nation or his own community, he spoke out his heart with an earnestness that evoked sympathy and understanding. The Hansard of December 1894 is replete of references of the concern **Abdul Rahman**, the Reformer, showed towards the community.

The Moors of the time were lagging behind even in matters of their social and educational life. These were spheres where **Abdul Rahman** felt that urgent action was necessary. He had much to speak but little to add to what he strongly urged for necessary inclusion of amendments to the Marriage Registration Ordinances No. 8 of 1886 and No. 2 of 1888, whereby Muslim marriages would also be registered. Until then "**Kadutham**" of the Katheeb was the only feeble form of documentary evidence, available, of Muslim marriages. Compulsory registration of Muslim marriages in a legalized form was the brainchild of Abdul Rahman. Even more, he urged that in cases where specified fees could not be levied or collected, the imposition of such fees be waived. His thinking was so meticulous even to such detail.

Female Muslim education was, wrongly, held to be foreign within the fold of Islam, by the Muslims of Ceylon. A very few female adults received some form of education in what was called "secluded" schools. But that was far below the standard. Abdul Rahman, with vision and foresight, spoke out his mind, urging special provision for the education of female Muslims, when the question of female education was discussed at the Legislative Council. Thus, he was the pioneer of Muslim female education in Ceylon. He was also responsible for the appointment of female doctors and vaccinators to cater to the needs of Muslim women. His insistence ultimately resulted in the Colonial Secretary authorizing half the cost of the building for the first Mohammedan Girls School in Colombo, in 1898.

**Abdul Rahman** married **Khadija**, the second daughter of his maternal uncle, Hajjar Appa. He was also a multi-linguist proficient in Tamil, Sinhala, English, Arabic, Urdu and Pharissee. He underwent a strenuous education in Islam, Islamic Law and culture. He lived at "Icicle Hall", at 532, Galle Road, Kollupitiya, Colombo 3, a symbol of social stature and prestige. "Icicle Hall" was later renamed to "Sri Kotha" where the United National Party purchased it from its new owners to whom M.C. Abdul Rahman had sold it to, in order to set up their new headquarters. The "Mumtaz Mahal" at Kollupitiya, now the official residence of the Speaker of Parliament, was also owned by M.C. Abdul Rahman, and years later, his great grandson, Muhammad Haniffa Muhammad, was destined to occupy the sprawling mansion as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, during the period 1989 to 1994. The "Rhineland" at Colpetty, a mansion at the site of the present Central Theatre at Maradana, and three houses at Grandpass were some of his other bungalows. He also owned the stretch of land from Kanatte to Borella, including the present Kanatte burial grounds, up to Rajagiriya, which served as his grass fields.

**Abdul Rahman** was always nattily dressed in Shalwar and Khameez over which he wore a long coat, Jutha on his feet and a richly embroidered Surat Cap. He used to ride in a twin-horse carriage. He owned a fleet of horse carriages of different structures. On

ceremonial occasions he rode a special carriage drawn by a pair of his choicest horses with two footmen colorfully dressed in attendance. The Kahatahena Estate at Galagedara in Padukka, where the Ceylon Refractories is presently located, was specially used by him for rearing his horses.

Abundant affluence did, however, not bar him from serving the economically-weaker sections of the society, and, especially among those belonging to the Muslim community. A highly religious personality he was a great philanthropist who generously helped a large number of Mosques, Schools and other Muslim institutions as well as needy individuals. Al Mahadul Bukhariyul Khadiriyyah Jumma Mosque at Layards Broadway in Colombo was built by him and managed under his personal supervision and control.

**MC Abdul Rahman** possessed one of the finest collection of books on Unani Medicine and specialized in spiritual healing. He also went on to play a major role in the Muslim Society in Ceylon at a time when the community was a badly neglected and hopelessly backward one.

**Abdul Rahman** was so engrossed in his service to the people that he found very little time to devote to himself. Frail in frame, yet, strong in spirit, he carried on the difficult task with many sacrifices, the hallmark of true leadership. Strangely, he had at heart a penchant for the welfare of the female more than the male. Yet it was quite natural. As a devout Muslim he had been taught that **"Paradise lies at the feet of the Mother"**. That had been his inspiration.

The strain and stress of his crowded program of daily services told on his health and he passed away, during the middle of his second five year term in the Legislative Council. That was **Abdul Rahman**, the **Leader**, an example for all times. He passed away peacefully on June 12 1899 and his remains were interred at the Maligawatte Muslim burial grounds.

**Abdul Rahman** was blessed with four sons and three daughters, viz;

**Abdul Majeed, Safia Umma, Ummu Habeeba, Ne'math Umma, Abdul Azeez, Muhammad Ismail and Izzadeen.**

**Abdul Majeed**, who married Safia Umma, had two daughters and two sons. One son passed away at an early age. His eldest daughter, Jariath Umma, married **OLM Levana Marikar**, a leading light in Colombo's world of commerce. Jariath Umma's second daughter, Ummu Hafeera (second bed), married **NHM Abdul Cader**, Colombo Municipal Councillor and later member of the Legislative Council (father of Jabir A Cader).

**Abdul Majeed's** second daughter, Muhusina, married **YM Naina Marikar JP**, also a prominent figure amongst the Muslim Community and the business world of that era. Amongst Muhusina's nine children are **NMM Bishrul Hafi JP**, a well known Muslim social activist, and **NMM Izzeth Hussain**. Izzeth Hussain was the first ever Muslim to join the Ceylon Overseas Service and the first ever Muslim career diplomat to rise to the highest position in the Foreign Service by holding the position of Director General of Foreign Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1980's. He was also the Ambassador to the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States, based in Moscow.

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**MC Abdul Rahman's** third son, **Muhammad Ismail**, was an active social worker who took a keen interest in religious and educational activities of the Muslim Community. The British Governor bestowed on him the titular honor of Mudaliyar for his exemplary social service. He was also the Managing Trustee of the Maradana Mosque and Honorary Secretary of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society. Mudaliyar Ismail married twice, Hajara Umma – a first cousin of **Sir Razik Fareed** – and Ummu Ayesha. His son **MACA Abdul Rahman** functioned as the Principal of Hameed Al Hussaini Maha Vidyalaya, one of the prominent government Muslim Schools in Colombo, for many years.

**MC Abdul Rahman's** fifth child, **Abdul Azeez**, maternal grandfather of **MH Muhammad**, was a successful businessman and was affectionately known as "Prince Charming". He did not seek public office. Yet, the British Government bestowed on him a titular honor. Azeez played a quiet role in the Muslim community, helping religious and educational institutions in an effectively constructive way. He was generous in his charity and helped the needy, regardless of their race, religion or ethnicity. He preferred silent service and avoided publicity.

**Abdul Rahman's** youngest son, **Muhammad Izzadeen** married Muthu Natchiyar but had no issue.

The Sri Lankan Muslim Community gratefully remembered MC Abdul Rahman when his portrait was unveiled by J R Jayawardene, the then leader of the opposition, at the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home Auditorium at Colombo Fort on June 13, 1975, on the occasion of his 76<sup>th</sup> death anniversary.

On January 21, 1987, the then Prime Minister, Ranasinghe Premadasa, unveiled a portrait of MC Abdul Rahman at the Colombo Town Hall under the patronage of B Sirisena Cooray, the Mayor of Colombo.

In December 1989, MC Abdul Rahman's portrait was unveiled at the gallery of the Parliament of Sri Lanka at Kotte-Sri Jayawardenepura, by President Premadasa, on the occasion of the centenary of Abdul Rahman's entry into the Legislative Council as the first ever Muslim Member. MH Muhammad, his great grandson, was the Speaker of the House at this time.

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## **Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman**

### **76th Death Anniversary Jun 13 1975 (Jamad Al Thani 2, 1395 H)**

published in the MICH Souvenir III of 1970-76

**Venue: Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, Bristol Street, Fort, Colombo 1**  
**Presided by : Sir Razik Fareed, OBE, JP UM**

Sir Razik Fareed, in his opening address, said:

I am very happy, indeed, to preside at this function today on behalf of the MICH and I extend a most cordial welcome to all of you. I was planning to travel to Pakistan by the 2 O Clock flight, but evidently Allah Willed that I should preside at this grand meeting. Alhamdulillah!

It has taken us 76 years after the demise of this grand old man to pay our respects to a Ceylon Moor pioneer. He, as you know, was the first Ceylon Moor Member of the Legislative Council and the Colombo Municipal Council. He was also the first Moor unofficial Magistrate in 1876.

We had a void in the portrait gallery of Ceylon Moor patriots. Today, Alhamdulillah! we have been able to fill that gap. We are thankful to Marhoom Anis bin Haji ismail Effendi, whose heir had handed over the photograph of the late Abdul Rahman, which his late father had carefully preserved.

We must also remember, with gratitude, Marhoom Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi, who has kept a careful record of the Moors of the past and also evidence of the history of the Moors. I understand that the organizers of this function have obtained very valuable information from the files of Marhoom Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi and that information is in your hands in the form of a booklet.

To a certain extent Marhoom MC Abdul Rahman was a man of outspoken ability. His speeches indicate that he was no "Yes" man. If the Government of the day introduced legislation that was beneficial to the country he supported such legislation and if it was not in the best interest of the country he opposed it. Specially at a time like that he had the guts to oppose.

As a Municipal Councillor, Hon MC Abdul Rahman, has been responsible in getting the streets of Colombo lit by gas. But in later years, when I entered Municipal politics, as a City father, I had the privilege of changing them to incandescent bulbs and that in spite of vehement protests by interested parties who tried to tempt me with various rewards if I withdrew the motion.

His other notable work in the Colombo Municipal Council was the appointment of female vaccinators who were very useful to our community, specially to the Moor women.

I understand that the teenagers have brought out a very comprehensive biographical sketch of this law-giver, educationist, merchant prince and social worker.

I believe - I can say this without any fear of contradiction - that I am the only man alive today who had seen the happy couple. They always sat together, she dressed in a white saree and he in Shalwar & Kameez complete with a Surat cap. A beautiful beard adorned his manly face. Undoubtedly, he looked a born leader. May their souls rest in peace!

**Citation by MH Mohamed, World Muslim Congress (Sri Lanka Council) and representative Rabitat-Al Alam Al Islami, Makkah Al Mukarramah:**

Mr Presisent, Mr JR Jayawardene, Your Excellencies, Mr Premadasa, member for Colombo Central, Ladies & Gentlemen:

It is my privilege to speak a few words on Hon MC Abdul Rahman, who was no ordinary mortal, but a merchant, reformer, legislator and leader. He had in his veins the same

saintly blood from his mother, Fathima, a daughter of the renowned saint, Al Khutub Al Sheikh Ismail Yemeni.

Khadija, his wife, was also of saintly blood, being the daughter of his paternal uncle, Al Qutub Sheikh Yahya al Yamani, commonly known as Hadjar Appa, whose remains lie interred at the Main Street Jumma Mosque, Matara.

Abdul Rahman became a businessman of repute by the establishment, in Colombo Fort and in Pettah and Slave Island, of an extensive import and export business. He owned shipping vessels for the transport of goods, the SS "Rahmaniya" was the first vessel named after him. He was helpful to everyone. That was Abdul Rahman the merchant. His activities and his conspicuous ability became well known and recognized.

He was nominated to a seat in the Colombo Municipal Council in 1876 to look after the and promote the interests of the local Muslims. He made such an impressive effort that while being a Councillor he was made an Unofficial Magistrate, being the first Ceylon Moor to hold these two posts.

As a result of the enlargement of the Ordinance and a Moor being allowed to be appointed to the Legislative Council, Abdul Rahman was appointed as the first Muslim Member of the Legislative Council on 29 October 1889. This appointment was made by Sir Arthur Gordon. His work received universal recognition. At the end of his five year term he was appointed to a further period of five years by Governor Elibank Havelock. In those days appointed Members generally sat and warmed their seats but not so Abdul Rahman. In any proposal or debate he was concerned with the rights of the nation. He spoke out his heart in earnestness and evoked the sympathy and understanding of the Ruling British. The HANSARD of December 1894 is replete with reference to his concern towards the community. That was Abdul Rahman the Reformer.

The Moors of the time were lagging behind in matters concerning their social and educational life. This was a sphere where, if at all, Abdul Rahman felt action was necessary. He had much to speak of on the inclusion of amendments to the Marriage Registration Ordinance No 2 of 1886 and Marriage Registration Ordinance No 2 of 1888 whereby Muslim marriages also came to be registered. Until then, the "Kadutham" filled by Khateebes were the only unstable form of registration. Compulsory registration of Muslim marriages was a brain-child of Abdul Rahman.

Another field of his activities was the championing of the cause of Muslim female education. The Moors of Ceylon then held that female education would jeopardize the practice of Islam. A few female adults had some form of education in what was called "secluded schools". Abdul Rahman's vision and foresight spoke out his mind urging special provision for the education of Muslim females and the question of general female education was discussed in the Legislative Council. He was thus a pioneer for the promotion of Muslim female education and for the appointment of doctors and vaccinators who catered to the needs of the Muslim women. His insistence ultimately resulted in the Colonial Secretary, in the year 1898, authorizing the cost of the building which housed the first Muslim Girl's School in Colombo.

Abdul Rahman became so engrossed in his political work that he found little time to look after himself. Frail in body and weak in health he carried out his tasks at tremendous sacrifice. A devout Muslim, he had learnt the Hadeeth "paradise lies at the feet of the



Mother". She had been his inspiration. Amidst his crowded program, on account of failing health, he passed away on 19 June 1899, while serving only the second five year term of the Council. That was Abdul Rahman the Leader.

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## **M. S. ABOO BAKR**

ABU - the late Mohamed Salim Aboobakr, former Deputy Mayor of Colombo in 1950 will be remembered with love and gratitude this week for the great services he rendered to the people and to the country.

M. S. Aboobakr first entered politics in the year 1936 as a pioneer member of the Lanka Samasamaja party. He belongs to the first generation of the left leaders of Sri Lanka along with such stalwarts of the calibre of Phillip and Robert Gunawardena, Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Dr. S. A. Wickramasinghe, Bernard Soysa, M. G. Mendis and Pieter Keuneman.

Aboobakr was a strong believer in scientific socialist politics and was a patriot and the friend of the working class. A fire brand politician. He was a champion in the struggle against the capitalist and feudal exploitation.

He was elected in 1946 to the Dematagoda ward as an M.M.C. and was elected Deputy Mayor of Colombo in 1950. A veteran trade unionist, he exercised his powers in; favour of the down trodden and for the rights of the poor rate payers. Being the first trotskyite member to be elected to the above position. He was also the first leftist Muslim to contest the first general elections as a candidate to the Polonnaruwa seat.

He served the people for over 14 years and it was during this period that he became the first person to address the municipal council in Sinhala and later a resolution to declare May 1st, as a paid holiday for the working class. He moved resolutions in the C.M.C. to re-name the streets of Colombo, resolved and paved the way for the establishment of public transport which is now an act of parliament. He was an excellent debater of facts and figures. His contributions to local politics, trade unionism and revolutions made him a feared but respected leftist whose dynamic personality and noble character are hitherto monumental. His entire life was a struggle and sacrifice for the benefit of the working class which is now part of history and which cannot be forgotten or erased.

In 1985 at the age of 72 M. S. Abu was confined to his bed because of his ill health, the former President R. Premadasa in the capacity of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka visited M. S. Aboobakr's residence at 153, Veluvana Mawatha, Dematagoda and chatted for an hour.

It must go on record that the Prime Minister did not go to Abubakar empty handed he carried a yellow file on his hands, together with a larger white envelope. The file contained the deeds of title to the house in which the former deputy mayor Abubakar had lived for 44 years.

He had, he wrote to the Prime Minister, attempted to purchase the house under the clauses in the law which permit of such a purchase. But the owner's agent, after

agreeing to a fixed sum of money, had welshed on the deal at the last moment. Hence he appealed to his old friend and colleague Prime Minister Honourable R. Premadasa.

Now, the house which he could not buy has been gifted to him. And what was in the envelope? This is a little present for you from the Colombo Central UNP organisation said honourable Premadasa as he pressed the envelope into his old friend's hands before he said good bye.

**By Azad Hashim and Falvl Hashim**

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**M. L. M. ABOOSALLY**

**ABOOSALLY - M.L.M.** Former M.P. & Minister of Labour for Balangoda. Dearly beloved husband of Salma, dearest father of Roshan, Rameez, Nilu, Shanaz, Laila and Sharm, father-in-law of Mike Mohamed, Mohantha Soysa, Zarkir Abdulhussein, Sulaiman Niyas, Jehaan Ismail and Dilip Kodikara, adored grandfather of Rehana, Tariq, Azi, Tahir, Nadine, Hatim, Hakim, Salma, Hussein, Anisha, Aquila, Imaan and Aamil. Janaza leaving residence Lankabarana Estate, Balangoda at 1.00 p.m. 12th December 2005. DN Mon Dec 12 2005

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## **ABU BAKR MUHAMMAD ibn ABDUL MALIK ibn THUFAIL AI-MADANI**

**Vaidiyatilleka Rajakaruna Rajavaidiya Gopala Mudaliyar** family of Uda Rata were also popularly known and called as Behethge Mudiyanse Lage Odayar Nilame of the Kandyan Provinces.

The arrival in Sri Lanka of the two male ancestors of the Uda-Rata family had taken place during the reign of **Parakrama Bahu II** (1230 AD). According to traditions handed down from generation to generation, these two ancestors, were, for some years living in the town called Gop, situated towards the Northern part of Bombay in the Sind Province. They were ordered by the Ministers of the Delhi Sultanate (Sultan Muizzudin) to leave for Sri Lanka at the invitation of a Sri Lankan Monarch, one Parakrama Bahu.

Thereafter the term Gopala was assigned to the names of their descendants by the Singhalese Kings. This is evidenced by the inscriptions on a tombstone found in the burial place of a mosque in the Kegalle District. The Odayar family has maintained a brief account of the activities connected to their services rendered to both the Singhalese Kings and British Rulers.

In the field of medicine, they occupied a unique position and have been the recipients of the highest honor through one member after another being conferred the rank of Behethge Muhamdirams by the Singhalese Kings. They also held the ranks of Army Commanders and rendered loyal service to the Kings. An important reference to this is given on page 330 of the History of Ceylon in the Portuguese Era by Dr. Paul Peiris.

**Vaidiyatilleka Rajakaruna Haji Muhandiram Sheikh Muhammad Odayar**, a Unani Physician by profession, is a descendant of the pioneer Moorish Royal Physicians who came to Ceylon as early as the fourteenth century. He descends from some of the distinguished men who adorned the public services of the Island from the time of the ancient Singhalese Kings dating from the reign of Sri Sangabo and Sri Parakrama Bahu. Reference to this family is made on page 99 of the Getaberiya Sannasa of Antiquarian Research in Kegalle.

One of his earliest ancestors was the eminent scholar and scientist, AbuBakr Muhammad Abdul Malik Ibn Thufail of North East Granada, Spain.

Muhandiram Muhammad's forefathers were all Unani Hakims (medical practitioners). In 1672 his great-great-grandfather, Rajakaruna Behethge Mudiyanse Abdul Qadir, a popular physician at that time, was holding the rank of Adigar. His great-grandfather, Palkumbure Vaidyatilleke Rajakaruna Gopalana Mudiyanse Lage Behethge Segu Muhammad Odayar, was a Royal Physician and served as a member of the Royal Court. His grandfather, Segu Madar Odayar, another practitioner of the Unani system of medicine, was a Head Aratchi of Parana Kuru Korale, where he received many rewards for his services. Sheikh Abdul Rahman Pediliyar, the Muhandiram's father, too carried down the tradition of his forefathers in the sphere of medicine and his was a household name in every Singhalese home although due state recognition failed to come his way.

Born in the year 1885, haji Muhandiram Muhammad Odayar, continued the noble service of his proud ancestors. He started the practice of medicine in 1902 and has proved himself a distinguished son of the soil by his aid to the poor and his munificent endowments for several charitable purposes. [Culled from Sailan Vol 2 No 1 June 1955]

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## **ADAMJEE LUKMANJEE**

One of the oldest exporters of tea, rubber and coconut, in Sri Lanka, as been Adamjee Lukmanjee & Sons Ltd. In 1860's, Mr `Adamjee Lukmanjee came to Ceylon from India and established for spices, sugar and pulses in the Pettah. The company moved to Grandpass in 1907 which was concurrent with the expansion of the business into the plantation sector, thus becoming a grower, processor, and exporter of Sri Lanka's three main agricultural crops. The bsiness comprised of warehouses and the Mohamedia Oil Mill for extracting oil from Copra and other seeds. In 1936 they were instrumental in founding the "Sucharitha" Foundation. In 1953, the company was converted into a Limited Liability and added new oil expellers and a steel drum manufacturing plant. Despite nationalization of its properties in the 1970's, in the 1980's hey expanded and diversified further.

The Directors of the Company in 2007 are:

Mr Murtaza A Lukhmanjee  
Mr Khuzaima T Gulamhussein

Main Areas of Business:

Manufacture and export of Dessicated Coconut

Manufacture Coconut Oil under the "N-JOY" brand name

Manufacture and export of Copra - largest exporter in Sri Lanka

Export of Pepper, Cinnamon, Nutmeg & Cloves

Produce Market and export Coconut Cream and Coconut Milk

### **Adam Group**

Directors:

Shabbir A Gulamhussein  
M T A Gulamhussein

Main Areas of Business:

Export of Tea, Dessicated Coconuts

Manufacture & Export of Garments

Main Business Establishments:

**AdamExpo Pvt Ltd** - export of Tea, DC, Spices - Imports wire

**Adam Apparels Pvt Ltd.** - garment manufacturing and export

**Adam Metals Pvt Ltd.** - manufacture of barbed wire, nail wire and panel pins. imports and distribute hardware, building materials, agricultural implements and sanitary ware

**NetCom Pvt Ltd.** - imports and deals in Computer Hardware

**Ceylon & Foreign Trades Ltd.** - established in 1949 as a private limited liability company and then converted to a public quoted company in 1978, later bought over by Mr Gulamhussein - processing packers, exporters of coconut products, dessicated coconut, rubber and spices

**Adamjee Extractors Pvt Ltd.** - operate solvent extraction and export essential oils

**Georgio Morandi Pvt Ltd.** - garment factory located in Hanguranketa

**Spice of Life Pvt Ltd.** - export of spices

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## **ADMANI**

The Admani family is well known for the many leading medical men it has produced through time. They originated in 1918, when their founding father, Abdul Latif, son of Mohammed Ali Admani set foot on the island, eventually establishing a small textile business in 3rd Cross Street in the heart of Pettah in the 1920's. He was joined by his eldest son, Abubaker, in 1938 who was a young lad of just ten years at that time. Abubaker was initially employed at A A Sattar & Company, a leading textile Company of that era, and thereafter taken as a partner of the firm in recognition of his sincere efforts and untiring work. In 1960 he established Lucky Industries at Hultsdorf Street Colombo in partnership with Babu Ali Miya. He eventually became the sole proprietor of A A Sattar & Company and Lucky Industries and thereafter established a business empire of his own. The business soon blossomed into several associate Companies, viz; Vanguard Industries (pvt) Ltd., Vanguard Trading Company (pvt) Ltd., Master Apparels (pvt) Ltd., and Liberty Textiles Exports (pvt) Ltd.

The Lucky Group of Companies went to export garments to the USA, then a very lucrative garment export market. In the early 1990's, when the Sri Lanka Government embarked on its 200 Garment Factory Program, he made sure that more factories were established in various locations, viz; Dehiowita, Yatiyantota & Jaela, not only providing the rural youth with substantial employment, but also generating valuable foreign exchange in the process. Haji Abu Baker was also a well known social worker. He served as the President of the Memon Association of Ceylon from 1969-70 and supervised the shifting of the headquarters from Hultsdorf to Kollupitiya. He also serves as Quazi for the Memon Community in addition to serving as Trustee for the Memon Hanafi Mosque. He was appointed Lanka Sikhmani by the President of Sri Lanka, D B Wijetunge, in 1993. He was also a sworn translator from Gujarati to English appointed by the Ministry of Justice.

Dr A A M, Iqbal, the oldest son of Haji Abubaker Admani, secured a scholarship at King Edward Medical College in Lahore and graduated as a doctor. Having completed his internship at the Chest Clinic as a Medical Practitioner in Government Service, he served at the base hospital in Watupitiwela.

In the year 1988, he started his own Medical Clinic at Bambalapitiya and soon built up a lucrative practice serving as a physician for a few five star hotels, seven foreign embassies and some international airlines. He was also a director of several companies including Amana Investments and also served as Trustee of the Devatagaha Mosque. Dr Iqbal traveled extensively and it was during one of sch a sojourn to Europe in April 2000 that he, his father, and two daughters, met with a tragic accident in Baghdad, Iraq, where all of them were killed.

Dr A A M Haroon, the second son of Haji Abubaker, also graduated from King Edward Medical College in Lahore as a doctor. He later joined his older brother Iqbal, and thereafter continued to practice at the clinic serving some of the leading hotels, airlines and embassies. He was the first to obtain the ISO Certification for a medical laboratory in Sri Lanka when he did so for Colombo Medi Lab and Clinic. He is also the Chairman of the family business, The Lucky Group of Companies, and is presently the President of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka.

A A M Ilyas, the third son of Haji Abubaker, joined the faculty of Law of the University of Colombo where he successfully achieved his LLB Degree. He, then, joined the Law College and passed out as an Attorney at Law. He completed his apprenticeship under P Navaratnarajah, QC, in whose Chambers he dwelled for over 12 years and later set up his own practice. He was appointed Special Quazi for the Memon Community in 1993 which office he holds to this day (2006). He is also a Director of the family business.

A A M Yusuf, the fourth son of Haji Abubaker, joined his fathers business while doiung his studies in Chartered Accountancy, and is now fully in charge of the affairs of the Lucky Group of Companies.

Haji Ismail Admani, second son of Abdul Latif Admani, started business as a textile broker in The Pettah he went on to establish, with the help of his father, Ismail & Company, a textile shop in Maliban Street, Pettah, in the 1960's. This Company, is now based in Second Street in the Pettah and has since been renamed Ismail Sons (pvt) Ltd., and has expanded its interests to include the import and sale of confectionary. In 1976, he went on to embark on a new industrial venture, Ecotex Industries, with its factory at Modera Street, Mattakuliya, Colombo 15, which manufactures textiles for the domestic market.

Dr. **Ariff Admani Dr**, son of Haji Ismail Admani, chose medicine as a career and did his pre-med at Forman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan before entering North Colombo Medical College in Ragama, Sri Lanka. He was transferred to St George's University School of Medicine, Granada, West Indies and graduated in 1992. Moved to NJ State in the USA in 1994 to begin his residency training in internal medicine at St Michaels Medical Center in 1994. Currently practices as a specialist in infectious diseases treating HIV and Hepatitis in Essex County, New Jersey. His brother, **Irfan Admani**, born:1972 in Colombo, chose medicine as a career, graduated at St George's University School of Medicine, Granada, West Indies in 1996 before entering St Michaels Medical Center where he specializes in Cardiology.

**Haji SalehMohammed Abba Admani**, son of Abba Admani, arrived in Ceylon at a very young age before the partition of the subcontinent. Started business in 3rd Cross Street called Ibrahim Abba & Company with his older brother Ibrahim. The Company was dissolved in the late sixties and thereafter he engaged himself as a distributor of imported goods and textiles and as a commission agent.

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**Farook Admani**, son of Haji Saleh Mohammed Abba Admani, started his own business in Keyzer Street under the name of TEXON Center in 1982 and later became a partner at SILVERTEX which imported textiles and fancy items. In 1998 became a partner of SOLO Tiles, importers of tiles and sanitary ware based at 268 Layards Broadway, Grandpass, Colombo 14.

**Haji Ahmed Admani**, son of AbdulGhani Admani, migrated to Ceylon as a teenager during the partition of India with his elder sisters family. Salesman in a textile shop and later a well known textile broker better known by his pet name of **Batchoo Bhai**. He married the daughter of **Haji Abdul Latif Pardesi**, textile merchant from Hambantota, in the southern coast of Ceylon.

**Mohammed Farooq Admani**, son of Haji Ahmed Admani, set up his own textile business, HAFYAR ENTERPRISES, which evolved into a well known name for imported suitings. Involved in real estate business. His daughter, **Farnaz Admani**, is a qualified elocution teacher registered with the Wendy Whatmore Academy and conducts classes at her home.

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## **AHMED ARABI PASHA of Egypt**

### **Ahmad Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian exiles in Sri Lanka**

#### **Revolt, trial and exile**

During the 1880s, the Muslims of Sri Lanka were brought into close contact with a head Arabi **Pasha**, the Egyptian nationalist. The Muslims were then at the peak of their economic prosperity and receptive to new influences. Arabi was exiled along with some of his brother officers after an Egyptian army uprising. They arrived in Sri Lanka in 1883. They had all become involved in a celebrated revolt against the government of the Khedive Ismail and his successor, Tawfiq. Ismail's follies of palace building and the extravagance of his royal entertainments had plunged his country into financial difficulties. To find new funds, he began to fleece the peasants; but he also became more and more financially indebted to the British and French. Ultimately, these two powers were to gain control over Egypt. Due to his unsound finances, Ismail was then replaced by Tawfiq. Arabi Pasha emerged into prominence at about this time. In the Egyptian army, the highest ranks were monopolized by the Turkish officers; but the lower ranks were held by Egyptian, and the Egyptian officers resented the fact that they were required to do the more menial tasks. The discontented in the army found in the young Egyptian officer Arabi Pasha an eager leader. A nationalist movement grew up around him, which made its target the government of Khedive Tawfiq.

By the time he came to Sri Lanka, Arabi enjoyed a wide reputation as a heroic nationalist revolutionary. He had been born in 1840 in Horiyah, near Zagazig, in Egypt, the son of a village sheikh and a member of a fellahin (peasant) family with strong religious affiliation. After a short period of study at al-Azhar in Cairo, Arabi was conscripted into the army at the age of 14 and rose up from the ranks. Due to the favor of said Pasha, he became a lieutenant at 17, captain at 18, major at 19 and lieutenant - colonel at 20. The Khedive Ismail adds him a Pasha and allowed him a wife from the Khedive's family. But Arabi soon espoused the cause of the oppressed Egyptian soldiery and, by standing against the policies of Tawfiq, he won widespread support. He became in Egypt a popular and powerful figure, even if only for a short time.<sup>3</sup>

In 1880's Arabi Pasha founded hizab al- watani, the nationalist party, whose object was to unite the peasants and the Turkish elite in Egypt, in order to give forceful voice to their discontent at the autocratic nature of tawfiq's rule as conducted through his lieutenant, riaz Pasha. The slogan of this party was " Egypt for the Egyptians." in time the party became the principal opposition to tawfiq's rule. Arabi Pasha made three demands of tawfiq: firstly, that the ministry headed by riaz Pasha be replaced by a nationalist one; secondly, that a constituent assembly be set up; and, thirdly, that the army be increased to 18,000 men. But cookson, the British consul in Alexandria, advised tawfiq to take a firm stand against the army's demands.

This advice precipitated a major crisis.the khedive decided to arrest the army colonels instead of inquiring into their grievances. They were asked to attend his palace, kasr al-Nile, but, on arrival, were arrested and dismissed from the service. The soldiers of Ali fehmi, who were guarding the palace, however, rescued the colonels and compelled the khedive to dismiss the war minister and appoint mahmood sami Pasha in his place. The colonels then marched back to their barracks in triumph.

The Khedive sought to recover from this reverse by attempting to send the regiments of Arabi Pasha and Bad -Al - Ala - Whilom out of Cairo, one to Alexandria and the other to Dimiyate. Mahmudu Sami Pasha resisted this suggestion and was dismissed. The Colonels, on hearing of this, marched their regiments to the Abdion Palace, and made Tawfiq once again to capitulate. This time he had to agree to the elevation of Mahmudu Sami Pasha to the post of Prime Minister and of Arabi to that of under secretary at the war office. The Egyptians seem to have welcomed these appointments, Arabi was then popularly referred to as "al-Whaled". the only one, and "al -misrl", the Egyptian. Within tow days, sheriff Pasha came to the conclusion that these nationalists enjoyed considerable support, and he felt obliged to appoint Mahmudu Sami Pasha Prime Minister and Arabi Pasha, Minister of war.

At this point, Britain became involved in Arabi's fate. The deposed khedive Ismail was planning a counter- revolution from Naples. Rumors of a coup spread, so that Arabi and his friends became afraid of assassination. It was rumored that 19 officers were planning to murder Arabi. They were seized and court-martialled, allowed no defense, and exiled to the Sudan. But in July 1882, attacks on foreigners suspected of supporting Ismail grew steadily more servers, and a mob in Alexandria set fire to the city. The French fleet felt compelled to leave Port Said. Public opinion in England was now roused.

Sir Garnet Wolseley was sent to Egypt to halt the unrest and violence. He occupied the Suez Canal Zone. Arabi and his associates tried to organize themselves to meet the challenge. Other officers were deployed Bad -Al-Aal-Hilmi was kept at Dimyut. Ali Fahmi was sent to the canal zone and mahmudu fehmi went to Tel-Al-Kabir to complete the lines there. But before long Ali Fehmi was contained and Mahmudu Sami captured and made prisoner by a small party of British soldiers. Arabi Pasha was without support and, within forty minutes of desultory fighting, his forces were rounded up by the British. Arabi himself took refuge in flight. By then a thousand Egyptians were believed to have been killed and wounded. The British gradually brought the riots in Alexandria under control.

Soon afterwards, Arabi was taken prisoner and handed over to the British Commander, Drury Lowe, in Cairo. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and his wife, a grand daughter of Lord Byron, were in Egypt during this period. They were attracted to the study of Egyptian affairs and



knew Arabic. When Arabi Pasha became powerful, Blunt became his guide, philosopher and friend.

He now endeavored to help Arabi by rousing public opinion in England to support him, through the press and through his powerful political contacts. Many British politicians clearly admired Arabi Pasha, whom they considered a nationalist leader, and were concerned about his health and safety.

For example, in the British parliament, Lord Randolph Churchill asked the Prime Minister whether Arabi's life was safe, and Sir Wilfred Lawson asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether there was any truth in the story that Arabi and the prisoners had been tortured.

Torture had, it was claimed, been inflicted on Mahmud Fehmi, the Engineer-General and the thumb screw and kurbush had been reputedly freely used. Sir Charles Wilson, his representative, had visited the Egyptian prisoners often and had reported that there was no truth in these allegations' future safety and keep them free from torture.

Other questions were addressed to the Prime Minister. He was asked whether the Government would bear the expense of the defense of the Egyptian officers or whether, as was rumored, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, to the London Times. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, replied that such expenses could not be expended from public funds.

The Egyptian Government had decided to charge Arabi and his associates under three counts: firstly, that of pillaging and burning the city of Alexandria; secondly, turning the Egyptian army against the Khedive; and thirdly, inciting the people to civil war.

To support these charges the prosecution proposed to call 140 witnesses. Arabi Pasha, in turn contemplated calling 400 for his defense. To meet the enormous expense of what was likely to be a protracted trial, a public fund, called the Arabi fund, was floated in Britain. Eminent figures, like Lord Randolph Churchill, General CE Gordon and Sir William Gregory made generous contributions, but the fund did not swell up as expected.

This compelled Blunt and his Egyptian friends to try a different tactic. Arabi and the leading prisoners offered to plead guilty to the main charge of rebellion if they were allowed clemency. Maude Fehmi, Jacob Sami, Toulba Ismath, Abd-Al-Aal-Hilmi and Ahmad Abd-al-ghaffar all then pleaded guilty, were formally sentenced to death and then had their sentences commuted to exile.

(It is interesting to note that Queen Victoria was one of those then in favor of hanging Arabi Pasha and his friends. She felt that Arabi was no more than a common rebel against the Khedive.)

### **Ahmad Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian exiles in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)**

Various countries were suggested as suitable places of exile for Arabi to be sent. Cape Colony was considered but rejected because of political unrest there. Finally, the British government agreed to send him and his co-conspirators to Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon.

Soon after the decision was reached, Arabi and his companions were required to make the following declaration of oath;

We, the undersigned swear by Allah, who gave the Qu'ran, and by our personal word of honor, that we will agree to go to the place which the government should designate for us, and to stay there.

The Egyptian Government agreed to the decision to send Arabi and the other political prisoners into exile, but in Arabi's case they insisted that he must forfeit his property. As some compensation for this, they also agreed that they would provide a maintenance allowance for his women and children.

Why Sri Lanka should have been chosen as the place of exile is not known. Obviously it was of importance that it was situated some distance away from Egypt. The rebels would not easily be able to communicate with Egypt, and so Arabi Pasha would find it hard to start another revolution from there. It is possible that a second reason may have been that in Sri Lanka Muslims formed only a minority community and were, also, loyal to the British. Arabi would not be likely to find enough support there for a revolt against the British government. A third reason for sending the exiles to Sri Lanka may have been its reputation as a peaceful country, politically quiet since 1848, and it was unlikely that the exiles would be able to provoke any general political unrest there. The inhabitants of the country chiefly spoke Sinhalese, while Arabi could speak only Arabic and therefore would not be able to communicate easily with them. One positive reason may also have been influential. Sri Lanka was, of course, well known to Muslims, for whom Adam's Peak was regarded as a sacred mountain. According to the legend, when Adam was cast out from Paradise, he placed one foot on the mountain and the other foot in the sea. Perhaps, this association made it seem a suitable place of exile for a Muslim nationalist.

### **The life of Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian exiles in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)**

All the exiles and their families, with the exception of Abd-Al-Ghaffar and his family, left Suez on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1882 in the specially chartered ship S.S. Marriott's. They were put under the charge of Maurice Bye, an Englishman in the service of the khedive.

He was assisted by Salimattalah, a Syrian. Two of the exiled officers, Abd-Al-Aal and Toulba, were not accompanied by their families. Arabi Pasha's first wife, a friend of Lady Gregory, also remained behind, as she was expecting a child. The Secretary of State informed the Governor of Sri Lanka, Sir James London, by telegram as follows:

Twenty, seventh December – Egyptian exiles proceed Colombo. Provide temporary quarters and funds avoiding unnecessary expense. Will ultimately choose residence in the island. Eight Chiefs, seventeen male children, nineteen wives and female children. Total fifty-eight. Dispatch follows.

This was followed by another telegram, which indicated that only 7 chiefs and a grand total of 54 were coming. Ghaffar and his family made up the difference.

The arrival in Sri Lanka of these distinguished Muslims, nationalists, patriots, revolutionaries, inevitably became an event of popular interest and was to have long-term effects on the local Muslim community. It was clear from the outset that the Colonial Government treated the exiles as people of some importance and was cautious in their dealing with them. On 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 1883 the Ceylon Times reported that Lake House, the property of the business firm Loose and Van Cuylenberg, had been engaged by the Government for Arabi Pasha. The next day it reported that a telegram had been received asking the

Government to provide quarters for Arabi Pasha and his seven companions and that Messrs. Venn and Company had engaged Lake House, Haarlem House, Braybrooke Lodge, Struan House.

The Ceylon times seems to have obtained this information even before the Government Agent of the Western Province (Mr. F. R. Saunders) under whose authority they came. On 4<sup>th</sup> January, Mr. Saunders inquired from the Colonial Secretary whether the information given by the newspapers was correct. Several people who had houses to sell had made inquiries from him. He recommended to the Government two particular houses and added that there were others available too. The Savings Bank had a large house, the Whist Bungalow, with extensive grounds, which the trustees would be glad to let and which would be a most suitable residence for a large party. Not far from it was another house, belonging to the estate of the late Mr. Daniels, which had been offered. The house contained 14 bedrooms and had 20 to 30 acres of land attached to it.

Mr. F.R.Saunders felt that the choice of a residence should be make with care. He suggested, obviously with security in mind, that the exiles must " desire retirement and seclusion," rather than seek "the most fashionable and conspicuous parts which I have heard mentiond, but he was over-ruled. The Governor asked the Colonial Secretary to inform Saunders that it was considered undesirable to place these exiles in seclusion, and that Lake House, Haarlem House, Struan House and Braybrooke Lodge had been selected. Ultimately, however, the exiles were, like any other refugees, to be allowed to choose their own residences in the island.

On 10<sup>th</sup> January 1883, the chartered ship, SS Marriott's, anchored in Colombo Harbor, the master attendant (Caption Donnan) and Port Surgeon (Dr.Garvin) boarded the vessel. The Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Douglas, and the Clerk of the Executive Council, G.T.M. O'Brien, followed them aboard, and it was agreed that the exiles would come ashore the next day.

The excitement, which their arrival occasioned, was verywidely reported. On 11<sup>th</sup> January, the local Muslim community gathered in large numbers on both sides of the road from the harbor to the barracks, a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile. At this date, there were supposedly 97,775 Muslims in the island, 32,208 of who lived in Colombo, and a considerable number must have turned out on this occasion.

According to Government orders. the exiles were ultimately allowed to reside in any part of the island except the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The restriction did not apply to the wives. Children and dependents of the exiles, could travel as they pleased, within and outside Sri Lanka. The exiles were to be under police surveillance. Coming directly under the Inspector-General of Police, and it seems that the remoteness of the Northern and Eastern provinces was seen as preventing effective supervision. Hence the limits on their travel within the country.

After their initial enthusiastic reception, the exiles attracted attention wherever they went and whatever they did. On Friday, 12 January 1883. Arabi paid his first visits to the Maradana Mosque in Colombo. On this occasion the local Muslims followed him in a procession. In April, too, some Muslims went in a procession to Lake House to call on him. This type of attention was paid not only to Arabi but to the others also. The Government thought that this sort of enthusiasm would wane after a short time. They claimed to see the attraction wearing off and hoped there would soon be an end to it.

In the police administration report of 1883, it was observed:

"The advent of Arabi and other Egyptian exiles to our shores was the cause of some excitement among the native population, prior to and after their arrival and particularly on the day of landing. The novelty, however soon wore off and the exiles now move about attracting scarcely any attention."

This may have been partly true regarding the local interest in them; but Arabi continued to hold a special attraction for visitors to the city. He was on one occasion likened to the upland tortoise. This tortoise was a very large one of unknown age, living in the uplands of Mutuwal. All those who called at Colombo supposedly endeavored to see both.

Shortly after their arrival, the Governor, Sir James Longden, interviewed the exiles at Queen's house in Colombo. His object was to become personally acquainted with them and to learn if they desired to remain permanently in Colombo or instead preferred to remove into the interior with the possibility of the exiles shifting to Kandy, the interior capital.

At the interviews, Arabi Pasha acted as spokesman for the others. He asked for two further houses, one for Abd-Al-Aal-himi Pasha and the other one for Toulba Ismath Pasha, who were both staying with him at Lake House. He also requested an English education for his children and the attention of an English doctor for his family, and he complained of the inadequacy of their allowances. Immediate steps were taken to meet most of these requests. Houses were soon found, for both Abd-Al-Aal-Hilmi and Toulba Ismath Pasha.

In the meantime, there were many sympathizers in England who kept up the pressure on the Government. They asked particularly what the status of the exiles was in Sri Lanka. Mr. Labouchere, the Member of Parliament for Northampton, broached this subject. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice answered:

Arabi Pasha is not retained as a prisoner, but remains in Ceylon in accordance with a solemn undertaking in writing, which was signed by himself and witnessed by his European Counsel, to the effect that he would remove to any locality indicated by the Egyptian Government and remain there until invited to change his abode.

This clearly applied to the others as well, for they all gave this undertaking on oath and signed the declaration.

When Arabi Pasha arrived in the island he had with him one son and one wife, a girl of 17 years. His first wife, the friend of Lady Gregory, had, of course, stayed behind. Soon after his arrival, Arabi endeavored to get his first wife to join him, but she did not want to leave Egypt. The position with regard to her right to join her husband was made clear in November 1883 by Evelyn Barin:

The Egyptian Government says that they certainly have no objection to this arrangement being carried out, but that Madam Arabi Pasha has stated that she has no wish to leave Egypt.

She apparently did not change her mind, for the four wives who ultimately returned with Arabi to Egypt was said to be "Chaffer" (i.e. Bedouin Arab) women. But there is no certainty on this point. The wives and children, of course, possessed the freedom to move from Egypt to Sri Lanka and back again, and their movement is not easy to trace.

Since there were no places in suitable English boarding schools available, the Government decided to allow the sons of the exiles to occupy vacant places in the Government's normal school, whose principal was Mr. Hill. They were allowed these places "free of rent for the time being". The boys came under the care of one Mr. James. Two sons of Abd-Al-Aal-Hilmi attended Gorton School, Maradana, in Colombo. The girls attended English Christian schools. Later, when they moved to Kandy, the sons of Arabi Pasha and Toulba Ismath attended Kingswood College, Kandy. It was perhaps through these arrangements that Arabi came to recognize the paucity of modern educational provision for Muslims in Sri Lanka.

The Governor of Sri Lanka, Sir James Longden, took a personal interest in the reception, accommodation and well being of the exiles. In February 1883, the Secretary of State asked him to allow the general military information, which the exiles might possess regarding the Egyptian war. The governor thought this a valuable suggestion. He was also willing to devote attention to the exiles' medical needs, placing them under the care of a European physician, Dr. White.

With regard to the complaint of the exiles that their allowances were inadequate, however, no immediate response was given. They remained dependent upon the first allowances of the Egyptian Government, which had arranged with the imperial Ottoman Bank of Alexandria to pay each exile a sum of English Pounds 30 -15s -4d per month.

The Egyptian Government took some time to settle the problems regarding the property owned by the exiles and the property jointly owned by them and their wives. Until this was settled, a fair and final distribution of any increase among them was not possible. But on the recommendation of the Governor, Sir James Longden, an interim increase was eventually made.

In 1883 the proposed increase in Arabi Pasha's allowance came up for discussion in parliament. Labouchere, the Member of Parliament for Northampton, raised the question. Sir Edmund Fitzmaurice answered that the Egyptian Government, with great liberality, had granted an increase of Pounds 2,500 per year, to be distributed among the exiles according to their needs and a further sum of pounds 220 per month for the maintenance of Arabi who was the poorest. Parliamentary agitation clearly helped to bring results.

Meanwhile, further claims were made by All Fehmi, Yacoub Sami, and Mahmudu Sami and were sent to the Secretary of State by the Governor with his own observations upon them. This necessitated yet another careful examination to ascertain whether their allowances were sufficient. While this was going on, writs were being served upon them by the Egyptian Government concerning their property interests in Egypt. This added to their discomfort and made the rapid settlement of their financial affairs imperative. In Britain the memoranda of the three exiles were therefore carefully scrutinised.

All Fehmi's memorandum reached the Prime Minister along with the comments of Lady Augusta Gregory, the wife of Sir William Gregory, who had earlier been Governor of Ceylon (1872-77). Of Madam Ali Fehmi, Lady Gregory stated.

"This poor woman was of good family and position in Egypt, has been a devoted wife and brought up her children carefully and well (I speak from personal knowledge). It is

heart-breaking to her to see her husband and children in absolute poverty and she must indeed be driven to despair when she thinks of leaving them and going away alone in broken health to relieve them of the burden of her support."

Madam Ali Fehmi's description of her own plight is even more touching:

"I have parted with everything I had, selling my things under their value, till now I possess nothing whatever by which to support life. I am reduced with my children to remain within doors. Not having proper clothes for myself and my children whom you saw at Cairo."

The Governor confirmed this:

"She has been compelled to dispose of much of her trinkets and she and her daughter cannot leave their homes because they have no suitable dresses in which to appear."

According to Madam Ali Fehmi, Pounds 30 was not sufficient to maintain the 14 persons of her household for more than 30 days.

Sir William Gregory, assisted by the Inspector General of Police, made a particular study of the contents of the memoranda. Gregory, who had seen the inside of Ali Fehmi's house observed that "it was absolutely destitute of furniture."

The contents of Yacoub Sam's memorandum puzzled the secretary of state. And clarification of certain points became necessary:

"I am to observe that Lord Granville is not able to judge whether Pounds 10 per month may be considered a proper house rent to pay in Ceylon for a person in his position, but his lordship does not think that a horse and carriage, a gardener, and a watcher, which are items in upon as reasonable requirements for one representing himself to be without private income."

Sir William Gregory pointed out that Yacoub Sami was not living in luxury and that he needed a watcher and a gardener and had to pay a house rent of Pounds 10 per month. In the case of Mahmudu Sami, it was established that his wife had a private income of about Pounds 300 per year. He, at least, was not considered to be in difficulties.

After studying their cases, the Inspector General sounded distinctly sympathetic.

"They live very quietly and inexpensively in much the style in which a Lieutenant Colonel commanding an English regiment would live there. If this is considered a suitable style for those who are ex Pashas and Ministers and before were Colonels, at the lowest, then their incomes are hardly sufficient, and those of six of them might be increased from RS, 4,000/- to RS, 5,000/- per annum, Arabi's was left at Rs, 6,000/- as at present.

Owing to the difficulties of assessing the real value of the property held by the exiles and their wives, and since the property possessed by some of the exiles' wives was only expressed in land of which the annual value was not known, the Egyptian Government found it hard to make its final decision. Eventually it decided to treat each exile as being equally devoid of private means unless it could be proved that this was not so. Accordingly, Arabi Pasha's allowance was raised by Pounds 19-4s-8d a month and the

allowance of the others by Pounds 7-4s-8d on the instructions of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India paid these increases. Bryce, the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, replied that all the exiles now received Pounds 435 a year, except Arabi Pasha, who received Pounds 600 a year.

The British authorities suspected that there was some opposition to the more generous treatment of Arabi:

"I am disposed to agree with the Inspector-General and to believe that there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction among the others at Arabi being pensioned more liberally. ", was Bryce's view, especially as Arabi did not share any of his increase with the others.

Since the exiles were precluded from earning a living in Ceylon, the allowances meant much to them. Strangers, as they also were, in a foreign land. Their style of living, the size and standard of the houses they rented and their establishments all depended on this. They felt it necessary to maintain a certain position among their co-religionists and obviously wished to be free from monetary embarrassments. At first they had to depend entirely on these allowances. Later they became better off when their wives' wealth became available to them.

If cared to be careful, they were not exactly poor. The allowances they received, Rs. 6,000/- Arabi and Rs. 4,350/- each for the others, compared favourably with the salaries of the Ceylonese public servants of standing. Their allowances brought them in line with an Army Colonel, whose salary was Rs. 5,400/- of a Chief Surveyor, Rs. 4,000/-, a Lieutenant Colonel, Rs. 4,800/- and a Cadet in the Civil Service, Rs. 3,750/-.

After Abd-al-Aal Fehmi's death the exiles asked to be allowed to share his allowance. The Egyptian Government, however, having raised their allowance once, decided not to make any more increases, and, in 1892, the Governor was informed by the secretary of state that her majesty's government was not prepared to press the government of Egypt to depart from its decision, nor itself to increase the allowances. After this, no further appeals for increases of allowances were made.

### **Foreign and local visitors**

In Ceylon, Arabi Pasha was subject to frequent intrusions on his privacy, not always of a pleasant nature. Prominent personages as well as ordinary mortals dropped in to see him. Arabi endeavoured to meet all who called. Among the early callers were the Russian Count. Boutourlini, who came with Lord Gifford to interview him. As more and more people called on him. It was observed:

"All the distinguished personages that call here will no doubt look upon Arabi as a local sight that ought to be seen, but we shall not be surprised if after a little while Arabi was not at home to his numerous callers.

But Arabi Pasha continued to see his visitors. In 1884, the Australian touring cricketers, led by W. I. Murdock, made a point of calling upon him.

The visitors were often gracious and were kindly received. In August 1890, Dr. F. Idrisawa brought for Arabi a book written by Tokaisaasosi bearing the title, "The Memoir of Arabi". Caroline Corner, who wrote an account of her visit to Ceylon, recorded that she saw

Arabi, "seated on his prayer carpet, with the holy Qur'an, his inseparable companion by his side."

Mr. C. H. Z. Fernandou, a local political figure, also recorded a visit he had made, when he was only 6 years of age. Arabi Pasha made him sit in front of him and spoke to him of the love one should have for one's country. Incidents of this kind suggest that the exiles were widely respected and, through Muslim, were regarded with affection even by local Buddhists, Hindu and Christians. Their presence must undoubtedly have raised the consciousness of the local Muslim Community and increased its sense of solidarity.

The exiles took advantage of all the opportunities to impress which came their way. One early example of their active participation in a public function was the reception they gave to the Blunts, who came especially to see them. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and his wife arrived in the island, aboard the S. S. Goorkha, in October 1888. The exiles, their co-religionists and other well-wishers gathered at Colombo harbour and accorded the Blunts a most cordial welcome.

Welcome speeches were made by two lawyers, Messrs. Siddi Lebbe and Fidelis Perera. The Blunts were then taken in a procession to their bungalow. Thirty carriages took part in the drive. Seventy guests sat for breakfast that morning. On 9<sup>th</sup> November, the Blunts were given a dinner at Lake House. Places were laid for 120 guests, and the catering was done by the Metropolitan Hotel, "in a manner becoming to Muslims." Lake house was at its most splendid. The garden surroundings were illuminated and decorated, and the Police Band played music. This was followed a few days later by a breakfast party at the residence of Mr. M. S. J. Akbar at Kew Gardens, Slave Island, in Colombo.

These kindnesses to visitor were not entirely altruistic. For all the note of sustained gratitude and celebration which accompanied their visit, in the month or so which the Blunts spent in Ceylon they were given every opportunity to see for themselves the type of life which the exiles led, and what they had to contend with. In fact, the exiles seldom missed an opportunity to place their case before the eyes of influential members of the British community.

It is clear that the exiles always yearned to get back to Egypt. They made use of every opportunity they got to effect their release. They made it a point to meet important visitors to the island, acquaint them of their unhappiness and ask them to use their good offices. As a result, requisitions were regularly raised in the British Parliament regarding their release. In 1885, Justin Hently McCarthy asked whether, in view of the prevailing situation in Egypt, Arabi Pasha could be recalled. Gladstone, the Prime Minister, replied that Her Majesty's Government could not accept the suggestion.

Again, in 1886, Labouchere asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, "Whether he will use his good offices to bring the exile of these gentlemen from their native country to a speedy close." The under secretary, Bryce, replied:

"Considering the causes which led to the deportation of these exiles and the consequences which might follow their return to Egypt, Her Majesty's Government can hold out hope that they will use their good offices in the way suggested."

### **The Exiles' Petitions to the British Government**



In 1887, Arabi Pasha, Ali Fehmi and Yacoub Sami publicly demonstrated their loyalty to the British by participating in Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations held in Colombo. Messrs, Arabi, Yacoub Sami, Ali Fehmi stepped out and in a sad and solemn manner walked past the pavilion.

This matter was also brought up in the British parliament by Pickersgill, the Member of Parliament for Bethnal Green who asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been drawn to this procession and whether there was any truth in the reports. He also asked whether Arabi and his friends had formed part of the procession as captives of war or as subjects of the Queen. Sir Henry Holland, the Secretary of State, answered that the troops did not form any part of the Muslim procession. About 2000 school children and members of the Muslim Community, including the exiles, had participated, but entirely voluntarily. The three exiles had presented an address to the Governor to be sent to the Queen. This contained expressions of loyalty, of congratulations and also of gratitude for the gracious treatment accorded to them in Ceylon.

The exiles never gave up sending petitions to the British Government requesting their release. In 1888 a petition was sent to the Queen and forwarded to the Consul-General in Egypt, but no reply was received. The Secretary of State indicated to the Governor of Sri Lanka the attitude of the Egyptian Government:

"But it is scarcely to be expected that the Egyptian government will be favourable to the release of those persons whose presence in Egypt they would regard as a danger to public tranquility, and Lord Salisbury does not think that it would be either right or politic to press them to permit it against their judgement."

In 1889 the matter of the exiles' health came up in Parliament. William Redmond, Member of Parliament for Fermanagh, asked the Under Secretary of State whether Arabi Pasha had complained that the climate of Ceylon was injurious to him and whether because of this he wanted a transfer to another country. Sir James Ferguson house, in Horton Place, Cinnamon Gardens, was then occupied by Arabi Pasha and he continued to live there till he moved to Kandy in 1892.

Abd-al-Aal-Hilmi moved from Lake House to the Retreat and from there to Braemar House, where he lived till his death in 1891. Mahmudu Fehmi moved out to Struan House, and then to the Retreat at Mattakkuliya, a house belonging to Mr. Daniels. From there he moved to St. Helen's Cotta Road, Borella. Mahmudu Sami went to reside in Kandy. Very soon, others followed him. Mahmudu Fehmi, however, stuck on at St. Helen's cottage.

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## **MAAS THALEP AKBAR**

### **Maas Thajoon Akbar, KC 1880-1944**

Born: 15-Jun-1880. at Slave Island, Colombo 2.

Educated at Royal College, Colombo 7.

Won a scholarship to University of Cambridge, 1897. BA LLB.

Called to the bar Grey's Inn in 1904.

Returned to Ceylon in 1905.

Private Secretary to C.P. Layard, Chief Justice.

Lecturer and Examiner Ceylon Law College. Crown Counsel 1907. District Judge, Colombo 1918-1919. Solicitor General 6-Oct-1929. Retired 12-Nov-1936. Member, Legislative Council 7-May-1938. Executive Chairman University Committee, Peradeniya.

Established Hussainiya and Fatima Girls School. Donated land for Jawatta Mosque. First Muslim to adorn the Supreme Court and also to be raised to the status of Kings Council. Founder Ceylon Muslim Educational Society.

Died: 22-Apr-1944

**M T Akbar** played a prominent role in the educational and judicial life of the country. He was the son of MSJ Akbar, a wealthy coconut planter. He showed an exceptional talent as a student of Royal College and won several prizes and accolades during his studentship. He obtained a first class division pass at the London Matriculation and won the coveted scholarship to Cambridge University in 1897 where he did the Mechanical Science Tripos to qualify as an engineer. However, he subsequently switched over to law and was called to the bar at Gray's Inn.

On his return home in 1905, while practicing law, he also officiated as a lecturer and examiner at the Ceylon Law College in Criminal Law & Procedure and Muslim Law. He joined the official bar and became a Crown Counsel in 1907, and by sheer merit, received appointments in turn as Solicitor-General, District Judge and Acting Attorney General, when Mr CH Elphinstone, the Attorney General at that time was away on furlough.

Akbar was the Chairman of the University Commission on whose recommendation the Legislative Council resolved, in 1928, that the University should be of the unitary and residential type, and that it should be located in the Dumbara Valley near Kandy.

Akbar, by his oratorical skill, tact and wit, successfully piloted through the Legislative Council the resolution accepting the recommendations of the University Commission of which he was the Chairman. He had to face strong opposition from such giants of the past as Sir James Pieris, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Mr GA Wille. He had lofty ideals in that the Cultural University he envisaged should be a great center of learning for the whole of Asia. Rather belatedly and grudgingly the University authorities have named one-half of a hall of residence as the "Akbar Hall".

Akbar was the first Muslim to adorn the Supreme Court Bench. He was also the first Ceylon Muslim to be raised to the status of King's Counsel. At the time of his retirement he was the senior-most Puisne Justice.

Akbar made outstanding contributions towards the development of Muslim Law in Sri Lanka. He played a leading role in framing new law on the subject of the Muslim Law of Inheritance and Law of Wakf. He was also responsible for enabling Muslim Public Officers who had hitherto been debarred to come within the provisions of the Widows and Orphans Pension Fund.

Akbar, realizing the educational backwardness of the Muslims served as the founder Secretary of the Ceylon Moslem Educational Society Ltd for a number of years and succeeded in establishing the Hussainiya Boys' School and the Fathima Girls' School which fulfilled an essential service in a populous Muslim area of Colombo. He was also instrumental in building the Jawatte Mosque within the Jawatte Burial Grounds.

Akbar studied the works of eminent Muslim scholars and writers and was a student of comparative religion. He contributed a number of erudite articles on Islam to various Muslim Journals and it is a pity that these cannot be traced for purposes of re-publication in book form.

MT Akbar, ex officio member of the Legislative Council by virtue of being the Solicitor-General, was the Chairman of the Committee composed of NHM Abdul Cader, HM Macan Markar, TB Jayah, SR Mohamed Sultan and made the following recommendation to change the word Mohammedan to Muslim in sessional paper XXXV of 1924 as follows:-

"The Committee are unanimously of opinion that the word "Mohamedan" in whatever form it may be spelt is incorrect and should not be used. The correct expression which should be used is "Muslim" to designate a person professing the religion preached by the Prophet, and "Islam" when the reference is made to the religion itself. These are the two expressions used in the Qur'an."

The versatility of Akbar could be gauged from the fact that he was a wrestler and an exponent of Judo. He died at the age of 64 on April 22, 1944.

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**SULTAN ALBDIN** (of Koniya, Turkey - arrived in Ceylon in 800 AD)

### **Periya Mudali Maraikar of Beruwela**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen090.html>  
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen090a.html>

The following extract from an old copper "Sannas" given by a Sinhalese King in AD 1010 to Periya Mudali Maraikar of Beruwela:-

**"..... and Great King being glad and in return for anchoring ships at Beruwela; sending them to other countries and improving the village ..... As long as the son and grandsons' children descending from Periya Mudali maraikar live, they are not to perform 'Rajakariya' (ie service of carrying Palanquins for the government) or to pay money tax. His respectability and dignity are to be maintained always undiminished. On their application they are to build Mosques for the performances of their religious duties and they are to be taken care of and any land that they apply for is to be granted to them. He is allowed to carry on trade in any part of the island by shipping cargo....."**

This was granted by the King on an application made by the Moor trader and according to historical evidence the application referred to was known as **"Sampotha Pathiram"**

Culled from "Sailan" Vol 2 No 1, June 1955

### **Basthamiyar Lebbe Maesthiriyar Meera Lebbe Maesthiriyar**

Basthamiyar Lebbe Maesthiriyar Meera Lebbe Maesthiriyar, the Chief of the Moors, left a son, Ahmed Lebbe in charge of the Maradana Mosque in 1760. In 1799 there were 7,500 able bodied Moors who were taxed ("Sonaka" page 91) in lieu of personal service to the State. Ahmed Lebbe's ancestors landed in Ceylon in 1016 and the rulers recognizing their services to the country gave them the following charter -

**"Periya Mudaliyar Marikar and his descendants are hereby exempted from punishment of either imprisonment or death and His Majesty being highly pleased with their services to his government they shall be so honored and esteemed. Further, the Government shall, at all times, protect them from all troubles and difficulties. They shall be free to follow their own religion and build mosques and seek places of worship on any land they choose. It shall be allowed them to also build ships and trade thereby with other countries."**

**(sgd) Bukman**  
**(Raja Weera Bukman)**

Dr. Paul Pieris is of opinion that he was not the King of Ceylon but may be a chieftan. This was granted to Periya Mudaly Marikar, one of the descendents of Jamaludeen (Sheikh Jamaludeen) who resided at Gorakadeeva (Maradana) in Beruwela and in consequence of great services rendered to this King he was the recipient of a "Mudrika" in the shape of the brass oplate (Shembupattanam) which gave the possessor, in those days, many rare privileges. For the following special favors:-

1. Periya Mudaly Marikar brought from Shaly Mongalam in South India, seven men to carry the Royal Palanquin, the names of whom were;

- a. Waly Arashen
  - b. Waly Muni
  - c. Waly Arunam
  - d. Waly Sulman
  - e. Waly Arashan
  - f. Para Mutti
  - g. Wallian
2. Periya Mudali Marikar looked after the post of Beruwela and increased the population by bringing in new colonists from other parts.

Along with these seven men from South India many others who were useful to the country also came. Some were tailors and weavers and others were carpenters and traders. The King having been greatly pleased gave them all facilities to settle down in the land. They are the ancestors of the Salagama or Chalia community.

Coming down to the early British period a descendant of the Sheikh Jamaludeen named Sheikadi Marikar, correctly Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar, was the Moorish Doctor who came in contact with Sir Alexander Johnstone who had a portrait of this Moorish Doctor presented to the Royal Asiatic Society and exhibited in the National Museum, Colombo.

About the year 1800, this Moorish Doctor was in charge of the Marakkala Palliya Watte, Maradana Mosque and grounds. He blocked out the grounds for the important members of the congregation. His family block was numbered No 41. On 21 May 1873, the Government ordered the burial grounds to be closed by proclamation, but the descendants of the Doctor continued to defy the order and buried their dead. They were prosecuted and fined. Some of the members applied to the Government for permission to bury their dead bodies therein and an Ordinance was proposed and Gazetted on Friday June 16, 1881. However, as the Kuppiyawatte Burial Grounds was already being patronized by the community, the Ordinance was dropped.

Attempts were made, on 21 November 1931, to bury the remains of Bastamiyar Abdul Careem, grandson of the Doctor, in block no. 41 and the remains of Proctor SDM Burhan, a descendant of the Doctor, on 27 December 1955 (Times of Ceylon), according to their cherished dreams.

For further information reference may be made to the story of Meera Lebbe Maestriar Shekadi Marikar (Moorish Doctor) in this publication.

### **Meera Lebbe Maestriar Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar (Shekadi Marikar)**

Meera Lebbe Maestriar Sekadie Marikar, known as the "**Moorish Doctor**", was a reputed physician who was appointed physician to the Cinammon Peeler's Guards (Chaliah Commanders) and the Moor Regiments which served under the Dutch at Colombo. He was appointed Native Superintendent of the Medical Department under the control of the Supreme Court by the British in 1806. He also was a signatory to the special laws concerning "**Maurus**" or Muhammadans (Muslims) dated August 1, 1806, prepared on the orders of Governor Lord North. He was appointed arbitrator and President of the Moorish Community in 1823 and died on February 25, 1840.

The portrait of Sekadie Marikar, prepared and presented by Sir Alexander Johnston, Chief Justice and President of His Majesty's Council in Ceylon, to the Royal Asiatic Society Ceylon Branch on July 19, 1834, was passed on to the National Museum of Colombo by Dr. Paul Peiris L.L.D. where it can be seen to date. (Ref No. C/448)

The ancestors of the "**Moorish Doctor**", Sekadie Marikar, is described as follows:-

**"Prince Jamaldeen, son of Sultan Albdin of Koniya, in Asia Minor (Eastern Turkey), settled down in Beruwela in 800 A.D. and practised medicine. This was during the reign of the Singhalese King Dapula III who established a medical college.**

**Dr. Periya Mudaliyar Marikar (1016) was awarded Royal recognition (Sembu Pattam) by the Singhalese King in consequence of his having introduced from the opposite coast of India, the first weavers of cloth who were established in Ceylon".**

**"The original ancestry of the present SALAGAMAWANSA community were:-**

**- Dr. Minna Marikar Bastaamiar (1515), appointed Physician to the Portuguese Royal household,**

**- Dr. Uduma Lebbe Maestriar Sheikh Abdul Cader (Shekadi) Marikar Maestriar (1640), Physician to the Dutch Government,**

**- Dr. Bastaamiar Lebbe Marikar Meera Lebbe Maestriar, Physician to the Dutch Government transferred to Colombo on promotion as Physician in charge of the Chaliah Commanders,**

**- Dr. Meera Lebbe Maestriar Sheikh Abdul Cader (Shekadi) Marikar, the celebrated, 'Moorish Doctor'."**

A reference to the family of the 'Moorish Doctor' is made in the "**KULALEKA POTH**A" of Maha Mudaliyar Abraham De Saram.

**Shekadie Marikar** was the eldest son of **Bastaamiar Lebbe Marikar Meera Lebbe Maestriyar**, the original claimant of the Maradana Mosque land. Bastaamiar lebbe Marikar Maestriar was a reputed medical practitioner both under the Dutch and British governments. In 1744 he had acquired title, by long and undisputed possession, of the land on which the present Maradana Mosque is situated, for the benefit of the Muslim Community of Colombo. He also possessed a portion of land lying between the Maradana Police Station and Dematagoda junction in Colombo, which he used for acquiring medicinal herbs for his medical practice.

In the course of time, he erected a building on the land adjoining the present Maradana Police Station and lived there with his family. This premise eventually came into the possession of **Shaka Marikar (Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar)**, father of **Ghouse** and **Mohideen** (John Scot), who were his descendants.

On the land opposite this site he built a Mosque, which, at the beginning, was used mainly by him and his family. Later on, other Muslims of the locality began to use the Mosuqe for prayer too. In the course of time, this Mosque was extended and rebuilt by the Muslim community and stands until today as the Maradana Mosque. The "**small**

mosque", or "Sinna Palli", in Symonds Road, Maradana, was built much later by a group of the congregation of the Colombo Grand Mosque. Deed No 2032 of 12 Aug 1856 atested by G W Stork, Notary Public.

Sir Alexander Johnston, in referring to the "**Moorish Doctor**" and his family, states as follows in his foot notes to his despatch to the Secretary of State dated February 3, 1827, as appearing in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Volume I, Page 537, as follows:-

***"I have a copy, in my possession, of a very curious and very ancient grant in copper, made by one of the Cingalese Kings of Ceylon, about six or seven hundred years ago, to a great Muhammedan merchant who was then residing at Barbareen, and to his descendants for ever, of certain privileges and immunities in consequence of his having introduced from the opposite coast of India the first weavers of cloth who were established in Ceylon. By virtue of this grant, the lineal descendants of that merchant, now enjoy, under the British Government, a portion of the privileges which were granted to their ancestors by the ancient Cingalese governments of the country, and which were successfully confirmed to them by the Portuguese, Dutch and English Governments in Ceylon. The Chief of this family was appointed by me, in 1806, Native Superintendent of the Medical Department, under the control of the Supreme Court. He was considered by the natives of the country as one of the best informed of the native physicians in the Island, and possessed one of the best collections of native medical books, most of which had been in his family between seven and eight hundred years, during the whole of which period it has been customary for one member of his family, at least, to follow the medical profession. This same person made me a very detailed report of all the plants in Ceylon which have been used from time immemorial for medical purposes by Muhammadan native physicians in the Island. The cultivation and improvements of these plants, as well as of all other plants and vegetables in the Island, which might be used, either for, food or commercial purposes, was one of the great objects for which His Majesty's Government, at my suggestion, in 1810, established a Royal Botanic Garden in Ceylon".***

In referring to the wide knowledge in medicine and philosophy of the Moorish (Muslim) physicians of the time, Sir Alexander Johnston, in the same despatch comments as follows:-

***"One of the principal Arabic works on Medicine which they introduced into Ceylon was the work of Avicenna; they also intriduced Arabic translations of Aristotle, Plato, Euclid, Galen and Ptolemy, extracts of which were frequently brought to me while I was in Ceylon by the Muhammadan priests and merchants who stated that the works themselves had originally been procured from Baghdad by their ancestors, and had remained for some hundred years in their respective families in Ceylon."***

The lineal descendants of the "**Moorish Doctor**" are **A.C. Abdul Cader** and **A.C. Jamaldeen** who are his great grandsons. One of the descendants of the "**Moorish Doctor**" was **S. D. M. Burhan**, Proctor SC, who served as the Secretary of the Management of the Maradana Mosque for about 35 years. A descendant who acquired eminence in the medical profession is **Dr. M Nafick Burhan**, MBBS (Ceylon), FRCS (England), the first Ceylon Muslim to be admitted a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (England). Other descendants are, **Mohideen Burhan**, Proctor SC and Coroner, Avissawella, **Marzook Burhan** of the Police Department, founder member and 13th President of the All-Ceylon YMMA Conference and leader of the Ceylon delegation to

the 3rd. General Assembly of the World Assembly of Youth held in New Delhi, India, in 1958.

Around the year 1800, the "**Moorish Doctor**" was in charge of the "**Marakkala Palliya**" (Mosque) and "**Watte**" (Grounds) of the Maradana Mosque. He blocked out the grounds for burial of the important members of the congregation. His own family block was numbered 41. On May 21, 1873, the Government ordered the closure of the burial grounds by proclamation. However, the descendants of the doctor continued to defy the order and buried their dead in the grounds. They were prosecuted and fined. Some of the members applied to the Government for permission to bury their dead therein and an ordinance was proposed and gazetted on Friday, June 16, 1882. However, since the Kuppiyawatte burial grounds was now being patronized by the Muslims the ordinance was dropped. Since then almost half of the burial grounds has been acquired by the Ceylon Government Railway on which now stands a Bo-tree. The grave of the "**Moorish Doctor**" which was situated under a Tamarind tree within the Mosque premises has since been levelled and a is now being used as a car park for the members of the congregation.

Attempts were made, on November 21, 1931, to bury the remains of **Dr. Bastaamiar Lebbe Abdul Careem**, member, Board of Trustees of the Maradana Mosque, grandson of the doctor, according to his long cherished claim, and also the remains of **S.D.M. Burhan**, Proctor SC, Secretary of the management of the Maradana Mosque for 34 years, another descendant of the doctor, on December 27, 1955, but were not successful.

Photograph: Copy of portrait of Meera Lebbe Maestriar Sekadie Marikar, "Moorish Doctor", wearing "Cufa" cap and the dress (Anagaraka Coat), of an aristocrat of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The "Juta" footwear has been left outside – as was the custom then –

Original portrait is available at the National Museum, Colombo – Ref No C/448

Reverse of original portrait bears the following caption:-

***"Presented by Sir A. Johnstone  
15<sup>th</sup> July, 1834"***

### **First Sri Lankan Moor Lady on Supreme Court Bench**

Reference the news item in the Daily News of December 22, 2003, I wish to bring the following information to the general public on the appointment of Her Lordship Justice Shirani Tilakawardena, to the Supreme Court Bench.

Her Lordship is the granddaughter of late **Sahib Durai Mohamed Burhan** Proctor S.C. and N.P. who was practising at the Maligakanda Magistrate Court, Colombo, was also the Secretary of the Maradana Mosque (Inc: Colombo for many years and she is the niece of late M. Mohideen Burhan, Proctor S.C.N.P. Avissawella Court and niece of late M. Marzook Burhan retired government servant, founder member of the All Ceylon YMMA conference, National Council of YMMA, Maligawatte, Sir Razik Fareed Foundation, Moors Islamic Cultural Home, All Moors Association and various other organisations and also a gold winner of the YMCA oratorical contest.



Her Lordship is the daughter of **Dr. M. Nafick Burhan**, FRCS Surgeon attached to the General Hospital and various other hospitals retired.

Her Lordship Justice Shirani Tilakawardena is the first female Attorney-at-Law to join the Attorney General's Department since then she is the first Sri Lankan Moor to rise to the High Court, Appeal Court, the President of Court of Appeal before being appointed to the Supreme Court by the President.

Although she is married to a non Muslim. She is the granddaughter of Sri Lankan Moor family of Colombo.

**Al Haj O.M. Ariff** -  
Colombo 9. - Daily News Fri Feb 20 2004

### **Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar (Shekhadi Marikar)**

During the closing stages of the Dutch regime in Ceylon, a leading Ceylon Moor family lived in that block of land where house premises Nos 263, 265, & 269 and the tenement garden No 263, on Dam Street, Hultsdorf, in Colombo 12, are today situated. Dam Street, as its name denotes, is reclaimed land from the swamps. The tenement garden is known as "Thannikarai Thottam" meaning "water shore garden". The descent of this family begins from the 16th line of Prince Jamaldeen, an Arab from Konya in Turkey, who arrived in Ceylon in 1016. This block of land belonged to, and was occupied by, Mahudoom Kandu Marikar, nicknamed "Mapulay" (bridegroom) for his handsome personality. His son was Oduma Lebbe Marikar (d:1800 and buried at the Maradana Mosque Grounds). He had two sons, Mohammed Haniffa Marikar, nicknamed "Kodipotta Marikar (Marikar who flew the Flag), of whom little is known, and Sheikh Abdul cader Marikar, known as Shekadi Marikar, born during the last quarter of the 18th century.

**Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar**, popularly known as **Shekhadi Marikar**, was appointed a sectional head of the Moor Community, on June 16, 1818, by His Excellency Sir Robert Brownigg, Governor of Ceylon (Vide Appendix II(b)). In 1825, another Governor, Sir Edward Barnes, appointed him as a Notary Public for attesting deeds of Muslim females.

**Shekhadi Marikar** was born in the year 1772 and died in 1847. His oldest son, **Cassim Lebbe Marikar Mudaliyar**, born on December 5, 1805, was appointed as Mudaliyar of the Governor's Gate in 1867. His second son, Idroos Lebbe Marikar, served the Government as Shroff in several departments. He was also the Trustee of the Maradana Mosque. Following is a translation of the Arabic inscription, translated by **Noordeen Abdul Careem**, on the facade of the Mosque, which was put up by the Khateeb of the time, namely, **Segu Mohiyadeen Sinna Meera Auduka Lebbe:-**

***"In the name of God, The One who purified the heart of the Founder of the Ka'aba. We lay the foundation of this house of God at Luhar time. In doing so we followed the Path of righteousness in the forenoon of the day, which is the sixth of Rajab, the month of respect and goodness. That is the day on which the Imam stood praising Him. All others stood there together invoking the blessings of the Prophet. The building was completed as the work of Moses was perfected on Ashura Day. On the Day of Hajj which was the Day of***

*excellence and beauty, hich belonged to the sixt year along with 50 and 200 and 1000 (1256 Hijra), from the time of the departure, to Madinah, of the Prophet f the Hashemite Clan. Oh Lord! grant us victory and forgiveness and mercy. To those who glorified You in it prostrating. And we ask blessings upon him who recommended to build mosques. And he is your beloved creature and the best of those who prayed at Makkah. Month of Hajj, 10th Day, 1256 Hijra. (10 Dhul Hijjah 1256 H)"*

## **Appendix II**

(a) Whereas the Moor **Seyed Nadie Nainde Marcier Lebbe NAINA MARCIAR** was by us recently appointed joint Chief of the Moors of the town of Galle and is now the other Chief of this community in the commandments has appealed to us that he being the oldest in service shuld have preference over the other. We, therefore, in consideration, of the request made by him, the said present Chief deem it desirable to appoint his first Chief over the Galle community of Moors residing within the four gravets with authority t employ the Moor, **Ismail Lebbe Maestri KADER** as his Canne Kappel.

Wherefore one and to whom it may concern are commanded to regard respect come and obey, as it behoves them, him the said **AGHAMDOE LEBBE SINNE LEBBE MARCIAR AS** first Chief of the Moors. Colombo, 28th July, 1757.

## **TRUE COPY OF AN ACT OF APPOINTMENT BY THE BRITISH**

(b) By His Excellency ieutenant General, Sir Edward Barnes, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath Governer and Commander-In-Chief in and over the British settlements and territories in the island of Ceylon with the dependencies thereof.

Whereas we have the greatest confidence in the eminent qualities, zeal, fidelity and ability of **Oduma Lebbe Marciar Sekadi Marciar**, we do hereby appoint him Headmoorman, of Colombo and Salpity Corale during our Will and Pleasure.

And we do further by these presents confirm to the said **Oduma Lebbe Marciar Sekadi Marciar** all such privileges, rights, Honours and Precedence enjoyed by His Predecessors in the office of Headmoorman of Colombo and Salpity Corale as these have not been abrogated or altered by Law.

All persons whom it may concern are hereby ordered and directed to acknowledge, respect and obey the said **Oduma Lebbe Marciar Sekadi Marciar** as Headmoorman of Colombo and Salpity Corale.

Wherefore we have granted him these Presents whereunto we have affixed the Seal of Our Arms Given at Colombo, the 22nd. May, 1824.

**By Order of His Excellency the Governor**  
**G.O. Seymour.**

## **Cassim Lebbe Marikar (Casie Lebbe Marikar Mudaliyar)**

**Cassim Lebbe Marikar**, born on December 5, 1805, was the eldest son of **Othman Lebbe Marikar Shekadi Marikar**. By his first marriage, with the daughter of **Ossen Lebbe** in the Cappodiar family, he had two children who died in infancy. After the death of his

spouse, he married **Mohiyadeen Candu Natchiya** alias **Mathunga Natchiya**, daughter of **Sultan Candu Yousoof Lebbe** of Colombo, on May 28, 1842. She died on May 26, 1900 at No. 263 Dam Street, Colombo. **Cassim Lebbe Marikar** had four daughters and four sons as follows:-

1. **Hafsa Umma** (daughter) born: June 1, 1843 in Trincomalee. Married C.L.Samsudeen.
2. **Muhammad Yousoof** (son) born: December 17, 1844 in Trincomalee. **Muhammad Yousoof**, by first marriage, had a son, **Abdul Cader** (unmarried) and a daughter, **Rahma**, who had two sons and two daughters. After the death of his spouse, **Muhammad Yousoof** married again in Kandy, the sister of **Muhammad Cassim** alias **Siddi Lebbe**, the Moor Leader, but had no children from this union. He worked in the Colombo Municipality as an Executive Officer in the Secretariat. He died in Kandy in 1917.
3. **Saffra Umma** (daughter) ("Palathu Mami") born: May 8, 1847 in Trincomalee. Married **Ahmed Lebbe Marikar** ("Dappy" family) and had three sons, **Abdul Latheef**, **Abdul Cader** & **Abdul Hamid** and four daughters, **Ayesha Umma** (mother of M.Y.Hashim Jiffry), **Maryam Beebee**, **Maimoona** and **Fathima Umma** of Colombo.
4. **Haniffa Umma** (daughter) born: September 18, 1848 in Trincomalee. Married **Cader Sahib Sinne Lebbe Marikar**. had two sons, **Abdul Hadi** married to **Thuwaiba Umma** & **Muhammad Cassim** (father of Mrs. **Ayne Muhammad** and brother-in-law of **M.Maharroof** of the Ceylon Diplomatic Corps). **Sinne Lebbe Marikar** married once again and his children of this union are **Muhammad Saleem** (Papulka) and **Ummu Ayman** (mother of Dr. **M.H.M.Ilyas** and brother).
5. **Ayesha** alias **Moomina Umma** (daughter) born: November 5, 1850 in Colombo. Married **Cader Sahib Aliya Marikar Alim Hajjar** (Trustee, Maradana Mosque). The children are **Muhammad Rasheed** and **Muhammad Thahir**, both died unmarried, **Leila** (also died unmarried), and **Ameena** who married **A.B.L.I.L.Marikar** (first Ceylonese English bookseller) whose children are **A.I.L.Marikar**, **Sithy Ayesha**, **Muhammad Aly**, **Muhammad Nilam** and **Muhammad Fulail**. **Ayesha** died on May 29, 1924.
6. **Abdul Majeed** (son) born: September 26, 1853 at Trincomalee. Married **Jainambu Natchia** and had a son, **Muhammad Cassim** (father of **M.C.M.Sheriff** and **Suleiman**) and a daughter, **Khadija Umma** (mother of **A.L.M.Rally**). He also married **Ummu Hany** ("Nawtha"). She had three daughters and five sons, one of whom was **Abdul Ahad**. **Abdul Majeed** served as a Shroff in the Kachcheri and later was in the clerical service in the Colombo and provincial Kachcheris. He died in Colombo.
7. **Abdul Gaffoor** (son) born: May 10, 1860. Married **Ayesha Umma**, daughter of **Muhammad Lebbe Marikar**. His sons were **Mahmood** and **Shameem** and daughters were **Thuwaiba Umma** (see 4 above) and **Negiba Umma** (mother of **A.L.M.Nasir**). He served in the clerical service of the Customs Department and died on August 30, 1940.
8. **Abdul Cader** alias **Abdul Jabbar** (son) born: February 24, 1863. Married **Cappodiyar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar's** daughter, **Ayesha Umma**. Children are **Muhammad Woleed** (Trustee, Maradana Mosque), **Nasseer Abdul Rahman**, **Sithy Rowha** and **Abul Hassan**. He was also the Trustee of the Maradana Mosque and Manager of the Hameedia School. He worked in the Drafts Department of the Chartered Bank and died on June 19, 1902.

Like his father, **Cassim Lebbe Marikar Mudaliyar**, was a devoted servant of the public and a devout Muslim interested in religious activities. It was through the inducement of his eldest son, **Muhammad Yousoof**, that **Muhammad Cassim** (proctor) alias **Siddi Lebbe, Yousoof's** brother-in-law, was spurred on to take up the cause of Muslim education and their general progress.

He was attached to his father at Trincomalee and made his mark so well that he was appointed as Chief Mudaliyar of the Eastern province by **Sir Robert Wilmot Horton** on October 23, 1834.

On his transfer, on promotion, he was appointed Mudaliyar of the Government Agent's Department (Western province), Colombo, by Sir Henry George Ward on June 18, 1855. All Muhandirams, Arachies, Kanganies, Iascoreens and others connected therewith came under his purview by this appointment. (original letters of appointment are available with **Mr. A.J.M.Woleed**). He was also the Shroff at the Colombo Kachcheri in 1855 and was appointed Shroff of the Pearl Fishery on March 3, 1858.

On representations made by Moor representatives of Colombo, a General Meeting was held at the Maradana Mosque, and on their recommendations he was appointed Head Moorman of Colombo on December 25, 1859. He was then appointed Cashier of the General Treasury and Mudaliyar of the gate by His Excellency **Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson**, on July 3, 1867. (letter of appointment available with **A.J.M.Woleed**).

After a full life of fruitful activity, he died and was buried on Friday, August 16, 1877, before Jumma, at the Maradana Mosque grounds.

It was said that the Moors during that period used to whisper between themselves on the undesirability of him wearing trousers and tunic coat with a turban on his head, an attire looked down upon as alien to Muslims, at that time.

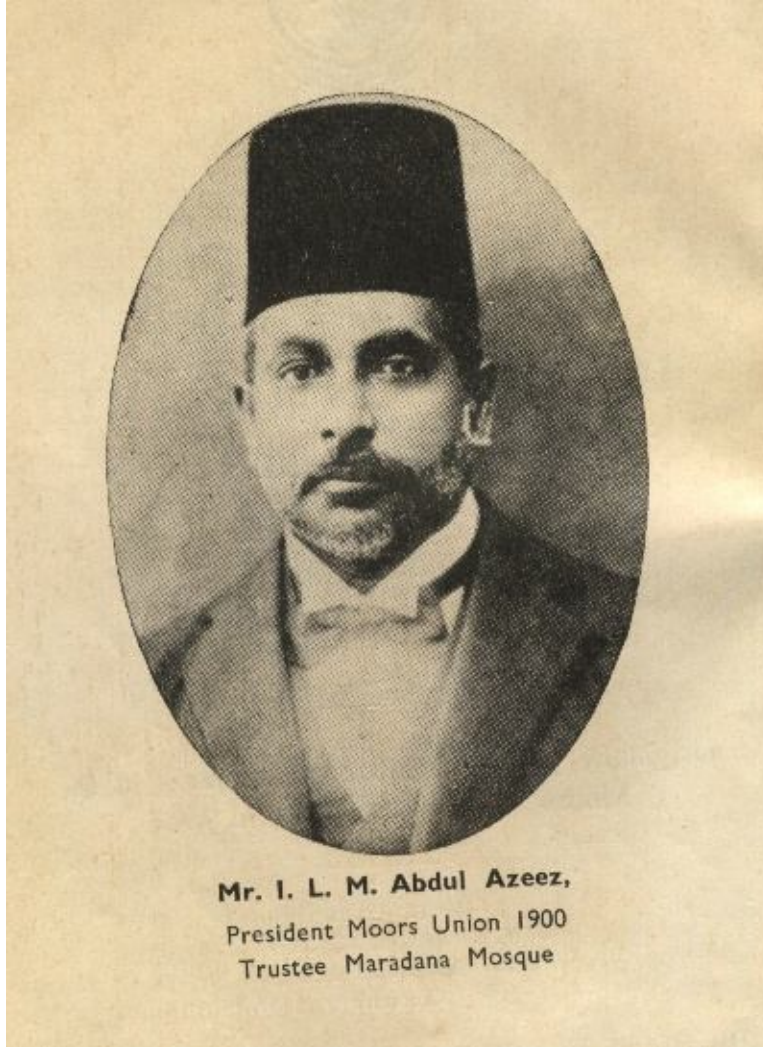
### **Cassim Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Ali Marikar**



**C L M Ahmed Ali**

CLM Ahmed Ali Marikar is descended from the Kappodear family. He was married to Khadeeja Umma Abdul Cader, daughter of ACSML Abdul cader and Hany Umma Sulaiman Lebbe. They had two daughters named Haleema Umma and Safiya Umma. Haleema, who was married to Ismail Lebbe Effendi, was the mother of Muhammad Sameer and Muhammad Anis bin Haji Ismail Effendi.

**Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez (ILM Abdul Azeez)**



**Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez 1867-1915**

Born:27-Oct-1867. Secondary education at Government Boys' School, Pettah, Colombo 11, El Jamiathul Islamiyyah, 1888. Assistant Manager Zahira College, Maradana. President, Moors' Association. Trustee Maradana Mosque 1903. Editor, Muslim Guardian, 1900. Commence newspaper Al-Muslim in 1907. Organized many meetings to fight the Fez question in 1905 where, finally, Muslims were allowed to wear their headgear inside court. Secretary, Fez Committee. Died:29-Apr-1990

**Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez**, grandson of **Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sekadi Marikar**, came from a very distinguished family of Moors in Colombo. He was a sectional Chief Head of the Moors. His father was **Idroos Lebbe Marikar**, a shroff in the government departments. In view of the confidence he received, the Government vested the Muhammadan burial grounds at Kuppiyawatte to **I.L.M. Abdul Azeez**, appointing him as one of the three Trustees in 1879.

**Abdul Azeez** was born on October 27, 1867. He studied Quran and Tamil under his father. He received his English education at the Pettah Boys Government English School. He gathered a good understanding of religion and also mastered the Tamil language. he

also read many English authors. In 1888, he was elected Secretary of the **Al-Jamiathul Islamia Society**. Among the many good works done by this society was the taking over of dead bodies of Muslims from hospitals for proper burial.

In 1889 **Abdul Azeez** assumed the editor-ship of the "**Muslim Friend**", started by **Proctor M.C. Siddi Lebbe**. In 1892 **Abdul Azeez** gave his wholehearted support to the educational movement started by Siddi Lebbe and financed by **Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar**. This movement formed the Colombo Muslim Educational Society and founded Zahira College. He was the Secretary of the society. The great assistance rendered by **Abdul Azeez** was borne out by the testimony of **Wapchi Marikar**, Manager Zahira College, in the following statement: "**My heartfelt thanks are due to the Committee who have bravely assisted me in the work, especially to Mr. I.L.M. Abdul Azeez, for his valuable advice**".

Another Muslim lawyer, **Mr. A.C. Muhammado**, referred to **Abdul Azeez**, at a prize giving ceremony at Zahira College, as the "**fulcrum**" of this institution.

In 1900, the Moors formed an organization called the Moor's Union and elected **Abdul Azeez** as its first President. **Abdul Azeez** sent telegrams of condolences at the death of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and His Majesty King Edward VII. He also read addresses to the Turkish Consul, Atha-Ulla Bey, while passing through Colombo, on his visit to Singapore. He presented an address to the first Muslim advocate, **Mr. Abdul Cader**. He passed a resolution of thanks to the Governor, Sir West Ridgeway, for nominating **Mr. W.M. Abdul Rahman** as a Muhammadan member of the Legislative Council. At the Moor's Union Hall, he delivered a lecture on the Muslim aspect of future life.

In 1898 **Abdul Azeez** published an Arabic Tamil journal titled "**Assawab**". In 1901 he started a Tamil newspaper, titled, "Muslim Guardian". Later it was converted into a Tamil and English magazine. Through this magazine he urged the Government to enact laws for the compulsory legislation of Muslim marriages. He ably defended Islam against criticism by **Sir Hugh Clifford**, Colonial Secretary, published in the pages of the magazine. In 1907 he published an Anglo-Tamil paper called "**Al Muslim**". His contribution to the local newspapers on the racial representations in the Legislative Council and on Muhammadan education were highly commended by the public.

When Mr. **Abdul Cader**, the first Muslim Advocate, was prevented from appearing with his Fez Cap on, before the judges of the Supreme Court, a deputation of Muslims including **Abdul Azeez** called on the Chief Justice, **Sir C.P. Layard**, at his residence, and laid their grievance. Having failed to obtain redress, the Muslims held a Mass Meeting at Maradana Mosque grounds on December 31, 1905. **Abdul Azeez** moved a resolution appealing to His Majesty for relief.

Tamil speaking people were represented in the Legislative Council by a Tamil Member. About the year 1880, the Muslims, the majority of whom were Moors, clamoured for representation in the Legislative Council by a Muhammadan member. **Mr. Ponnambalam Ramanathan** opposed this suggestion of the Moors saying that the Moors were Tamil speaking people and Tamil converts to Islam. **Abdul Azeez** carried on the campaign of the Moors, led by **Siddi Lebbe**, seeking Muslim representation in the Legislative Council. **Mr. Ramanathan**, opposing this request, read a paper at the Royal Asiatic Society Meeting on the subject of "Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon" and attempted to prove his theory that the Moors were of Tamil origin. **Abdul Azeez**, under the auspices of the Moor's Union, published a book titled, "A criticism of Mr.

**Ramanathan's** Ethnology of the ceylon Moors" proving that the Moors were a separate race descended from Arab travellers who settled in Ceylon. This book has been reprinted by the Moor's Islamic Cultural Home.

In 1903 **Abdul Azeez** was elected Managing Trustee of the Maradana Mosque for five years. At the end of this term he was elected for a further five years and this was opposed by a section of the congregation thus leading to litigation. The Privy Council approved his re-election. He also presided at the dinner given to **Muhammad Macan Markar Effendi** who was appointed Honorary Turkish Consul. **Abdul Azeez** also wrote an account of the "birth, customs and puberty ceremony" of the Moors for the census Report of 1911.

When the period of **W.M.Abdul Rahman's** membership in the Legislative Council was ending, in 1905, the Muslims petitioned the Government to nominate **Abdul Azeez**. However, this was not accepted and **Abdul Rahman's** period was extended for a further five years.

**Abdul Azeez** drafted an amendment to the Muhammadan Marriage Registration Ordinance in 1906. he also suggested reforms in the Purdah system retaining the Islamic Laws but permitting the womanhood of Islam to advance socially, intellectually and spiritually in like manner as the females of the glorious days of Islam. he sopought reforms in the matter of acquiring religious knowledge. He suggested translations and explanations ofreligious literature. The Baptist Young Men's Society gave him an opportunity to deliver a lecture on Islam in their hall.

In 1912 **Abdul Azeez** travelled to Jaffna where, after the Jumma Prayers, he presenetd a lecture on Hadis and urged the Imams to deliver their Khutbas in Tamil so they may be understood by the congregation. **Abdul Azeez** also delivered a lecture on the conflict between the cross and the crescent and this was published in book form.

His only son is **Muhammad Rashard Abdul Azeez** of Sagara Road, Colombo 4. His grandsons are Dr. **Nafick Burhan** and **Muhammad Marzook Burhan**, who take a great interest in the affairs of the Muslim Community.

**I.L.M. Abdul Azeez** died on September 11, 1915. May Allah bless his soul.

Poem composed by M A Careem, MA, LLB (Cantab) on ILM Abdul Azeez for the MICH Souvenir #1 of 1944-1969 on the occasion of his 100<sup>th</sup> birth centenary in 1967.

### **I L M Abdul Azeez**

By M A Careem, MA, LLB (Cantab) - 1967

**To-day we celebrate the hundredth year of birth  
Of a Patriot true – a Warrior brave!  
Hail Abdul Azeez! We revere you this day  
For, did you not our rights redeem – our honor save?  
Against gigantic odds a daring David, you  
Awoke the brethren in this Island fair  
To perils of the time and in unison led them all  
To victory sublime and so affection we display**

---



***By remembering you. Intellectual great – sagacious leader rare,  
Saintly soul – you feared none but Creator God.  
You oped the window wide of Fate and brought to view  
Our racial heritage – a life dedicated to Lanka’s call.  
Farewell and rest in the bosom soft of mother earth ---  
Till awakening of Dawn – the Light before the Lord!***

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## **M S ALIF**

Mr. M. S. Alif, retired Cabinet Secretary passed away in Colombo at the age of 80. Mr. Alif who held the dual post of Cabinet Secretary and Director General of Cabinet Affairs under the Sirimavo Bandaranaike Government of 1970 to 1977 played a key role in the formation and functioning of the United Front Government.

Together with the late Mr. T. B. Ilangaratne, Mr. Alif who enjoyed the confidence of both Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and the leaders of the LSSP and CP, played a big role in helping the United Front to function together despite the vicissitudes of coalition politics.

Mr. Alif who remained an SLFP loyalist right to the end joined the SLFP in 1953 and worked in various capacities for the Party.

An Attorney-at-Law who was in active practice up to his demise, Mr. Alif celebrated his completion of 50 years at the Bar a few years back.

Mr. Alif who had a MSc in Town and Country Planning was considered an expert in Housing and made a significant contribution towards the formulation of Housing Policy in Sri Lanka and also served on several Housing related missions for the United Nations.

He also served as the United Nations Housing Adviser to the Government of the United Arab Emirates. He also played a big part in forging links with the Arab world and also served as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to the Middle East.

Mr. Alif took a great interest in the affairs of the Muslim Community. He worked closely, with the late Sir Razik Fareed in helping to put Muslim Ladies College Colombo on a sound footing while he worked closely with the late Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud in relation to the political and development related matters affecting the Muslims.

After his retirement from active politics Mr. Alif continued his work for the welfare of the Muslims. He directed his energies towards helping to build two important institutions which are of considerable benefit to Muslims.

The first was the establishment of Ilma International Girls' School, a non profit making girls school, where he remained a director of the School Board since its inception. He also was a founder director of Amana Investments Ltd which is the pioneer Bank involved in Islamic finance.

## **Sir ABDUL W M AMEER**

### **Second Death Anniversary : Al Haj Deshabandu Sir Abdul W.M. Ameer**

I wish that Al-Haj Deshabandu Sir Ameer still lived with us and continued with his enormous services to the entire nation. But we are unfortunate for he departed us on October 25, last year. Now it is one year since he passed away leaving his exemplary life to be followed by our present businessmen, diplomats and politicians.

The most significant and exceptional thing about his personality is that he represented Dominican Republic as a Honorary Consul general for forty three years. He was the longest serving Honorary Consul General in Sri Lanka, possibly in Asia. Late Sir Ameer maintained a good rapport among diplomats and Consuls in our country and was the dean of the Honorary Consular Corp. He strove very much to promote understanding and friendship between Sri Lanka and Dominican Republic. He was ever prepared to help students and other persons who were in need of information about the country.

Dominican Republic is basically an agriculture country and now it became a number one tourist destination in whole Caribbean countries. It occupies two third of the island called Hispaniola which is in the Caribbean sea, and was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Every year in October, Sir Ameer organized the Columbus Day in order to mark the discovery under the aegis of the Sri Lanka-Latin America-Caribbean Friendship Society (SLLACFS) for which he was the founder president and to which he invited diplomats, state officials, friends and well-wishers.

It was in recognition of great, longest and enthusiastic services to the Dominican Republic and to human kinds in general, the State of the country conferred the knighthood on him.

Late Sir Ameer did not limit his involvement to diplomatic services, but he founded many national and international organizations through which he could extend tremendous contribution to his country and to his community. He endeavoured to safeguard our cultural values and norms in Latin America and Caribbean countries through SLLACFS which was formed thirty five years ago by him along with some local and foreign personalities. His membership and vice presidency of the world Constitution and Parliamentary Association is a clear indication for his popularity among international figures.

Being a member as well as a president of the Colombo central Rotary Club he did yeoman services to uplift the standard of our nation through all the activities carried out by the club.

Late Sir Ameer's engagement as a vice president of the English Speaking Union of Sri Lanka, a cluster division of the union in England was definitely of very much use to many English Language learners and speakers.

Sir Ameer was an active and pious Muslim who was very sensitive whenever he observed some negative things happening to his community. He along with the few Muslim leaders formed the Indonesian Hajaji Memorial Society in order to respect and remember the Muslim pilgrims who died in the plane crash occurred in Sri Lanka while they were returning from Holy Mecca some years ago.

He was a senior member of the all Ceylon Moors' Association founded by Sir Razik Fareed. He served as a vice president of the Moor Islamic Cultural Home until the time of his demise.

He was an invisible politician. That is to say, he backed up many Muslim politicians to raise voices for Muslim community when they were in trouble. When there was any social problem anywhere, Sir, Ameer was sure to be present and assist the needy.

Sir Ameer was the Chief founder of the Refugees Relief Organization (RRO) which was purposefully formed to help the Muslim Refugees when there was a mass exodus of Muslim people from North and some bordering villages in the East because of the atrocities and assassinations done by the terrorists. He personally visited all the refugee camps in many parts of the Island with clothes and medicines. He kept trying to attract the Amnesty International's attention regarding the refugees through the Muslim Information Centre (MIC), a centre created for information purposes and chaired by him.

Hotel Ranmuthu owned by late Sir Ameer was placed as the centre for many matters. The hotel was at the disposal of all communities, various organizations hold their meetings and functions. Sir Ameer contacted many philanthropists and NGOs in Sri Lanka and abroad and collected relief for the refugees. All the food items and clothes were heaped up at his hotel basement and taken to the particular refugee camps in lorries.

His generosity to have used his business place for the good of the refugees and his timely action to have kept them away from pinch of hunger should be written in gold.

He was very friendly with journalists and mediemen. He personally helped some journalists to do their career development. Press Association of Sri Lanka still conducts classes. The formation of the Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum took place in the same hotel and the meeting of the forum were and are held there.

Sir Ameer took a keen interest in national affairs when the nation was embroiled in ethnic violence. He worked hard to create peace and harmony among all the communities in our country. He was against communalism and chauvinism.

Sir Ameer started many Quranic Schools in and out of Colombo. Very recently a Quarnic school which was started nearly twenty five years ago by Late Sir was converted in to a Jummah Mosque in Padukka.

Late Sir Ameer was amiable, striking and unassuming personality, who always dedicated to his area of work. He was much benevolent towards all those who sought his assistance.

**- Habeebullah Bafalul**

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## ASSEN ALIYAR MUHAMMAD NAGOOR MEERA

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen173.html>

**Assen Ali Muhammad Nagoor Meera**, the indefatigable "**Nuwara Mudalali**" and his brother, **Assen Ali Muhammad Merra Lebbe**, affectionately known as "**Meeyanna Mudalali**", were two enterpreanours who made a determined effort in successfully entering the closed and well-protected citadel of trade in Colombo wherein the British had firmly entrenched themselves.

**Nagoor Meera** and **Meera Lebbe** were born at Kongaraya Kurichchi, a predominantly Muslim hamlet close to the Mofussil township of Eral in the Tirunelvely District at the Southern tip of Tamil Nadu in South India. Many were the Muslims of South India who came to ceylon in pursuit of trade as well as for the purpose of imparting the Arabic language and also spreading Islam. **Meera Lebbe** was barely 14 years old and **Nagoor Meera** a few years younger when they first arrived in Ceylon around the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Century. Their father, **Assen Ali**, had already settled down in the central hills of Ceylon several years back and was successful trading in household goods and merchandise. He is believed to have spent most of his time in a place called Kithulgala and had eventually died there.

The two brothers, having arrived in Colombo, travelled to Rambukkana by train, and, from there, walked all the way to Kandy. **Meera Lebbe** joined a bakery run by a kind-hearted Sinhala village Mudalali. His remuneration was five cents per day considered a handsome salary in those times. It was this beginning that paved the way for the two brothers to set up their own vegetable and supplies business in Kandy after a few years when they were almost in their early twenties. They were readily assisted by the wealthy Kandyan Sinhala traders who recognized the entrepreneurship amongst the young lads.

In 1886, **Nagoor Meera** set up vegetable wholesale business under the business registration of **A.M. Nagoor Meera & Company**, at a sprawling complex at Gas Works Street in the Pettah, opposite the old Town Hall. The establishment continues to exist, even until today (1998), having shifted its focus from vegetables to ship chandelling and shipping agency.

Although the British merchants were the chosen favorites of the Colonial Government, they could hardly compete with the dynamic **Nagoor Meera** who outbid them almost everywhere possible. Soon, through hard work and commitment, **Nuwara Mudalali** emerged as the largest supplier of vegetables to key government institutions and private enterprises in Colombo. The Grand Orient Hotel (GOH), one of the few star class hotels in Colombo at that time, entry into which was forbidden for dogs and natives, was one of the prized customers of Nagoor Meera.

Encouraged by the success in this wholesale trade in the Pettah, A M Nagoor Meera expanded the scope of his business to launch a ship chandelling agency a few years later.

**A.M. Nagoor Meera** was a person who was meticulous in his attire, wearing a long Surat cap and sporting a well trimmed beard, riding majestically in his twin horse carriage. He was also a great lover of sweet meats for which his home district of Tirunelvely, in Tamil Nadu, is still famous for. He had a close friend in Colombo who was also from his

hometown of Kongaraya Kurichchi called cader Mohideen, popularly known as "Neykara Mama" (Ghee Uncle), who lived at Kehelwatte in Colombo's Hultsdorf area. Nagoor Meera's business complex was only a stones throw away from Neykara Mama's house who supplied him with Indian and local sweets manufactured at his residence. **Nagoor Meera** used to help Cader Mohideen to clear his imported sweets at the port free of charge. It is said that Muslim businessmen in Colombo who found it difficult to settle their debts to Nagoor Meera used to use the kind services of Cader Mohideen to intervene on their behalf and request for more time.

Nagoor Meera was a great philanthropist and gave liberally to both Muslim and Non-Muslim religious and educational institutions and the needy without any discrimination and hesitation whatsoever. The Minan Mosque at Dematagoda Road was built by him and was maintained by his family members after him. The office block at the Kuppiyawatte Muslim Burial Grounds was a donation by Nagoor Meera in memory of his eldest daughter, Ozeela Umma, who died at the young age of seventeen having suffered an attack of typhoid. One of the houses at Dematagoda Road, where Nagoor Meera lived, was named after Niyaz, the only son of Ozeela Umma, as "Niyaz Villa".

A wise and far-sighted person he was, **Nagoor Meera** invested his savings in real estate in Dematagoda, Maligawatte, and Maradana. Vast tracts of land, stretching from St. John's College, Dematagoda Road to Reservoir Road – almost half of Dematagoda – were owned by the Nuwara Mudalali.

**Nagoor Meera** died in 1923 and left behind an estate valued at 2.1 million Rupees – a vast and unbelievable fortune at that time. He also had three sons, **Muhammad Haniffa** (1893-1949), **Muhammad Ishak** (1901-1965), and **Muhammad Zakariya** who died at the age of nineteen, two daughters, **Ozeela Umma** and **Faleela**, who both died young. His wife, **Zainambu Natchiya**, died at the ripe age of 95 in 1967.

Nagoor Meera's elder brother, "Meeyanna Mudalali" Meera Lebbe was the father of thirteen children, comprising five boys and eight girls. Meera Lebbe's eldest son, Muhammad Ismail, was the first Muslim to rise to the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police and was also the Sergeant-at-Arms of the first Parliament of Sri Lanka in 1947. Muhammad Ismail's sons were:-Professor Mahroof Ismail, first Muslim to become the Professor of Parasitology of and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Sri Lanka, Colombo Campus, Director of the Medical Research Institute, and Chairman of the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine of Sri Lanka, Dr. Ifthikhar Ismail, Muhammad Ghazzali Ismail, M.R. Ismail and Dr. Samad Ismail of Kandy.

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## A M A AZEEZ

### Dr. A.M.A. Azeez : An intellectual leader of eminence

by A. Mohamed Nahiya - Daily News Tue Dec 10 2002



Dr. A.M.A. Azeez

This great leader of the Muslim community Aboobucker Mohamed Abdul Azeez hailed from a very respectable family in Jaffna. He was born on 4th October 1911 and passed away on 24th November 1973.

During this period he had contributed tremendously to the nation in general and his community in particular. A.M.A. Azeez was one who was an all-round intellectual - may it be Education, Religion, Language, Literature, History or Sociology. He followed the footsteps of late leader and the father of Muslim Education, Proctor M.C. Siddilebbe, Egyptian exile OrabiPasha, I.L.M. Abdul Azeez philanthropist Wapichchi Marikkar and Dr. T.B. Jayah and did yeomen service specifically in the field of education for the children of the Muslim community.

He began his early education at the Allapichchai Quran Madrasa and then proceeded to Vannarponnai Vaidyshawara Vidyalaya in Jaffna and then to Jaffna Hindu College in the Northern Sri Lanka. He entered the University in 1929 and obtained a Special Degree in History in the year 1933. At the University Dr. Azeez won the exhibition prize in History and later he was awarded the Ceylon Government Arts scholarship and proceeded to St. Catherine's College of Cambridge University for further studies. But he had to cut short his studies in Cambridge and return to Ceylon to take up a Ceylon Civil Service appointment. Though he had abandoned the Postgraduate studies he had the distinction of being the first Muslim to enter the Civil Service in Ceylon.

He served as a Civil Servant for 13 years in various positions. During the World War II in 1942, he was sent as an Assistant Government Agent to the emergency Kachcheri established at Kalmunai, Mainly for food production. It was there he got to know the plight of the Muslims and their being backward in education. Throughout his life, Azeez was to bear a special affection for the Eastern Province which he regarded as his second home. He helped the Muslims of this region in every way. Many acres of jungle land were cleared and given free to the poor Muslim farmers of this area for cultivation.

This helped not only the Muslims of the area but all communities that lived in the Eastern Province at that time. 12,270 acres of land had been distributed in this area for this purpose. Those grateful farmers still call the land area given by him as, "Azeez Thurai Kandam".

Some of the posts he held in the public Service were A.G.A. Kandy, Administrative Secretary of the Dept. of Health, Information Officer and Additional Landing Surveyor. of Customs.

It was in Kalmunai, when he was the A.G.A he realised the importance of education for the uplift of the backward Muslim community and together with leading local personalities of the area. Azeez had formed the Kalmunai Muslim Education Society in 1943. This society confined its activities to the Kalmuani area. This was the initiative of his

famous project the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund that was inaugurated on 19.5.1945 by him in Colombo.

This inaugural meeting was chaired by Late Dr. T.B. Jayah. The aim of the CMSF was spelled out thus, 'To see that no Muslim scholar capable and deserves in any part of the Island is deprived of the education he or she deserves for want of money. This fund was incorporated by Ordinance No. 19 of 1946. Very few are aware that the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund has helped over 2000 poor Muslim students to pursue their higher education over the last 57 years. This fund helped several men to acquire professions like Civil Servants, Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Trained Teachers etc.

Dr. Azeez advocated for his community to acquire knowledge of Arabic, Tamil, Sinhala and English. These four different languages are with four different scripts and each of them with different background of religion and history.

He felt that without Arabic language, the Muslims of Sri Lanka will become culturally isolated, and shall lose entirely the rich heritage. Tamil is the home language of the majority of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. Sinhala is the language of the vast majority of the population in this country. English is the world language and the language of Commerce, Science and Technology with a wealth of literature and resources without any parallel so far. In these circumstances, the curriculum of Muslim schools and of every school where there is a considerable Muslim boys or girls should include all these four languages - according to Azeez.

Dr. Azeez also did show special interest in establishing separate schools for Muslim girls and a separate Tamil Teacher's Training College for Muslim female teachers. The Training College which was established at Aluthgama in 1941 was re-named as Muslim Female Teachers Training College in 1954, following his agitation alongwith Al Haj M.M. Ibrahim (M.P.) and others.

After General Election in 1947, the then Government invited Dr. T.B. Jayah to join the Cabinet of the Ministers. Dr. Jayah tendered his resignation from the post of Principal Zahira College, Colombo, having served devotedly in the above post for a period of 27 years. The mantle fell on A.M.A. Azeez whose Golden Era as Principal at Zahira College continued till August 1961. Dr. T.B. Jayah and Swami Vipulananda had to persuade Dr. A.M.A. Azeez to accept the post of Principal. A.M.A. Azeez, on his part took it as a challenge giving up the Civil Service appointment where he had a bright future.

Under the Leadership of Azeez, Zahira blossomed out as the radiating centre of Muslim thought and activity. He had made Zahira, during his period, one of the best schools in the Island. Zahira flourished in education, sports and other extra curricular activities and good number of children entered University from there.

"Two names loom large in the history of Zahira College. They are Jayah and Azeez. In the era of Jayah, Zahira emerged from childhood to youth. In the era of Azeez it passed from youth to manhood."

This was said by the late Hon. H.H. Basnayake, Attorney General of Sri Lanka who later became the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka.

The Ceylon Muslim Cultural Centre, which was built by A.M.A. Azeez in the premises of Zahira College, Colombo, had an Islamic Library, a publication Bureau and an Islamic Research Centre. But the work was not completed, as Azeez had to leave Zahira.

Actually, Azeez's plan to establish a Cultural Centre and Muslim Cultural University at Zahira College never materialised, the absence of which are felt today.

Azeez contributed several articles to Publications in Sri Lanka and abroad. His publication called Islam in Sri Lanka (in Tamil) won the Sahitya award. His article Titled History of Sri Lankan Muslims' has been recognised and it was included in the encyclopedia published by H.J. Pril & Co. Another of his well-known contributions is 'The West Re appraised' as English publication.

On the 6th February, 1955 he presided over the 'Tamil poet day' organised by the South Indian Muslim Educational Association in connection with its Golden Jubilee celebration. He also presided at the Islamic Tamil-Research Conference held in Trichi in May 1973 where he was honoured.

(The writer is Director, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the Ministry of Eastern Development and Muslim Religious Affairs)

#### **Dr. A. M. A. Azeez's contribution to Muslim Education**



by Saleem Marsoof, PC, Additional Solicitor General - Island Monday 30 Dec 2002

Extracts from the Marhoom Dr. A. M. A. Azeez Memorial Oration delivered at the Mahaweli Centre auditorium on 10th December, 2002 on the invitation of the Dr. A. M. A. Azeez Foundation and the All Ceylon YMMA Conference.

Marhoom Senator Abubakkar Muhammad Abdul Azeez, better known as A. M. A. Azeez, was an illustrious son of our soil who is worthy of emulation.

He was born on 4th October, 1911 into a fairly well to do family in Jaffna. His father, Janab. Abubakkar, was a leading lawyer who also served the community as a Quazi. It will be recalled that Janab. Abubakkar entered the political arena as a Member of the Jaffna Urban Council, which Council he also served with distinction as Vice Chairman, and was at the time of his demise in 1946, the President of the all Ceylon Muslim League, in fact the first ever Muslim resident out side Colombo to hold this important position.

Like most other Muslim children of that era, Marhoom Azeez began schooling in an Arabic Tamil school, but after 3 years of this he changed over to Vaithiswara College where he spent two fruitful years. He then joined Jaffna Hindu College with a view of mastering Science and Latin, which he thought would stand in good stead when he



eventually entered an institution of higher learning. Marhoom Dr. Azeez was a brilliant student whose progress in school was propelled by double promotions and the like, resulting in him being underage to enter the university when he did qualify for admission.

He entered the Ceylon University College in 1929 where he was an exhibitioner in history. He graduated in 1933 winning the Ceylon Government Arts Scholarship, and proceeded to St. Catherine's College, Cambridge for further studies in history. His stay in Cambridge was short-lived as he decided to return to the island after only one term at St. Catherine, when he was informed of his success at the Ceylon Civil Service Examination. He departed from an academic career of singular distinction and even more promise to become the first ever Muslim to enter the Ceylon Civil Service. This no doubt was the beginning of his extremely service minded, exemplary and selfless public life, which can serve as a model to any contemporary social worker, public officer or politician.

Although it is difficult to divide the life of any individual into strict compartments, the public life of Marhoom Dr. Azeez lends itself into a three-fold classification, namely of Civil Servant, Muslim educationist and politician. What is remarkable is that in each of these successive but sometimes overlapping roles, Dr. Aziz exhibited his concern and commitment for the welfare of the Muslim community and a willingness to sacrifice anything and everything for the cause of his people and nation. He also believed in one Ceylon, for all her people.

The first thirteen years of his public life commencing in the year 1935 portrays him as a devoted, hardworking and enthusiastic public servant in the Ceylon Civil Service. He held many responsible positions ranging from Information Officer, Administrative Secretary and Emergency Government Agent, which gave him ample opportunity to interact with the Muslims all over the Island, and in particular in the Eastern Province where he held the post of Emergency assistant Government Agent. During his tenure of office in the East, he was able to study, analyze and assess the problems of the Muslims of that region, and he will be long remembered for his dedicated service he rendered to the people of the Eastern Province.

Even during his stewardship in the Ceylon Civil Service, Marhoom Azeez showed a great deal of interest in Muslim education and scholarship, pioneering in 1938, the Muslim Scholarship Loan Fund, which was the forerunner of the Muslim Scholarship Fund established by him in 1945. As he stated in the course of his presidential address at the Muslim Educational Conference organized by the educational branch of the all ceylon Muslim League held in Kalmunai in May 1949, his position as AGA (Emergency) in the Eastern Province helped him to come into intimate contact with the people of Kalmunai. To quote the words of Marhoom Azeez: "..... it was in this area that I became fully aware of the importance of education. I realized that education, and education alone, is that master key that could unlock all the doors to progress and in any social programme of the Muslims the first and foremost place should definitely and distinctly be given to education."

It was probably this line of thinking that persuaded Marhoom Dr. Azeez to take over as the Principal of Zahira College from his illustrious predecessor Marhoom Dr. T. B. Jayah in the year 1948. This was indeed a great sacrifice, as Dr. Azeez was at that time steadily heading towards the pinnacle and plums of public service, which he opted to give up though he was not even an old boy of Zahira.

As Hon. H. H. Basnayake, Attorney General of Sri Lanka who later became the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka, when he presided over the prize giving at Zahira College, Colombo in 1955 commented:-

"Two names loom large in the history of Zahira College. They are Jayah and Azeez. In the era of Jayah, Zahira emerged from childhood to youth. In the era of Azees it passed from youth to manhood."

The Jayah-Azeez period, also called the 'Golden-era of Zahira' witnessed the blossoming of many brilliant products that made enormous contributions for the development of this nation in various fields. They came from all communities and races of this country, not just Muslims. Under the Leadership of Azeez, Zahira became one of the best schools in the Island. Zahira flourished in education, sports and other extracurricular activities and good number of children entered university from there.

Like his illustrious predecessor Dr. Jayah, Dr. Azeez put a great deal of emphasis on the indivisibility of spiritual and material education. As Dr. Aziz himself has explained.:

"In this context, learning was always Qur'an-centred: that indeed is the special feature of the Muslim tradition. The Holy Qur'an occupies a place in Islam that finds no parallel in other religions of the world; for, to the Muslims the Holy Qur'an is not a mere book of religious maxims or a collection of devotional hymns; nor is it of human or prophetic origin; instead it is a code of life laying down the correct pattern of conduct. It is the Word of God revealed to His last Prophet. Education in Islam therefore begins and ends with the Holy Qur'an. All branches of knowledge, whether strictly theological or broadly scientific, thus derive their inspiration from the Holy Qur'an."

Dr. Aziz made every endeavour to provide technical education to the students and in fact made use of an offer by the Education Department to grant an interest free loan of Rs. 80,000 in 1956 which was utilized for putting up a building for practical education.

Being an erudite Tamil scholar, Dr. Aziz also commenced parallel classes in Tamil in 1949 beginning with a Tamil Lower Kindergarten.

While being Principal, he established the 'Thamil Sangamam' together with the likes of Professor Sivathamby and Professor Sivagurunathan, both eminent scholars and distinguished old boys of Zahira. Marhoom Azeez was widely responsible for nurturing the Tamil Language and published many important titles in Tamil. One of his many acclaimed books, 'Ilangaill Islam' (Islam in Sri Lanka) won the Ceylon Sathiya Academy award in the 1960s.

His English publication 'The West Appraised' (1964) provides valuable insights into the contribution of freedom fighters of Sri Lanka and India such as Anagarika Dharmapala, Dr. W. A. de Silva, Arumuga Navalar, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohamed Ali Jinnah, Seyyed Ahemd Khan (founder of Aligarh University India), Orabi Pasha, M. C. Siddhi Lebbe and many others. A. M. A. Azeez was in fact a great thinker, reformer and prominent educationist. His works and thoughts bear comparison to the great Islamists of the late 19th Century such as Moulana Jalaludeen Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Allama Iqbal. It was in fact Azeez who introduced the works of Iqbal to the Ceylonese and established the 'Iqbal Institute' at Zahira College. The Islamic College 'Jamiah Naleemiyyah' of Beruwala, which has produced many Islamic Scholars was a brainchild

of Azeez. The great Muslim Philanthropist Naleem Hajjar who has donated immensely for the devolvment of Zahira including construction of the magnificent hostel building, made Azeez's dream a reality. In the field of education Dr. Azeez also stressed the importance of English education for Muslim students.

The goal of Dr. Aziz was to make Zahira the radiating centre of Muslim thought and activity. With a view of realizing this dream, he activated the Muslim Scholarship Fund, established Old Boys Associations in Karachi and other capital cities, streamlined the administration of the school and attracted the support of wealthy and educated Muslims of enhancing the content and quality of education and sports at Zahira. Sometimes Dr. Azeez had to adopt strong arm tactics to meet challenges arising from the foolishness of parents and greed of others having vested interests in Zahira which often manifested itself in unruly behaviour and violence. Marhoom Azeez was so successful that the number of Zahirians gaining admission to the universities increased rapidly during the Azeez era from almost zero in the early 1950s to 11 in 1958, 14 in 1959 and 15 each in 1960 and 1961, at a time when the country's student population was far less than what it is now and university admissions were countered in hundreds and not thousands. Zahirians also excelled in sports such as Cricket, Soccer, Rugby Football, Boxing, Shooting and Cadetting and were dreaded by mighty opponents such as Royal, Trinity and S. Thomas'. In 1956 M. H. Ameen won the coveted Queens Cup for Best Marksman of all ages, and in Cricket, Zahira amassed the highest score for the season - 536 runs for 2 wickets. The very next year Zahira became Schools Champions in Soccer, which is a trend that continues to this day.

Let me now turn to what I consider the most important facet of Marhoom Azeez's illustrious career, his political life. It is here that one encounters a statesman of the highest order who was lost to our community due to its lack of vision. With the establishment of the YMMA conference, Dr. Azeez began to play a significant role in the political arena of Ceylon. He joined the United National Party, and in 1952 was elected into the working committee of the party. He was also appointed into the Upper House of Parliament, better known as the Senate, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister late Dudley Senanayake.

It was while he was a Senator that the Official Language Bill was presented to the Parliament. The decision of the UNP to support the 'Sinhala only' policy at a UNP Parliamentary meeting was vehemently opposed by Senator Azeez. Not only was he vociferous in his dissent to it, but he went a step further and resigned from the party which he loyally served. He endorsed the thinking of the late Dr. Colvin R. De Silva that the recognition of both Sinhala and Tamil as official languages will preserve Ceylon as one nation, whereas the adoption of Sinhala only will create two nations. Senator Azeez's main misgiving in regard to the 'Official Language Bill' was that, he thought that it posed a challenge to the separate identity of the Muslims as an ethnic group distinct from the Tamils, which the Muslims had been trying to preserve even during the pre-independence period. He also foresaw the division of our community into Tamil speaking and Sinhala speaking Units. In his own words,

" ..... the abandonment of Tamil by the Muslims of the South and Central Ceylon would almost cut them off from the Muslims of the East and North Ceylon; ..... would deny them the benefits of the Muslim-Tamil literature produced in South India; ..... would make it difficult for the theological institutions in Ceylon to function effectively ..... (but) ..... Sinhalese cannot also be neglected in the present context of affairs in Ceylon ..... and

the abandonment of Tamil would definitely destroy the solidarity of the community and considerably weaken its political power."

Unfortunately the events that unfolded after 1956 have proved the predictions of Senator Azeez to be very prophetic indeed. Not only did the implementation of the Official Languages act cause the two major communities of our country to drift far apart, it also has resulted in a deadly civil war bringing with it utter misery and hardships to the people of this country, some of whom are still refugees in and out of the country.

As far as the Muslims are concerned, the emergence of the Muslim Congress with its power base in the east has brought into focus the sharp differences in the aspirations of the Muslims of the Northeast vis-a-vis their brethren living in the rest of the country. Ironically, the present leader of the Muslim Congress, who himself hails from outside the Northeast, has the responsibility of reconciling these apparently contradictory needs and aspirations, and going through the peace negotiations with a sense of balance which will avoid any kind of future disharmony between these two units of our community. Mercifully, our present leaders, who have had the benefit of the wisdom of the hindsight, have come to the realization that Marhoom Senator Azeez was right after all, and his resignation from the party and the Senate was not in vain.

I conclude my address on this Founders Day praying to Almighty that Marhoom Senator Azeez be rewarded in the hereafter for his great service to the cause of Islam and the Muslims of Sri Lanka, and may he and all those great men we commemorate on this Founders Day attain Jannathul Firdows.

I am deeply grateful to the President and members of the Dr. A. M. A. Azeez Foundation and President and other office bearers of the All Ceylon YMMA Conference, for inviting me to participate in today's function, and I also thank Almighty Allah for giving me this opportunity.

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### **The 34<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of A M A~Azeez Senator A M A~Azeez – an Icon of his age**

By *Ananda W. P. Guruge*

In the hectic transitional age in the progress of Sri Lanka from a British crown colony through a period of semi-self-rule to a free and independent nation, a few names stand out as leaders of undisputed versatility. They made lasting contributions and offered leadership in a variety of fields at one and the same time through their multiple talents. One of the spectacular icons in that comity of rara avis was A. M. A. Azeez who was recently selected to be appraised in a prestigious international publication as one of the hundred Muslim leaders of the world in the twentieth century. His unique record of achievements in provincial administration and rural development, national food drive during war years, expansion of high quality education especially of the Muslim youth, community leadership in the political scene and legislation, and promotion of scholarship through research and publication do certainly merit this remarkable honour.

I met Senator Azeez in 1954 at the request of the then Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala. It was to invite him to be a speaker at a public ceremony in October 1954 to inaugurate the national celebration of Buddha Jayanti to mark the 2500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha and the founding of the nation. It was the Prime Minister's idea that the

national event should involve all segments of the population and Senator Azeez was the obvious choice to represent the Muslim community. He saw me in his study in the Barnes Place residence and this little cozy corner had been the venue of many hundred meetings we had as we cooperated in many fronts over nearly two decades. The ever-deepening friendship with the Azeez family has been a most enriching experience for me and my family.

Born in Jaffna and assigned to the Eastern Province as Assistant Government Agent of the Ceylon Civil Service, he had a first-hand knowledge and understanding of the problems, which the Muslims faced, and was deeply committed to solving them.

His wife Ummu, the most charming, compassionate, hospitable and loving person she was, hailed from an affluent family descending from a distinguished Iranian diplomat accredited to Ceylon. Tall, fair, handsome and cheerful, Azeez had a genial and charismatic personality, enhanced by his exemplary humility and inimitable sense of humour. Their three children, Marina, Ali and Iqbal shared the parents' affability and generosity. Their lovely home had thereby been the meeting place of people of all walks of life invited to social, religious, cultural and public events. It was a veritable beehive of activity.

In three areas in particular we ensured the cross-fertilization of our ideas and insights by sharing experience for mutual benefit. They were history, literature and education. Azeez was not only well-read and well-informed but also an intellectual giant on his own right. His superior skills as an orator in both English and Tamil and his facile pen made him a delightful communicator. There was no aspect of a subject on which he had no clear-cut views or an innovative approach and these had been developed through thorough reflection, critical examination and open-minded consultation. He was always ready to learn. He was never rigid or stubborn. He loved a good discussion and more controversial the better.

Once he presented his observations on colonialism highlighting how nationals of colonies responded to their contact with foreign powers. Using a series of alliterative adjectives as dazzling, disillusioned, and disenchanting to the point of dispelling, he traced the history of colonialism with specific examples. So brilliant and thought provoking was his analysis that I persuaded him to expand on it as a chapter of a book, which would deal with the Sri Lankan experience. The result was his first book, **The West Reappraised** which I had the privilege of seeing through the press. Fitting skillfully to his theory and demonstrating his intellectual inclusivity, he added thumbnail sketches of the lives and careers of Arumuga Navalar, Siddi Lebbe and Anagarika Dharmapala. With this he became an author and to me it had been a rewarding experience to cooperate with him in his literary career. In turn he has played a similar role with my publications. From English, he switched to Tamil with the conviction that the new generation of young readers could be reached only through the mother tongue.

**It was in the field of education that we were deeply involved because he was the foremost Muslim educator holding the prestigious position of Principal of Zahira College - a position of service for which he relinquished his career as a highly placed Civil Servant. My responsibilities "in the Ministry of Education necessitated us to take some very difficult decisions and to justify them through long-drawn legal battles. Eventually Azeez was vindicated as his unswerving dedication to the cause of Muslim education was beyond doubt or question.**

We also collaborated in developing legislative measures and plans for the establishment of a Muslim University on the lines of Vidyodaya and Vidyalandkara. It was a pity that the political will dwindled with the change of Ministers and the project fell through. His concept of a center of higher learning deriving inspiration from the remarkable history of Muslim contribution as an intellectual bridge between South Asia and Middle East would have enabled Sri Lanka to play a special role and gain leadership. His efforts, however, were not in vain as, among others, he inspired young Muslim scholars like Professor Uwise of Vidyodaya University to achieve some of the objectives.

What has been most noteworthy in Senator A. M. A. Azeez's career is that change of governments did not affect the position of leadership that was universally recognized. Thus in later years, he was appointed to the Public Service Commission wherein his multi-dimensional experience made him a tremendous asset. His role was to ensure that justice and fair play were the foremost considerations affecting every decision pertaining to public servants. I have personally observed the effective manner in which he argued to safeguard the welfare and interests of the downtrodden and the disadvantaged.

This is an exceptional quality for which he had been always remembered by all who came to know him. Once I was amazed to see how enormous crowds of people in the Eastern Province attended the election meetings he addressed on behalf of some candidates because they recalled the unforgettable services he had rendered to the Province as a young man two decades earlier.

So Marhoom Dr. A. M. A. Azeez, Civil Servant, Educator, Senator, and Public Service Commissioner, is truly a leader to be long remembered and strongly recommended for emulation. While shining as a bright star in the galaxy of hundred Muslim leaders of the world in the twentieth century, his contribution to national development reminds us that his legacy in Sri Lanka extends beyond linguistic, religious or communal boundaries.

**Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge was a junior colleague of Senator Azeez in the Ceylon Civil Service until his retirement on its abolition after serving as Acting Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. After having served UNESCO in Paris , New Delhi and Bangkok , and been Sri Lanka 's Ambassador to UNESCO, France and the USA as well as Spain , Algeria and Mexico , Dr. Guruge is now a leading Buddhist. scholar in California, USA .**

### **Dr. A. M. A. Azeez: An Iqbalian Visionary and an Exceptional Intellectual**

**- Dr. A.C.L. Ameer Ali -**

This is the thirty-fifth year since Aboobucker Mohamed Abdul Azeez breathed his last, and the Sri Lankan Muslim community is yet to find a replacement to fill the vacuum left by that towering personality, an Iqbalian visionary, an exceptional intellectual, and a patriotic citizen.

As a keen student of Sri Lankan Muslim's history, politics, and development; as a direct beneficiary of Azeez's intellectual thoughts and vision; and perhaps with the benefit of historical hindsight I record regretfully at the outset that Azeez, while he was alive, did not win the recognition by his own community that his stature and services deserved.

Today, the unflinching contribution of the Eastern Province Muslims to the food stock of Sri Lanka, the glorious legacy of the Azeez-era of Zahira College, the Young Men's Muslim Association and the Muslim Scholarship Fund that Azeez founded, the annual Iqbal Day celebrations that he initiated, and the numerous essays and books that he authored in Tamil and English languages speak eloquently the lasting contribution that he made to the development of the Sri Lankan Muslim community. He was indeed a towering personality second to no other Muslim leader in the history of the Island.

The solitary palmyrah palm that he nurtured at the entrance of his 'Meadow Sweet' home in Barnes Place, Colombo, constantly reminded the visitors of his Jaffna heritage. Hailing from a very prestigious and highly educated family in Jaffna, Azeez was a proud product of Vaidyeshwara Vidyalayam and Jaffna Hindu College from where he went on to receive an Honours Degree in history from the University of London in 1933. He was the first Muslim to pass the prestigious Ceylon Civil Service Examination, and in 1942 he was appointed as an Assistant Government Agent and posted to Kalmunai in the Eastern Province. Azeez's services to his community and to his country began that year and ended only when he died after thirty-one years.

It was in Kalmunai that he came into direct contact for the first time with the life and conditions of rural Muslims. It was also while serving in that region that he realised with perspicacity that the future of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka lay in the development of the rural Muslims in the East. Steeped in rural poverty and deprived of proper educational facilities the Muslims of the East were yearning for a breakthrough. His first attempt to ameliorate their condition was to make hundreds of landless Muslim peasants become land owners. "Azeez Thurai Kandam", an area of paddy land named after him with a deep sense of gratitude by the Muslims of that region, is a silent testimony to his yeoman services. No wonder that Azeez described this part of Sri Lanka very aptly as "Muslimkalin kazha poomi", meaning Muslim's rooted soil.

Another important event occurred while he was in Kalmunai, which was to change his entire outlook on Islam and the future of Muslims for ever. Azeez was a voracious reader to which his personal library of hundreds of volumes on history, politics, philosophy, religion and literature will bear witness. He was an acute observer of developments that were unfolding in the rest of the Muslim world, notably in Turkey under Mustapha Kamal and in the Indian sub-continent during the last days of the Raj. He became a regular reader of a then South Indian Tamil monthly, *Tharul Islam* edited by the well known Muslim journalist, P. Dawood Shah. One of the regular contributors to this paper from Sri Lanka by way of his poems at that time was the Late Abdul Cader Lebbe from Kattankudy. Lebbe's poems, written under his pen-name Adhan, carried with passion Iqbal's vision about Islam and Muslims, and about the true nature of the struggle for Pakistan.

Azeez, who was already an admirer of Muhammd Iqbal, found to his surprise that Poet Abdul Cader Lebbe was also serving as a teacher in Natpittimunai in the same region where Azeez was working. A casual meeting between the two made them the inseparable intellectual twins for the rest of their life. Azeez's forward to Lebbe's *Iracool Cathakam*, and Lebbe's dedication of his *Ceynampunachchiyar Manmiyam* to Azeez, and later on an entire poem composed by him to the memory of his best friend speak volumes to this lifelong intellectual partnership.

Iqbal's philosophy about *tawheed*, progressive Islam, his condemnation of the obscurantist and stagnant 'Mullah Islam', the unique role of man as God's *khalipha* on

earth, the crucial importance and the true nature of *ilm* as stressed by the Quran and the Prophet, the proud legacy of the glorious days of Muslim civilization centred in Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Cordoba, and Delhi, and the struggle for Pakistan became the thought ingredients shared by the two friends and moulded the vision of Azeez which set the stage for him to play an even more important role in his career.

Driven by Iqbal's vision and imbued with a selfless desire to serve his community Azeez found government service too constricting. In his view education became the key to Muslims' future in the modern world. Although he founded the Kalmunai Muslim Educational Society in 1942 and three years later successfully launched the establishment of the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund, which until now has benefited thousands of poor Muslim children to continue with their education up to university level, he was looking for another position that would permanently tie him with education. The opportunity arose when in 1947 the then Principal of Zahira College, Dr. T. B. Jayah, had to resign his position to accept a ministership in the first independent parliamentary cabinet of the country. The Iqbalian visionary Azeez did not wait too long to throw away the civil service and assume duties as the principal of the premier Muslim educational institution in Colombo at the request of Dr. Jayah.

The year 1948 marks the beginning of the Azeez-era of Zahira that lasted for thirteen golden years until 1961. During his time Zahira became in his own words "the radiating centre of Muslim culture, thought and activities".

As an educationist Azeez brought to Zahira College the efficiency of a civil service administration, the Iqbalian vision of Islamic thought and culture, and the grass root knowledge that he gained while serving in Kalmunai about the needs and conditions of ordinary Muslims. From this institution Azeez was able to continue serving the Muslim community from where he left as an Assistant Government Agent. In particular, Zahira College became the sole educational refuge to the children of the farming elite of Eastern Muslims. Mr. Issadeen, the boarding master of Zahira College hostel at that time once remarked, "If the night train from Batticaloa arrives at the Maradana station on the morning of the beginning of college term Zahira hostel will become full". Azeez's Zahira produced generations of brilliant students who later entered the university and became doctors, engineers, surveyors, agronomists, accountants, teachers, and other professionals. Azeez, a strong nationalist, kept Zahira's gates opened not only to Muslims but also to the children from other communities.

Not only in the academic field but also in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities the success of Zahira during his time was envied by other leading colleges in Colombo. As a principal of a leading college, Azeez had one advantage over his counterparts, and that was his membership in the Peradeniya University senate. He used this position to pick and choose the most promising of the graduates who passed out of the university and recruited them as teachers at Zahira. It was a delightful sight to see every Monday morning at the college assembly a galaxy of able teaching staff standing behind the Principal in a semicircle to listen to his thought provoking address for half an hour, to be concluded by the announcement of a list of achievements made by the college students during the previous week. Zahira College, like any other Boys school in Colombo, was usually a noisy place; but when Azeez stepped into the corridors of the college there would be pin drop silence. That was the sign of an astonishing respect that his students showed to him every time he walked in.



Azeez's contribution to Muslim education should be assessed within a historical context. There were four leading Muslim personalities in this field, each playing a unique role to promote Muslim education. M. C. Siddi Lebbe of Kandy in the late nineteenth century was the pioneer who was instrumental in awakening the Muslim elite to realise that their children had to proceed beyond the traditional *madrassa* learning if they were to compete on equal terms with the other communities in modern Ceylon. The establishment of Zahira College in 1892 itself was a direct result of this awakening.

Second was Sir Razik Fareed in the nineteen forties and fifties who worked tirelessly for the opening of two Government Muslim Teachers Training Colleges, one for men in Addalaichenai and the other for women in Alutgama. He realised the desperate need at that time to produce Muslim teachers to fill the professional needs in government public schools in Muslim areas, which until then remained a monopoly of the Tamils. He was, in many ways, the father of the government Muslim schools that has become the permanent feature of Muslim education in Sri Lanka today.

The third in line was Azeez, a visionary and a theoretician in addition to his practical capabilities, whose focus of interest was to promote tertiary education among Muslims and that too in the English medium. It was in university education that Azeez saw the key to produce a Muslim professional class in the future. Like Sir Seyed Ahmad Khan in India, Azeez dreamt of an Aligarh University College in Ceylon and he wanted his Zahira College to grow up to that stature during his tenure as principal. Unfortunately, the government take over of private schools in 1961 and the subsequent events that engulfed the Muslim community left his dream un-materialised until perhaps the establishment of Jamia Naleemia in 1973.

The fourth personality of course was Dr. Badiudin Mahmud, who as the Minister of Education was able to continue the momentum that was built by his predecessors and took Muslim education to an even higher level. Some cynics said that Badiudin single handedly turned a 'business community' into a 'teacher community'.

In this history of Muslim education in independent Sri Lanka, which is yet to be written objectively, the role of Azeez, as both an intellectual and visionary, remains unique because he did not have the political clout that Razik and Badiudin had. While the others were more concerned about the quantity of educated Muslims Azeez was interested in their quality. Without any pomp and publicity but with great tenacity and dedication Azeez quietly equipped generations of Muslim youth with the tool that it desperately needed to achieve a competitive edge in the open market.

Although Azeez did not have much to do directly with Muslim women's education he was passionate about improving their lot. He was alarmed at the low literacy rate among Muslim women and was forthright in condemning the traditional *ulema* for misleading the community on the role of women in Islam. Later, when Badiudin became the Minister of Education he gave teaching appointments to Muslim girls who had passed even five subjects in their General Certificate Examination.

Azeez was a student of history, a passionate lover of literature and arts, and a great thinker and writer. His article, "Ceylon", in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, his book, *The West Reappraised*, his travelogues and other similar publications in Tamil reflect his acute research skill, historical objectivity and lucid presentation. In his last days he was seriously involved in collecting material to write the history of Muslims in Sri Lanka. He had an impeccable command over the English and Tamil languages, which made his oratory

captivating and writings attractive. His speeches at the Parliamentary Senate were more than a political statement and reflected his own independent and objective analysis of various subjects under discussion, irrespective of political party considerations. It was Azeez's intellectual capabilities and academic stature rather than his political affiliations that won him a place in the Parliamentary Senate. Even after the Senate was abolished, and Azeez's career at Zahira College was over, the governments of the time needed his talent and services which made him to be recruited to the Public Service Commission.

In the field of literature, Azeez developed a nostalgic love toward Arabic-Tamil, a unique contribution by the Tamil-speaking Muslims to both Tamil and Arabic as well as to Islam. His essay, "*Arapuththamil Enkal Anputthamil*" yearns for a revival of this somewhat 'sacred' dialect written in a modified Arabic script with a mixture of Tamil and Arabic vocabulary. For instance, when the controversy about official language erupted in the late nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties, Azeez, whose grounding in the Tamil language was rock solid and who strongly believed that Tamil is the mother tongue of the vast majority of Sri Lankan Muslims, thought at the beginning of the controversy before giving up later, whether Arabic-Tamil would be an option to choose for the Muslims. His friend Abdul Cader Lebbe convinced him through correspondence that it would be too damaging for Islamic culture in Sri Lanka if Tamil were to be sacrificed in the interest of political expediency.

In spite of all his involvement in public life and sincere commitment to community service Azeez was a family man. He loved his wife Ummu and children Marina, Ali, and Iqbal, and once told me with great pride that he was picking up his Sinhalese speaking ability from a great teacher, his grand child. Azeez was always a smiling person and never allowed his anger to mar his judgement. He was humble, soft spoken, mild mannered, amiable, and generous. The untimely loss of his beloved wife Ummu was too much for his soul to bear. Azeez, who rarely fell sick and took great care of his health was broken-hearted after Ummul passed away. He did not live long after that.

Azeez was an institution and a walking encyclopaedia. His thoughts and vision were far ahead of his time. The visionary who introduced Iqbal to Sri Lanka, the educationist who produced a whole generation of English educated Muslim specialists and professionals, the public servant who rendered yeoman service to the struggling Muslim farmers in the east, the author who won recognition in national and international writers forums, and the patriot whose dedication to his country was beyond party politics is no more with us. It is a fitting tribute to this great intellectual and visionary that his name has been included in the *100 Great Muslim Leaders of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, published by the Institute of Objective Studies in India.

*(Dr. A.C.L. Ameer Ali hails from Kattankudy and is the son of the well known poet Abdul Cader Lebbe. He was a student of Zahira College, Colombo during the Azeez era, and graduated with Honours in Economics from the University of Ceylon in 1964. He obtained a M.Phil degree from London School of Economics and Political Science and a Doctorate from University of Western Australia. He is a trained economist and has taught thousands of students in the University of Ceylon, the University of Brunei Darussalam and the University of Western Australia. His services were obtained by the South Eastern University, Sri Lanka as an academic advisor. He is now a senior academic in Murdoch University of Western Australia.)*

*He has published many research articles and presented papers at many international conferences. In Australia, he is a leading personality in the Muslim community holding many important posts).*

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## **The best of CV Gooneratne and AHM Azwer**

DN Mon Feb 18 2008

To keep Parliament proceedings alive and interesting is an impossible task for parties representing that August Assembly. For a Speaker, Deputy Speaker or a Deputy Chairman of Committees, it is a headache and a nuisance to have a Member who continues to interrupt each and every Member on his feet.

But, if that Member who disturbs or interrupts the House is a disciplined man, the proceedings turn exciting with other Members responding in a similar manner.

For that, elected Members should have a sound command of the three languages used in the House with absolute knowledge on all Standing Orders of Parliament. Then only they become capable on how and when to disturb a Member who is on his feet.

There was a Member nominated on the National List in 1989 by the UNP who held the record of the most number of interruptions in the House till the year 2000. He was the 'cracking' Member of Parliament A. H. M. Azwer.

The Hansard records many a nickname for Azwer. Deputy Speaker Gamini Fonseka called him-"Jack in the Box". The then Opposition Member, Mahinda Rajapaksa once called him-"Charlie Chaplin". Speaker K. B. Ratnayake described him as-"Heckler in the House". Speaker M. H. Mohamed called him-"Spring Jack" as Azwer sprang up from his seat all the time to disturb the House.

But, C. V. Gooneratne who encountered Azwer thousands of times called Azwer by the name of an animal in Azwer's electorate in the Puttalam District where Azwer represented his people. And Azwer in turn labeled CV with the name of another animal in the Zoo with a tail which jumped from tree to tree, as CV lived close to the Dehiwala Zoo.

### **Honourable**

This honourable man, A. H. M. Azwer was a honest, sincere and a disciplined parliamentarian who never used politics to earn a living. He always led a simple life mingling with the people in the society. Being a State Minister of the Premadasa administration, he had to sell his official jeep (already owned after paying the instalments) to give his daughter in marriage.

Thereafter, he travelled to parliament in a rented out Hi-Ace van. If one monitored the number of interruptions by Azwer in Parliament from 1989-2000, he would have certainly entered the Guinness Book of Records. He played the role of "Lone Ranger" in the two

Parliaments he represented as a Government and an Opposition MP to keep the proceedings alive even at times there were no quorum in the House.

He also holds the record of being involved in the most number of verbal battles which led the Speaker to suspend sittings in the House. Also if you count the number of words by Azwer in the Hansard prints, Azwer would certainly out smart all Parliamentarians in the democracies worldwide. Even the legends of the "Mother of Parliaments", the "House of Commons" who spoke for hours during the second world war may not equal that number.

## Debates

In the bygone days, Parliamentarians debated with discipline and decorum using the command of the language to out smart their opponents during debates. The use of un-parliamentary language was never witnessed by those who flocked the galleries to listen to their elected Members. Humour was met with humour and not with sarcasm.

Azwer's regular partner in battle was the flamboyant former Royal College ruggierite, the six foot C. V. Gooneratne. CV who had a Nelsonian personality inherited a stentorian voice. A well read man like Azwer, CV could fire salvos in seconds.

He had a fine flow of the English Language and the sequence and eloquence of his delivery was excellent. We in the Gallery as Lobby Correspondents for respective newspapers always awaited Gooneratne on his feet as Azwer was sure to take on Gooneratne from the first minute.

Azwer was also a qualified quality interpreter of the three languages in the country able to meet any verbal battle with the experienced members of the House. Of course, the former Royal ruggierite Gooneratne was physically capable of knocking out the verbally strong Azwer in seconds. They both were disciplined men who never stooped to low levels as often seen among many today.

## Friends

Outside the Chamber, Azwer and Gooneratne were great friends. Inside the Chamber, Gooneratne, before rising on his feet would warn the Chair to keep Azwer under control. Former Speakers M. H. Mohamed, Anura Bandaranaike and K. B. Ratnayake always sought the cooperation of Azwer not to disturb Gooneratne. Azwer could hold himself only for a few seconds.

As the late Gamini Dissanayake repeatedly quipped that Gooneratne had done some "charm" to Azwer, he (Azwer) found difficult to hold himself with Gooneratne. Whenever Gooneratne rose to speak, Azwer followed a ritual to tell the Chair-"Sir, I rise to a Point of Order".

The Chair often ruled that the query raised by Azwer was not a Point of Order. Gooneratne shot back in style to say,-"Sir, I told you Azwer's "Point" is now "Pointless" and "Blunt". Azwer retorted in his inimitable style to add,-"Sir, the Hon. Gooneratne is a man without any "Point" to point". Not giving in Gooneratne referred to Azwer's electorate at Puttalam to claim that "Donkeys" never knew they had a "Point". Azwer valiantly came back to the fray to burst out that "Monkeys" who originated close to the

Dehiwala Zoo had only "Tails" and no "Points". "Sir, if Mr. Azwer really knows my "Point", he will run", Gooneratne cracked as the Speaker called both Members to Order.

The Azwer-Gooneratne combination was best ever seen in the recent Parliaments from the Governments and Opposition. They held the floor for hours with brilliant contributions, interruptions, humour and excitement. They both often quoted from intellectuals like Longfellow, Shakespeare, Elliot, Dickens and so on.

Whenever Gooneratne quoted from Shakespeare, Azwer would disturb him to quote from "Martin Wickremesinghe" and then refer to Charles Dickens" to the annoyance of Gooneratne. From that point it was all humour in the House.

Parliament was quality and entertainment to quantity by these professional members of the House as seniors like Lalith Athulathmudali, Gamini Dissanayake, ACS Hameed, Dharmasiri Senanayake, Lakshman Jayakody, Lakshman Kadirgamar, Anura Bandaranaike, Anil Moonesinghe, K. B. Ratnayake and others were also men of scriptures who chipped in often to add more humour.

### Handkerchief

C. V. Gooneratne after assuming office as Cabinet Minister for Industrial Development in the Kumaratunga Government began to display a red colour handkerchief in the pocket of his tunic coat. That amused Azwer. Azwer wondered about the sudden change in the attire of his opponent in the Chamber.

Whenever, Gooneratne entered the Chamber, Azwer used to quip, "Sir, I first greet that red handkerchief and then my friend Mr. Gooneratne". "You have nowhere else in myself to greet", cracked Gooneratne. "No Sir, I have never gone the "Wild" way that "Oscar" went", Azwer told Gooneratne. Looking to the Chair, Gooneratne quipped, "Sir, I am afraid that my friend Azwer may soon try an "Oscar Wilde" if his focus goes 'wild".

The famous Air Lanka-Emirates deal debate in the House paved the opportunity for all Members and those in the galleries to witness the best of Azwer and CV Gooneratne. Azwer began to focus his eyes on the minister's red handkerchief planning to take on the minister unlike before. Gooneratne used the opportunity to first counter allegations made by UNP MP Karunasena Kodituwakku. Azwer was the Saviour of all in the UNP. Azwer, a shrewd parliamentarian chose to divert the attention of Minister Gooneratne to his red handkerchief knowing well he could disturb the trend of the verbal dose unleashed on the UNP by the minister. Entered Azwer in this way to say-"Hon. Minister your red handkerchief might fall for the lies you utter in this Chamber". Shot back Gooneratne in an angry mood-"Only bulls get excited by the colour Red".

### Bulb

Azwer turned the topic back to the Air Lanka-Emirates deal to claim the deal would deprive the stewardesses of the beautiful Peacock designed saree as their uniform. Gooneratne came back-"Sir, Azwer has another problem when he talks about the removal sarees as his 'bulb' is not functioning now" (Azwer's microphone bulb stood off in the chamber). Azwer complained to the Chair that somebody was deliberately fiddling with his microphone. "Sir, Azwer must call for action to make his 'bulb' function "chipped in Gooneratne. Azwer did not give in but cracked, "Sir, even Mr. Gooneratne's

'bulb' is in the 'dark; as I see it". Looking at the Speaker, Gooneratne quipped, "Sir, if I switch 'on', Mr. Azwer will run". At that point Azwer decided to leave the Chamber saying, "Sir, I have to attend another function". Gooneratne added, "Mr. Azwer, I hope your 'bulb' will 'function' at that function". As Azwer was leaving, Gooneratne cracked that the House was free of "Donkeys". Turned back Azwer to retort -"Sir, the Dehiwala 'Monkeys' are free to have a day on their own". 'Sir, without my friend Azwer in the Chamber, there's no fun", quipped Gooneratne to the Speaker. Just leaving by the Opposition door, Azwer emotionally said, "Sir, with malice towards none, it was all said in fun". "Sir, Mr. Azwer ate into my time, I'll wind up now", said CV Gooneratne.

## Unity

Later on that day, CV Gooneratne was seen walking in the company of Azwer with the right arm round Azwer's shoulder into the Members' Dining Room. Will we ever witness such dignified conduct, decorum, understanding and unity among Government and Opposition Members today or even in the near future is the vital question.

The late CV Gooneratne, a brilliant gentleman, fine debater and a disciplined parliamentarian will be long remembered by his intimate colleague and fellow Parliamentarian A.H.M. Azwer, another outstanding product, now an Advisor to President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

These men were rare specimen in the annals of our new Parliament in Sri Jayewardenepura, Kotte. Will we ever see the likes of them again?

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## Al Haj M A BAKEER MARKAR

### Sons and daughters of Sri Lanka - Bakeer Markar

Sunday Observer Sep 7 2003

Seventh Death Anniversary : Al-Haj Bakeer Markar strove for national harmony

Late Al-Haj Bakeer Markar was born on 12th May 1917 at Hakeem Villa in Beruwala. He received his early education at St. Sebastian Vidyalaya in Colombo and joined Zahira College, Maradana. He later entered Law College and passed out as a proctor.

His multi-faceted life placed him in various positions as a teacher, lawyer, politician and above all as the Speaker of Parliament and Governor of the Southern Province. These high positions helped him a great deal to serve the masses.

Maradana Zahira College and its Principal late T. B. Jayah provided the necessary background and guidance to Bakeer Markar's public career.

He inherited the attributes needed for public service by birth. He was the hallmark of integrity, sincerity, simplicity and patience. These shining qualities stood him in good stead as a leader among the multi-ethnic society in Sri Lanka.

In the sphere of religion too, he made his mark as a devout Muslim. He made many speeches in Parliament urging the introduction of religious education in all the schools in

Sri Lanka. He stood for inter-racial harmony in Sri Lanka and his proficiency in all three languages namely Tamil, Sinhala and English proved to be a big boon for this avowed interest in him.

The following excerpt of a speech he made in Parliament illustrates clearly the ambition he cherished for national harmony in Sri Lanka. "I feel proud of myself as a Muslim. At the same time I doubly feel proud of myself being a Sri Lankan. Because any citizen in this country can perform his religious duties independently. Islam treats the entire human race as the nation. We extend our hands of friendship to all the communities."

As a parliamentarian and also as the Speaker there, Bakeer Markar exhibited impartiality and commitment in his duties.

These qualities won him applause and praise from all the sections in Parliament. His god-fearing qualities helped him to overcome innumerable obstacles and challenges which confronted him both in politics and public life.

He worked tirelessly at the national and social levels while he devoted himself for the well-being of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka.

His desire to mobilise Muslim youth at national level resulted in the formation of Muslim League Youth Fronts at village level throughout Sri Lanka.

He became the guiding force of this movement and made the voice of this movement as the voice of the Muslim community.

Bakeer Markar realised the importance of the media and media persons in this field and started the tabloid 'Dawn' in Tamil and English amidst many an obstacle.

In spite of his busy schedules in politics, he found time to involve himself in social activities as well. When the cyclone hit the Eastern province in 1979, he used his good office to get assistance from Iraq for the affected ones along with the Saddam Hussein village entire cost of which was met by the then Iraqi government.

He also rendered a yeoman service when a plane crash of Indonesian Haj pilgrims took place in Negombo. Relief activities led by him during this plane crash won him praise of the Indonesian government.

He also rendered immense service to the people affected by the breach of Kantalai tank in 1986.

This noble man with piety, love and affection has, left behind a heir to carry forward his vision and mission is the Mass Communication Minister Imtiaz Bakeer Markar.

Late Bakeer Markar who devoted his life time for the well-being of the Muslim community and for the promotion of national harmony in this country is indeed a national leader worthy of emulation. On this day when we remember him, let us strive hard ourselves to bring to fruition the vision he set forth in realising national harmony in Sri Lanka.

**S. M. Kamaldeen**

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## **Deshamanya Alhaj M. A. Bakeer Markar : Consistency was his strength**

By Alhaj A. H. M. Azwer, MP, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.- DN  
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Alhaj Bakeer Markar was born on 12th May, 1917. He traces his ancestry to Sheikh Jamaludeen Al Maghdoomi, the pioneer Arab settler who established himself in the seaboard town of Beruwala. His father Hakeem Aleem Marikkar Mohamed Marikkar belonged to a family of physicians. He was educated at Zahira College.

He entered Law College in 1940 and passed out as a lawyer. He was President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka, Kalutara branch. He was founder president of All Ceylon Union of Muslim League Youth Fronts. He was also a senior vice president of the All Ceylon Muslim League. He was chairman of the Beruwala-Maradana Mosque until his demise. He passed away after 80 well spent years.



Alhaj M. A. Bakeer

In a public career as teacher, lawyer, politician, Speaker of Parliament, Minister of State and Governor of the Southern Province for over a period of 50 years he made a profound contribution to the evolution of a democratic polity and society of which Sri Lanka can justly be proud of.

Alhaj Bakeer Markar was always accessible even to the poor and powerless and like his mentor Dudley Senanayake had not a trace of the arrogance that often, in the case of lesser men accompanies the attainment of high office. He was a self effacing political figure of great charm, high integrity, total incorruptibility and dignity. He was Speaker of the last Parliament. He was also the first Speaker of Parliament which was opened in 1982 at the new administrative capital Sri Jayewardenepura, Kotte. At the main entrance to picturesque building, his name has been described as its first Speaker. He adorned our legislature for 16 years and 1 day and for more than five years as its Speaker.

He was truly a people's speaker. It is significant fact to recall that before the escalation of war he was the last leader from the South who was accorded a civic reception in the North by the Jaffna Municipal Council attended by the mayor, community leaders and all the Tamil parliamentarians of that time when he visited the peninsula.

Alhaj Bakeer Markar was totally committed to the pursuit of peace. He vigorously campaigned for peace, harmony, unity and national integration. He was following in the footsteps of Dr. T. B. Jayah his mentor, political guru and freedom fighter. Mr. Bakeer Markar used to refer to Dr. Jayah as a "Magister Magistorum", a teacher of teachers. His political forte was his consistency in politics which he learned from his guru Dr. T. B. Jayah. he also acquired his political wisdom from Dr. T. B. Jayah who discovered his talent so early in his life and chose him as his campaign manager for his election. He was influenced by Dr. Jayah whose thinking was stimulated, nourished and sustained by the great ideals of Islam.

Bakeer Markar was also a great humanist. The influence of Islam and humanism not only moulded his character but also broadened and widened his vision and mental horizon.



When Alhaj Bakeer Markar became Speaker he did not confine himself to the precincts of "Mumtaz Mahal". He wanted to infuse in the Muslim community the activism, vigour and dynamism of youth. He advocated the formation of youth movements and himself reorganised an existing youth organisation and renamed it "All Ceylon Union of Muslim League Youth Fronts". He toured the whole island and formed over 560 branches. In his speeches Alhaj Bakeer Markar used to quote extensively from the "Dammapada" and the "Thirukural". He was awarded the Deshamanya. He used to carry the rosary and recite his prayers.

He was closely associated with Dudley Senanayake whom he greatly admired. Bakeer Markar's greatness lies in the fact that all he did, he did without flamboyance, without publicity or self-adulation and most importantly without any basic change in his demeanour, his manner of speech, his bearing or his lifestyle.

I had the privilege and good fortune to accompany Alhaj Bakeer Markar on his visits to India, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh and U.A.E, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Great Britain where he visited the House of Commons. He was received in the "RajGat" by S. Hidayathullah who was then the Vice President of the Republic of India. He was so meticulous in the performance of his religious obligations that special arrangements were made to attain Friday Jumma prayers. His wife was a constant source of inspiration in his public and private duties.

Alhaj Bakeer Markar was a believer in peace to establish political stability and economic prosperity. He believed in the promotion, encouragement, assistance and fostering of activities or advancement of national unity, inter-communal amity, racial and religious harmony, goodwill and peace among people.

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### **Deshamanya Al Haj Bakeer Markar**



It gives me great pleasure to write a few words regarding the gentleman whom I had the pleasure of serving when he adored the highest seat of Parliament as the Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka for a considerable period of time. The late Al Haj Bakeer Markar was the first Speaker who had the distinct privilege of serving as the Speaker in the new Parliament at the time it was ceremonially opened in 1982.

I knew that the late Al Haj Bakeer Markar was truly a Sri Lankan in all respects and he enjoyed serving the masses with dedication having started his political career as a Member of the Beruwela Urban Council where he had implemented various programmes for the uplift of the community where he was committedly serving both Sinhala and Muslim communities equally. He was a humble, kind hearted, deeply religious minded leader who wanted to do the utmost to the people since he was truly a people's representative.

According to the records available the late Al Haj Bakeer Markar entered Parliament for the first time in 1960 having won the Beruwela electorate.

Thereafter in 1965 he was re-elected to Parliament for the second time. Subsequently, he was elected as a Member of Parliament back again in 1977 when the UNP Government got a massive landslide. On this occasion, the late Mr. Bakeer Markar was unanimously elected Deputy Speaker and became the Speaker when the late Anandatissa de Alwis relinquished his post to take up a Ministerial post in the Government under the Mr. J. R. Jayewardene.

It was my privilege to come to know him very closely when I was called upon to attend to various duties entrusted to me personally by him in my early twenties. At that time, I was lucky that I enjoyed unique privilege of working for the then Speaker one of the most renowned sons of Sri Lanka who was also a great humanist and a gentleman of par excellence. In my view, as a politician his only ambition was to serve the country with sincerity to the best of his ability which he did with dedication. He attended to his duties with a deep sense of responsibility and a commitment.

I must very sincerely state that his traits have been a great inspiration for all those who worked under him including me. His simplicity and down-to-earth outlook, I have no doubt, made him an affable politician having won the hearts of everyone from all walks of life.

Furthermore I have been very fortunate to serve him even very closely when he was the Chairman on Public Petitions as I was the Head of the relevant secretariat at that time. The Al Haj Bakeer Markar enjoyed performing his duties as its Chairman in order to ensure justice and the welfare of the petitioners who came before the Committee seeking redress. I could recall very well instances when he was personally overjoyed to grant redress for those deserving cases who came before the Committee on Public Petitions seeking necessary relief.

The late Al Haj Bakeer Markar similarly took no time in turning down appeals when there were grounds that an appeal could be rejected. I believe this was because he was a true disciplinarian who upheld the values, who regarded the rules and regulations with utmost respect. This is the man who taught me to be firm for reasons and to be courageous when you need to seek justice. He took great pains to explain matters and showed us the path in order to be efficient so that petitioners could be granted expeditious relief. He added that justice delayed is justice denied. Due to this kind of training I have no doubt the petition secretariat at that time earned the highest respect, appreciation and the recognition from everyone.

It reminds me of a few words of "Rudyard Kipling" which goes as "if you can walk with Kings and Queens and not lose the common touch" and Al Haj Bakeer Markar was a

shining example who did not lose the common touch and was able to move with masses with admirable humility. This quality I suppose stood very well in him as a politician who was loved by all communities in our motherland.

I must add that he served the Supreme Legislature for 16 years and more than 5 years as the Speaker and another 5-year-term as a Minister. However, he enjoyed very much being the Chairman of Public Petitions Committee since he was able to do an enormous service to the petitioners through the Committee to his heart's satisfaction. The Petition Committee at that time met on every working day including all Sitting days in Parliament. As I have stated above, he was overjoyed when he was able to deal with difficult cases and grant redress because he was a true Muslim and he always said that he was proud to serve the people and he truly enjoyed serving the mankind.

The late Al Haj Bakeer Markar had a distinct advantage of being able to be fluent in all 03 languages. He associated people of all classes, religions, races and was able to move happily with the rich and the poor, the educated, the uneducated, etc. with ease.

As a lover of human beings he enjoyed advising them perhaps again due to his desire to ensure the uplift of his fellowbeing. I have seen how he exchanged views even with Heads of States. I was able to witness the contributions he made in several International Conferences both here and abroad.

He was a respected Speaker in the Sri Lanka Parliament. His simplicity, sincerity and affectionate ways were the characteristics in the man who was endeared by all who came in contact with him.

I may be failing in my duty, if I do not mention his ambition towards providing the necessary facilities, welfare activities etc, for the staff under him. He relentlessly fought for the introduction of trousers for the minor staff along with the courage and support he received from Mr. Sam Wijesinha, the then Secretary-General of Parliament.

Al Haj Bakeer Markar was full of sympathy for those who deserved sympathy of the Hon. Speaker. In my view, he developed the quality of leadership not only among the Muslim community, but also the Sinhala and Tamil communities as well. His desire to do his duties towards the people with perfection had no barriers and had nurtured these qualities to be a perfect politician with a dedication for social work.

He was always prepared to serve the mankind. I have associated him very closely, even after he left politics having completed the term in the Southern Provincial Council as the Governor. He enjoyed our presence in his Beruwela residence and treated us with hospitality, who is typically a Sri Lankan. As I myself comes from down south, he insisted that I should drop in his residence at Beruwala on my way home when time permits. He enjoyed my visits so much and we happily discussed various issues including what he did in order to uplift the quality of the staff of Parliament. I must mention that I had the feeling and the respect I had for my own father to the late Al Haj Bakeer Markar.

He may have had enemies, but he never carried vengeance. He was full of humour and he enjoyed helping people and his style of benevolence had no limitations. I was able to see him as a true party man which he always said that he was proud of being an UNPer. He stood firmly and never hesitated to stand by despite odds which stood against him when there were hardships that befell on him. I must also mention that I have the highest

respect and affection to his eldest son Al Haj Imtiyaz Bakeer Markar, the former Minister of Mass Communication who is also ably carrying forward the vision while following the noble steps of a legendary father in order to fill the immense vacuum created by the late Al Haj Bakeer Markar.

**Lacille de Silva, Director (Administration), Parliament of Sri Lanka.**

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## **BHAILA**

One of the most prominent Memon families in Sri Lanka. Many of its members have contributed significantly to both the country and the community in various aspects of life, political and professional.

Haji Ahamed Bhaila and his brother Haji Usman Bhaila, are the sons of a well known social worker in Kutiyana, named Haji Gani Bhaila who served as a member of the Kutiyana Municipality representing the Memon Community in Kutiyana. The brothers found employment in Ceylon way back in the 1940's within separate Memon business establishments. The elder was attached to Haji Sulaiman Taiyoob & Company in Jaffna, where he went on to become a partner. He moved to Colombo in 1955 in order to improve his business prospects and started his own Company, Haji Usman & Company in Third Cross Street, Pettah. The younger, Ahamed, went on to become the Managing Partner of H H Abdul Kareem & Company in Main Street, Pettah.

With the partition of India both brothers brought their families down to start a new life in Ceylon. Along with their families was also Abdul Latif Bhaila, Ahamed's father in law, who went on to start a textile shop down High Street n Wellawatte, Colombo 6, known as General Drapery Stores.

Usman was a founder member of the Memon Association of Ceylon in the mid fifties and was seriously involved in the betterment of the Muslims, both within Sri Lanka and overseas. When the MP, GG Ponnambalam, took over the Muslim Burial Grounds in Jaffna for the use of Tamil funerals, after Usman had left in 1955, he successfully managed to retain the said grounds for the use of Muslim funerals at the request of the Muslim Community in Jaffna. During the Indo-Pakistan war over the creation of Bangla Desh in 1971 he was responsible for obtaining clearance for many stranded Pakistani's who arrived in Sri Lanka as refugees, providing them food, shelter and even financial assistance. He even ensured that the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo issue them with travel papers for their safe return to their homeland in West Pakistan. Usman also took to politics and was the first ever Memon to contest a parliamentary election when he contested the Kalkudah seat as an Independent candidate. He was presented with the title of Thajul Uloom, in Feb 1993, by the then President of Sri Lanka, D B Wijetunge, in recognition of his services to mankind.

**Haji Ahamed Bhaila**, son of Haji Ghani Bhaila of Kutiyana in India, started life modestly employed as a Salesman in Galle and went on to be involved in enterprises ranging from textiles, to poultry and plantations. He went on to become the Managing Partner of H H Abdul Kareem & Company.

He was also the Founder Member of the Memon Association of Ceylon. Actively involved in service activity with the YMMA in Mutuwal where he was residing in the early 1955's.

Was in charge of the Memon Hanafi Mosque on behalf of H H Abdul Karim & Company, who were the appointed Mutawalli's. He served as Trustee Layard's Broadway Jummah Mosque. Quazi of Memon Community. Was fluent in seven languages even though he did not have a very extensive formal school education in his life. Champion of female education amongst the Muslim Community. Sent one of his daughters to Medical College and another to pursue Islamic Studies. Left one third of his wealth for charity in his inheritance. This Trust, he left behind, is managed by his four sons and has gone to build six Mosques in areas like Pasyala, Hapugastalava, Kattankudy and Sarvodayapuram. Also was used for the extension of a Madarasah in Tihariyah. VC's have also benefited from this Trust as a water supply scheme in Nelsonpura and the clean well scheme for safe drinking water in Anuradhapura.

**Hussein Bhaila**, born:1949, son of Haji Ahamed Bhaila, was a Member of Memon Association in 1967 and went on to become President for four terms spanning a period of seven years from 1980-82 and again in 1997-2000. Lions Club Governor District 306B 1993-94. Served in a special committee for Muslim refugees displaced by political turmoil in the North in an organization known as Federation of Assemblies of Muslim Youth of Seylan, FAMYS, through which he became closely involved with the late MHM Ashroff, charismatic leader and founder of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress. Member of Parliament, Sri Lanka Government. This acquaintance paved his way into Sri Lanka politics. Director of REPPIA (Rehabilitation of Persons, Properties, and Industries Authority). Chairman of the Freight Bureau. First Memon to head a Government Statutory Body. Member of Parliament, UNP National List in 2004, the same year he crossed over to the UPFA Government ranks. Deputy Minister of Advanced Technology and National Enterprise Development in Oct 2004. Deputy Minister of Plan Implementation 2005.

**Kadeem Bhaila**, son of Hussein Bhaila, had his early education at Royal College, Colombo. Left for USA in 1992 to pursue higher education. BSc Industrial Engineering from Purdue University, Indiana, in 1996, moved to California where he worked as Project Engineer for IIT Industries, a fortune 500 Company, before joining Waterpick Technologies as an Advanced Manufacturing Engineer. He married **Kauser Ismail**.

**Ameen Bhaila and Yaseen Bhaila**, sons of Haji Ahamed Bhaila, is a Textile business, partners of TipTop International at Keyzer Street, Pettah, which imports and distributes quality "lock", "chain", "999" and "55", brand sarongs from India.

**Shoab Bhaila**, son of Yaseen Bhaila, passion for Aviation. Wycherly International School, Colombo. Flying at Katukurunda Airfield, earned his wings as a private pilot at the young age of 17. Left for Daytona Beach Campus in Florida where he studied Aviation Business Administration. Nominated to the Deans List for each Semester. VP of the Delta Mu Delta Business Honor Society and ETA Chapter. Completing his MBA (2006).

**Kamran Bhaila**, second son of Yaseen Bhaila, is the President of many Clubs and Organizations including Interact Club at Wycherly International School in Colombo. Excelled in sports captaining the Under 17 Cricket Team. Presently (2006) studying Business & Management at Aston Business School in the UK.

**Ummu Habeeba Bhaila**, sister of Yaseen Bhaila, is the first Memon lady doctor in Sri Lanka. MBBS Trivandrum Medical College India in 1979. Specialize in eye surgery. Diploma in Ophthalmology University of Colombo 1986. Served at General Hospital Ratnapura, Eye Clinic of CMC as Ophthalmologist. Conducted several eye camps in remote areas in Kalpitiya and Nagadipa. Presented research papers at the Annual Sessions of the

Ophthalmological Society & College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka. Editor of the Ophthalmological Society of Ceylon in 1991. Awarded WHO Regional Fellowship on Prevention of Blindness in 1988, Most Outstanding Citizen in Medicine by Lions International in 2004. Married to **Rizvi Rawoof**, exponent of Martial Arts Sport known as Kurash from Uzbekistan over 3,000 years ago which involves bodily throwing ones opponents. President of Kurash Federation of Sri Lanka, VP of the Kurash Confederation of Asia, Chairman Commission for International Kurash Development. Introduced Kurash to the Sri Lanka Navy and Air Force.

**Raiyan Rawoof**, son of Ummu Habeeba Bhaila, won several Karate tournaments locally, Bronze Medal at International Kurash Competition in Kent organized by the British Kurash Federation.

**Safiya Bhaila**, sister of Ummu Habeeba Bhaila, Moulaviya, involved in Islamic studies, passing out from Kal-Eliya Muslim Ladies Arabic College. Catering, specialiy being Samoosa, Arabic Bread and Moghul Fair.

**Umar Bhaila**, born:1942, son of Haji Usman Bhaila, Secretary Memon Association of Ceylon. Formed the first Memon Sports Club. Secy, Islamic Cultural Organization and Charter Member of the :Lions Club of Pettah serving as its first bulletin editor.

**Khalid Bhaila**, born:1968, son of Umar Bhaila, showman and entertainer, performed daring magical tricks, locally and overseas. Known as "Magic Bhaila". First Memon to have won the National Magician of Sri Lanka award and has performed in India, Pakistan and the USA. Performed the only ever daredevil act of its kind, riding a motorbike on the 72 mile stretch from Colombo to Kandy, blindfolded.

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## **BHIRIYA**

**Haji Osman Ismail Bhiriya**, a textile merchant, served STR Salay Mohammed as a working partner from 1940 to 1980. Ismail, son of Osman Bhiriya, is the President of the Sri Lanka Motor Cycle Club. Having started his racing career in late 1971 at the Katukurunda Circuit, where he won first place for 250 cc bikes, he moved on to Stock Cars and Modified Cars before switching on to Formula Racing with the Ford 1600 cc.

He is also an astute businessman and Chairman of Asian Motors Limited, based in T B Jayah Mawatha (Darley Road), which is a franchoise holder fr the import of Proton Cars from Malaysia.

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## **BHOJA**

The Bhoja family, belonging to the Memon Community in Sri Lanka, traces its roots to one Moosa Dewalwala who had a son named Rahmatullah Dewalwala. It was Rahmatullah's son, Ghani Bhoja, born circa 1795 who gave his name to the Bhoja clan and ever since his descendants have been known as the Bhoja's. Ghani Bhoja had a son named Ismail Bhoja who was born circa 1820. Ismail had two sons named Jamal, born circa 1849, and Sulaiman born circa 1851. Jamal had four children, viz, Osman, Karim, Abdullah &

Mohammed while Sulaiman had four children, viz; Salay Mohammed, Latif, Dada, & Somar.

The Bhoja family are descended from **Moosa Dewalwala**, whose son was **Rahmatullah Dewalwala**.

**Ghani Bhoja**, son of **Rahmatullah Dewalwala** was born:circa 1795. His son was **Ismail Bhoja**, born:circa 1820. Ismail had a son named **Jamal Bhoja**, born:circa 1849, whose son **Osman Bhoja**, born:1873 was married to **Fathima Hajiani Peer Mohammed**

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**Osman Bhoja's** son was **Haji Omar Bhoja**, born:1900 in Kutiyana, India and married to **Hajra Hajiana Katchi**, who was born:circa 1900, daughter of **Abdullah Katchi & Noorbhai**. Haji Omar Bhoja also married **Mariam** (India), born:1930. His third wife was **Turkiya Khanum Safadi**, born in 1912 in Damascus, Syria, daughter of **Thowfeek Safadi & Resmiya Samman**.

**Haji Yusuf Bhoja**, son of **Osman Bhoja**, was born in 1919 in Kutiyana, India, was educated at the famous Alighar University in India and later went on to establish a textile business in Karachi in collaboration with his brothers. It was, however, not long before he closed down the business and settle in Sri Lanka in the mid 1950's. In 1957, he started his own business, Abdul Sattar Haji Yusuf & Company, a textile firm originally based in Maliban Street, Pettah, which was later shifted to Bankshall Street and again to Prince Street also in The Pettah. In 1965, he embarked on another textile trading venture, Bhoja Stores. This time, the business was in collaboration with his three sons. Initially based on Bankshall Street the business later shifted to Keyzer Street in the Pettah where it presently stands. Haji Yusuf's sons have now taken over the business from their father with the Bhoja Stores coming under the control of Abdul Rahim and Abdul Sattar Haji Yusuf & Company coming under Abdul Sattar who also runs Hajras, a shop specializing in artificial flowers located in Prince Street, Pettah.

**Haji Moosa Bhoja**, brother of **Haji Yusuf Bhoja**, was born in 1921 in Kutiyana, in India, and married **Rabia Abubakr Mundhiya**.

**Haji Abdul Karim Bhoja**, second brother of **Haji Yusuf Bhoja**, was born in 1926 in India, first arrived in Ceylon in 1934 as a young lad of 8. He settled down and worked for his fathers textile business in Keyzer Street, Pettah, called "H A K & Company". Set up another business, along with his father and brothers, in 1946 in Main Street Pettah under the name of Haji Omar & Company Limited, claimed to be the first Memon Limited Liability Company in the island. The Company closed down in 1956.

He purchased Ceylon Textiles Limited on Second Cross Street, Pettah, in the same year. The new company specialized in Silks, Sari's and Choli's and was reputed for Chiffone printed Georgettes, Nylon Taffeta, and white and colored Poplins. They were also stockists of Bismarck and Joker banians. The Company survived successfully until 1983 when the Black July riots of that year, primarily directed against the Tamil Community, spread to the Pettah. A fire started by an unruly mob engulfed both Tamil and Muslim shops along the street and with it went Ceylon textiles in flames.

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**Haji Karim** also owned a rubber plantation known as Hatbawe Rubber Company in Rambukkana in the Kegalle District which was taken over by the State in 1974 under the Land Reforms Commission. He was one of the few Memons of that time who opted for citizenship of the country under the Ceylon Citizenship Act when he applied and eventually was granted citizenship in 1949 at a time when very few Memons were willing to become citizens of a country they still regard as a home away from home. He also involved himself in a variety of social activities and was appointed a Justice of the Peace by Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranaike in 1959, thus becoming the first Memon JP of the Island. Was also appointed the first Quazi from the Memon Community in 1960 and served as the President of the Memon Association of Ceylon from 1960-62. He married **Mariam**, daughter of **Mohammed Chana**. Haji Abdul Karim also married **Hajara Sopariwala**, daughter of **Kassam Dada Sopariwala**

**Abdul Rahim Bhoja**, son of Haji Yusuf Bhoja, started the business of Bhoja Stores in Colombo.

**Abdul Sattar Bhoja**, second son of Haji Yusuf Bhoja, started the business of Abdul Sattar Haji Yusuf & Company and also Hajras on Prince Street, The Pettah, in Colombo.

**Mohammed Iqbal Bhoja**, son of Abdul Sattar Bhoja, livewire of the Memon Association for over two decades. He served as Gen Secy of the Association under President Ismail Hingora, President Haji Mohammed Dhedhi, and President Haji Abdul Hafiz Bhuri, before being elected as Vice President for four years from 1997-2000, and serving under the then President of the Association, Haji Hussain Bhaila.

**Mohammed Asmath Bhoja**, third son of Haji Yusuf Bhoja runs his own business, Masood Traders in 3rd Cross Street, The Pettah, in Colombo, dealing in textiles and yarns

**Yaseen Moosa Bhoja**, son of Haji Moosa Bhoja, was born in 1946, He passed out as a Lawyer specializing in Commercial Law in Colombo and was also the first lawyer among the Memon Community in Sri Lanka, having become a Proctor and Notary Public in 1973. He served as JPUM for the District of Colombo as well as the Special Quazi for the Memon Community in the early 1980's. He was appointed Member of the Board of Quazi's, the appellate body of Quazi's in Sri Lanka, in 1990 and served in it for over ten years. He also served as a member of the Waqf Tribunal around the same time. He held the position of Chairman of the Bhoja Foundation, the first Memon Government Approved Public Charity founded by his father, Moosa Haji Omar. He was also President of the Haji Omar Foundation for Peace, Education and Research which he founded in 2000. Married **Ruby Sulaiman Somar** in Colombo and settled in Sri Lanka.

**Farnaz Yaseen Bhoja**, son of Yaseen Moosa Bhoja, was an excellent Arabic Calligraphy Artist in Sri Lanka.

**Dr Saleem Karim Bhoja**, son of Haji Abdul Karim Bhoja, MBBS Hon University of Colombo 1971. Obtained his FRCS in 1978 Edinburgh, UK. Resident House Officer in Paediatric Medicine and Gyn & Obs at the Castle Street Hospital for Women in Rajagiriya and Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children in Borella. Gen Surgeon and Family Practitioner in Melville Hospital Canada in the mid 1980's and is presently a family practitioner in NY City USA.

**Nihara Karim Bhoja**, daughter of Dr. Saleem Karim Bhoja, chose Law for a career. She was educated at the Columbia University School of Law and practices law, since 2006, in



the USA. A Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar, she has authored three books, including "What to do before I do", "The Modern Couples guide to Marriage" and "Pre Nups" in 2004, "The complete guide to divorce law" 2004, and "Parent Savvy straight answers to your families financial, legal, and practical questions", 2005.

**Hameed Karim Bhoja**, brother of Dr. Saleem Karim Bhoja, was born in Karachi and chose to make Sri Lanka his home and took to the rather unconventional business of running a bookshop "Bibliomania" on Hospital Street in the heart of Colombo Fort. It is supposed to be the largest second hand bookshop in Sri Lanka and continues to be a favorite haunt for Bibliophiles of all ages and from all walks of life. The books sold here covered almost every subject from aeronautics to zoology. He also involved himself in considerable social welfare work and is the local coordinator of the "**Gift of the Givers Foundation**", a South African Relief Organization, whose founder **Dr Imthiaz Soliman**, is a Memon from South Africa. This organization initiated its activity in Sri Lanka immediately after the devastation caused by the 2004 December Tsunami. They have initiated a housing project for the victims of this disaster in Sarvodayapuram in Pottuvil near Arugam Bay in the Amparai District of the Eastern Province.

**Sa'adiya**, daughter of Hameed Karim Bhoja, qualified as an AMI Montessori Teacher, completed her Diploma at the Good Shepherd Convent Maria Montessori Training Center and joined Joyce Gunasekera Montessori House of Children as a teacher. A versatile creative writer having composed a number of short stories such as "Bitter Sweet", "Dark Silence" and "A Fervent Plea" which were published in the Daily News, a leading local daily newspaper belonging to the Lake House Group of publishers.

**Dr Amin H Karim, MD**, chose medicine as his career and graduated from Dow Medical College in Karachi in 1977 with Honors in five medical fields and was awarded six Gold medals upon Graduation, at that time a record in Pakistan. Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and has served in several hospitals including the Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Center, Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, and the Vellore College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, where he holds a Fellowship in Cardiology. Involved in the extensive research in the field of Cardiology having delivered lectures before distinguished medical men and presented papers to learned medical journals. Involved in many charitable projects such as the Safe Motherhood Project of the Civil Hospital of Karachi. Married **Dr Shahnaz A Karim**, who graduated from Sind Medical College Karachi in 1983 is also actively involved for the provision of healthcare for the people of Karachi having established the Zainab Sulaiman Clinic which she personally supervises.

**Mohammed Haji Omar**, son of Haji Omar Bhoja and his second spouse Mariam, established Feroze Limited, a textile trading house in Pettah in 1969 which over the years grew from strength to strength finally evolving into Phoenix Venture Limited, one of the country's largest industrial and trading conglomerates which owns Phoenix Industries, a pioneer in quality and plastic products and Brandix, the country's single largest exporter producing high quality garments for the export market. He married **Zahara Moosa**, in 1953, and took the business empire founded by her husband to greater heights.

**Aslam Haji Omar**, son of Mohammed Haji Omar, joined Feroze Limited as Managing Executive in 1984. He took over the supervision and management of the emerging group a year later. In 1986 he took on the role of MD of Kurivita Textile Mills and spearheaded three key joint ventures to strengthen the backward integration of the apparel business, viz; American & Eford, a sewing thread manufacturer, T & S Buttons, a polyester button manufacturer, and A & E Brandix Hangers, a plastic garment hanger manufacturer. MD

of Phoenix Ventures in April 2004. He was responsible in forming alliances with Tyco A&E (USA), America & Efid (USA), and T&S Buttons (HongKong), leading up to successful joint ventures. He holds the position of CEO of Phoenix Ventures Ltd, the holding company of The Brandix Group, and also the MD of Phoenix Industries Ltd., the largest plastic manufacturer in Sri Lanka. Holds the position of Fellow Member of the Sri Lanka Institute of Chartered Accountants and a Member of the Institute of Certified Management Accountants of Australia.

**Ashroff Haji Omar**, second son of Mohammed Haji Omar, began his career as the Managing Executive of Lux Shirts a family owned garment manufacturing concern that focussed on woven tops. Spearheaded several acquisitions including GIL Garments and Phoenix Fashions, and, in 1993, established MAS Lanka, the Groups Garment Trading House now known as Brandix Apparel, the single largest exporter of garments in Sri Lanka with a turnover exceeding US \$200 Million. He took the Group overseas in 1996, establishing its first garment manufacturing facility in the Maldives Islands. He formed the Brandix College of Clothing Technology and Finitex Textile Finishing in 1996. He was appointed CEO of Brandix Lanka in April 2004. He spearheaded the Groups first joint venture with Mast Industries, the first of sixteen such operations that followed and several other strategic acquisitions within the apparel industry. His entrepreneurial spirit and strategy of vertical integration has resulted in the success of Brandix. A frequent spokesman for the apparel industry, he is also the former Chairman of the Sri Lanka Apparel Exporters' Association and the Joint Apparel Association Forum (JAAF) – the apex body of the apparel industry, primarily involved in driving strategy for the industry and lobbying on its behalf. He is also a Steering Committee Member of the European Commission – Sri Lanka Joint Study, and is also responsible for negotiating with the European Union for added benefits for the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. He serves as a Non-Executive Member of the Board of John Keells Hotels Limited and the Colombo Stock Exchange.

**Firoze Haji Omar**, third son of Mohammed Haji Omar, began his career as Managing Executive of MKC Industries, the Groups first foray into the manufacture of knitted undergarments. He was responsible for converting a greenfield site into Kurivita Manchester Textile Mills, which is today one of the leaders in fabric manufacture with a customer base that spans the region. He spearheaded several other group ventures, including the formation of Ocean Lanka in 1996 and Quenby Lanka Prints in 2000. Recently entrusted the responsibility of managing the operations of Columbia Clothing, which is one of the Groups Joint Ventures in Madagascar.

**Hadiya Omar Bhoja**, daughter of **Haji Omar Bhoja** and **Turkiya Khanum Safadi**, contested Negombo electorate elections in 1967 becoming the first Memon woman to enter into politics. She lost and migrated to the USA in the mid 1970's along with her husband **Ghaffar Sattar**

**Zahara Omar Bhoja**, second daughter of **Haji Omar Bhoja** and **Turkiya Khanum Safadi**, started Pop Chicks in the 1960's producing top of the line children's and women's garments which at one point were being sold by Harrods of London. Heads Tallman Tours, well known local Travel Agency she set up in 1976. She also ventured into a recruitment agency under the name of ZA Cader & Company in 1978. She embarked on the garment trade in 1986, selling stock lots under Pop Chicks Ltd. and Cada Collection. She held the post of President of SKAL Club of Colombo in 1991 as well as President of PATA Sri Lanka Chapter. Was also involved in considerable social service having involved herself in the Muslim Women's Social League.

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**Bilkis Omar Bhoja**, started Pop Chicks with her sister in the 1960's.

**Nizar Haji Omar**, son of **Haji Omar Bhoja**, b:1900 in Kutiyana and **Turkiya Khanum Safadi**, achieved distinction in sports since his school days at St Peters' College and later went on to Captain Sri Lanka against Bosuns, a visiting Rugby Team from the UK in 1969. He was the first Memon to head a National Team. Captained Sri Lanka in the All-India Tournament in the same year where Sri Lanka won as well. Captained Sri Lanka in the Asian Rugby Tournament held in Bangkok in 1970. Played in the next two Asian Rugby Tournaments in 1972 (HK) and 1974 (Colombo). Represented Sri Lanka in almost every match of that time playing against all visiting teams that toured the country. Was Elected President of CR & FC in 1981 and President of the SLRFU for 1983-84. In 2006, he served as a Managing Partner of STR Salay Mohammed & Company, a long standing textile firm on Main Street, of which he is a co partner with his sister **Hadiya** and her husband **Abdul Ghaffar Sattar Dhedi**.

**Ayesha Haji Omar**, daughter of Nizar Haji Omar, obtained her degree in International Business & Marketing from the Albright College in Pennsylvania in 2000.

**Nadia Haji Omar**, second daughter of Nizar Haji Omar, gained admission to Bard College in NY State (2006) where she is currently studying for a degree in Art.

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**Sulaiman Bhoja**, brother of **Jamal Bhoja**, was born circa 1851, in India.

His son was **Salay Mohammed Bhoja**, whose son **Abdul Sattar Bhoja**, married **Haleem Bhai**. Their son **Haroon Abdul Sattar Bhoja**, reached the pinnacles of the religious establishment in Sri Lanka. Involved in Islamic work and he passed away early at the young age of 38 years. He was a great Islamic Scholar, who graduated from the Bin Noori Madarasa in Karachi. Well recognized Theologian in the island. Fondly known as Moulana Haroon, he served Islam for 12 years. Delivered Friday Sermons and urged his fellow Muslims to live a life dedicating themselves to God in the Holy Month of Ramadan. His discourses also dealt with the need of the Muslims to conduct their business dealings in conformity to the Shariah and to refrain from un-Islamic business practices. His last sermon was delivered at his favorite Mosque on Abdul Hameed Street, the Muhiyadeen Jumma Mosque. In it, which took place on 20 Sep 2002 only a day before his sad demise, he stressed on the importance of devotion to Allah and cautioned his congregation to spend more time in the Path of Allah. He also recited the following Quranic Verse before commencing what turned out to be his final sermon. "Verily, man is in loss, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds". Summing up his last sermon said that sudden death is one of the signs of the Last Day, and, it is said by many of the congregation that they felt and believed that he may have had a premonition of his death. The following day, Moulana Haroon, having offered the Dhur Prayers, suddenly fell ill and passed away. Thus passed unto the Mercy of Allah one of his noblest creations. His sad demise was felt, not only by the Memon Community, but also by the rest of the Muslims in the country in general, who flocked from all parts of the island to pay their last respects to the man they loved so much.

His other sons were, **Latif Bhoja**, **Dada Bhoja**, and **Somar Bhoja**

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## **BHUTTA**

**Mohammed Hafeez**, son of Ismail Bhutta, is perhaps the only Memon Pharmacist in the country. He had his early education at Kotahena Maha Vidyalaya and Kegunugolla Central College, Kurunegala, before proceeding to Zahira College for advanced studies. Having completed the Diploma in Pharmacy Program from the Faculty of Medicine, under the able guidance of his teacher, S L Mansoor, he is now registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council to practise as a pharmacist.

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## **I A CADER**

The Sunday Leader Sep 7 2008

### **Appreciation                      I.A. Cader**

#### **My Dad, a man for all seasons**

My father the late I.A.Cader was a man for all seasons. Twenty nine years after his demise his memory stands vivid in our minds. A product of Mahinda College, Galle and St. Peter's College, Colombo, Dad hailed from Talapitiya, Galle and was born on January 5, 1917

A lawyer by profession, he later took to politics and indulged in the gem trade too. He was a Member of Parliament for Beruwela, Deputy Speaker and Senator as well. Retiring from politics in 1977 he was assigned a diplomatic posting as Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Egypt.

How he combined politics, his profession, social activities and family was truly amazing. He sported an extraordinary charisma which made people of all ages to be drawn towards him. He loved children and for us his daughters he had a deep affection.

As a member of the Wakf Board he had to travel extensively to far off places. This did not hinder him making it an official cum leisure jaunt. As usual he bundled us into his amazingly expanding 'Zodiac' to the wild and exotic places.

Dad was an extremely generous person. He instilled in us the need to be charitable; and most of all to be 'honest and truthful.' He despised those who lied to achieve their goals. His constant advice to us was 'Whatever your dealings, be truthful and be honest.' These words are etched in our hearts and are strictly adhered to, although we live in a world full of such elements.

His love for his kith and kin was another unique aspect to his character. When his only sister was widowed with three young children, he moved in as a shield and protector. He always visited his relations and gave them companionship, security and advice. He was a tower of strength to them.

During his tenure of office as Member of Parliament, his constituency saw many development activities. The fisheries harbour in Beruwela and the Maggona market stand to his credit. Father nursed his electorate with genuine fondness and his constant weekend visits included us as well.

Dad's contribution to his party the SLFP was immeasurable. Loyal to the core he stood by the government of the day in 1964 when many crossed over for monetary gain. He was staunch until his demise in 1979. He was of a very rare calibre indeed, considering the standards of politics today. He was returned to parliament as member for Beruwela on two occasions; in 1960 and 1970. He served for 11 years in this capacity. Dad's home was a haven for anyone who sought refuge, it was open to all.

Dad was unique in character. He played many parts in his life and in all of them he achieved distinction. As a trusted lawyer many turned to him for justice and advice. He didn't turn away any one for monetary gains.

He quoted extensively from Shakespeare, Rabindranath Tagore and 'Avvayyar.' His favourite poem was *IF* by Rudyard Kipling.

He detested untruths and dishonesty. Parliamentarians of yore often had to dispose of their assets for their upkeep, and electoral activities. They did not receive the perks enjoyed by parliamentarians of today.

Father had a powerful voice and could sing a variety of songs — an asset, which I inherited. Singing his favourite songs *Mona Lisa*, *Autumn Leaves* and *This is My Song* to him had a soothing effect. He rendered 'ghazals' in a voice that was deep and eloquent. His rendition of *Rosemary* was absolutely awe inspiring.

Islam ran deep in his veins. He imparted Quranic stories of prophets, anecdotes and *sharia*. His personal Quran which my younger sister possesses has many markings to show the importance of certain verses.

Angling was one recreation he found peace and solace in. He was a member of the Angler's Club and would make trips to the breakwaters in the port at dawn.

We are indeed proud of our Dad who left a lasting legacy to us his daughters. A soft hearted person, his purse opened readily to assist the less fortunate. Warm and gentle, a rare breed he was better known as 'Adham' to his wide circle of friends and to his relations.

We his five daughters salute our dear father who was a rare personality, an advisor, philanthropist, exemplary politician, a friend, a father and a grandfather.

May Almighty Allah grant him *Jennathul Firdous*. Ameen.

**Liqa Cader Faaiz**

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## **SITHY CADER**

The Sunday Leader Aug 24 2008

### **Appreciation                      Sithy Cader**

#### **Innalillahi Waina Elaihe Rajjoon**

Sithy Cader a great social worker, strict disciplinarian and an able administrator suddenly passed away from our midst on August 1 like a banyan tree that was uprooted by a cyclone.

She was a founder member of the Young Muslim Women's League which was inaugurated in June 1973 consisting of 20 young pioneering ladies for the upliftment of the less privileged in our society and for community development.

She was our first President from 1973 - 1975. This was her stepping stone to serve humanity and opened the floodgates for her to enter other social organisations to render yeomen service. She held various important positions in the league until her sudden demise.

She initiated two major projects of the league - one of which was the maintenance of the female surgical ward 11 at the Colombo South Teaching Hospital in Kalubowila, Dehiwela in 1998. She was also a member of the hospital committee. She was the chairperson of the Educational Trust Fund which was her brainchild, granting scholarships to the underprivileged students for their university education.

She successfully fulfilled her duties as the chairperson of these two major projects. Whatever she did, it was done with grit and determination. She was an outstanding personality and made her mark both in the educational and social field. In a fair, truthful and honest way she achieved what had to be achieved in all her social work.

She is no more with us but her good work will be remembered forever by our members. May Allah grant her jennathul firdous. Ameen.

#### **President and members of the Young Muslim Women's League**

**Colombo 4**

**Sunday Times Nov 2 2008**

**Dedicated teacher and social worker**

**Mrs. Sithy Cader**

Mrs. Sithy Cader, joint secretary of the Women's Bureau of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH), passed away peacefully on August 1, 2008. Innalillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Rajjoon.

Mrs. Cader served the MICH Women's Bureau from its inception 33 years ago, first as secretary and finally as president. She held many positions within the bureau, and was

actively involved in the home's various activities. She served the MICH up to the very end.

Mrs. Sithy Cader was a teacher by profession, and was vice-principal of Lindsay Balika Maha Vidyalaya, Colombo 4, for many years. She devoted much of her time to helping others, and she continued to be active in teaching and community service even in her retirement. She was a tireless social worker, strongly committed to all the projects she was involved in. To name a few, she was principal of the Ahadiya school, with which she was associated for the past 27 years; a member of the hospital committee of the Kalubowila Teaching Hospital, through the Young Women's Muslim League; an All Island Justice of Peace, and a volunteer teacher at many orphanages.

An active and energetic member of the MICH Women's Bureau, Mrs. Cader took a lead role in forming the Muslim students' scholarship fund, which was established just one month before her demise. She also spearheaded an MICH project to maintain a ward at the Lady Ridgeway Children's hospital. We at the Women's Bureau miss her greatly. She was a pillar of strength to all of us. Whenever we asked her how she found the time to do all her community and social work, in addition to fulfilling her personal and family obligations, she would say: "If you try hard enough, you will find the time." May Allah grant her Jennathul Firdous.

### **President and Executive Committee Members of the Women's Bureau of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home.**

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#### **MUHAMMAD CASSIM**

##### **Seyadu Abdul Raheem 1921-1989**

Seyadu Abdul Raheem

Born: 09-Aug-1921 at Mannar

Educated at St. Xaviers' College, Mannar, Jaffna Central, Jaffna College, Jaffna.

Entered politics in 1960.

Chairman Mannar TC 1962-1972.

Contested Mannar as a UNP candidate and lost in 1970.

Won by-election in Feb-1974.

Sri Lanka Chairman Paddy Marketing Board.

Director, Sri Lanka Cashew Corporation.

Member UNP Working Committee.

Died: 1989

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#### **CHANA**

A`Memon family who comprise of a considerable number of members in Sri Lanka. Many are the descendants of one Juma through his two sons, Ismail and Ahamed. Ismail had a son Mohammed, who in turn had four sons named Aboobucker, Ismail, Elyas, and Ahamed.

**Iqbal Ismail Chana**, son of Haji Ismail Chana and Zaibunissa, perhaps the only Sri Lankan Memon to choose Aircraft Engineering as a profession having joined the National Carrier, Air Lanka, in 1980. Followed a 5 year apprentice course in Aircraft Engineering with

Singapore Airlines in Singapore where he obtained a Degree in Aeronautical Engineering and qualified as a Licensed Aircraft Engineer. Moved to Dubai after joining Emirates Airlines in 1988.

**Haji Abdul Karim Haji Ahamed Chana**, son of Juma Chana. His son, **Rasheed Abdul Karim Chana**, is a photographer. Rasheed established two textile trading firms in the Pettah, Akosons & Karsons, and had a dyeing and finishing plant in the mid 1960's.

**Akhtar Kamal Channa**, son of Rasheed Chana, distinguished himself in swimming. In 1971 he participated in the 2 mile sea swim from Mt Lavinia to Dehiwela for the Kinross Swimming and Life Saving Club. Did the six mile sea swim from Kinross to Mt Lavinia in the following year. Joined Upali Airways in 1982, to learn flying and obtained his private pilots license the following year. Continued to flying till 1990 until restrictions to flying were imposed due to security reasons. Logged 30 hours flying time and has also done cross country flying from Ratmalana to Avissawela and back. Joined the polythene industry in 1980 starting DKW Plastic Industries (pvt) Ltd. Presently into garment manufacturing under the name of NG Apparels with two factories in Hatton and Matara.

**Awais Rasheed Chana**, second son of **Rasheed Chana**, is a promising Rugby player. Captained Royal College Rugby Team and bagged the coveted Thambapillai Trophy when they trounced arch rivals St Thomas' College 17-0 with Awais scoring a try playing as flanker. First Memon to represent his school in the much celebrated Bradby Shield Royal-Trinity, encounter. His daring style helped Royal to wallop Trinity in both legs of the Bradby in that year. Represented Royal College, on a tour to Australia becoming the first Memon to play for his school overseas. Demonstrated his outstanding dexterity when he scored a scintillating try against Victoria Combined Schools side.

**Vally Mohammed Abdul Rahman Chana**, brother of Juma Chana, arrived in Ceylon in 1947. Established Vally Stores at Prince Street Pettah in 1960 dealing in textiles and plastics. His son, **Ilyas Chana**, is the Managing Partner Vally Stores. Trustee Clifton Lane Mosque. High Commissioner in Kenya, accredited to Zambia & Ethiopia, 1978. Sri Lanka representative to Habitat International. Founder Member Moors' Islamic Cultural Home. Vice President All Ceylon Muslim League.

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Vice

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## **DADIA**

It was in 1928 that Tayoob Mohammed Dadia, also known as Ranawawala after his native village, arrived in Ceylon. He found employment in a shop named SOMAR Textiles on Main Street in the Pettah, and in Feb 1949 brought his family to the country. His three sons, Dada Dadia, Ahmed Dadia, and Anver Ali Dadia, are married to ladies from the Fatani, Dhaga & Chana families, respectively.

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## **DANGRA**

**Abdul Karim Aboobucker Dangra**, is said to have been a hawker of textiles in the Colombo area before starting a textile shop of his own under the name of A K Aboobucker & Company in High Street (present W A Silva Mawatha) Wellawatte in the



1930's. In 1936, he and his three brothers, took over Noorani Drapery Stores in Wellaatte, which yielded a considerable business but eventually closed down in the 1970's.

Mohammed Dangra, eldest son of Abdul Karim, ventured into business, setting up City Industries in Wellawatte, with the help of his two sons, Aboobucker and Afzal, in 1977. The Company which initially, took to the manufacture of garments for the domestic industry, presently focuses on importing textiles for the local market. Hameed Karim, younger son of Abdul Karim, has contributed immensely to the cause of Islam. A founder member and livewire of The Center for Islamic Studies down Rohini Road a Wellawatte. Hameed was greatly influenced by Ahmed Deedat, he well known South African Islamic Missionary, who did much to propogate the noble message of Islam to the world. It was in 1984 that Deedat took the Muslims of Sri Lanka by storm with his bold and thought provoking speeches which were taped and distributed over a good part of the country, thanks largely to the generosity of the Memon Community which funded much of it.

It was then that the seeds of the CIS were sown, under the guidance and able management of Hameed, who was even able to get a local philanthropist to donate the newly formed Center, a building of its own. It has since seen visits by distinguished Islamic Scholars, viz; Ahmed Deedat, Jamal Badawi, Ahmed Von Denfer & Gary Miller, and in recent times the famous Yvonne Ridley who was captured by the Taleban in Afghanistan and who reverted to Islam thereafter, whose lectures were well attended and appreciated by local audiences. The CIS has also been instrumental in distributing a variety of literature dealing with Islamic topics and has also engaged in a good many community service projects, viz; Amal International School, the setting up of which was largely facilitated by funds raised by the Memon Community both in Sri Lanka and overseas by Mohammed Dangra, also a member of the Memon Community, and a housing scheme at Kahatowita in Nittambuwa, the brainchild of Ahmed Von Denfer, a German Muslim convert who donated funds for purchasing land for the scheme.

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## **Dr. ABDUL RASHEED DEANE**

### **A fond tribute to a dedicated patron "Padang Complex"**

by Fazeer Radin (Rawdin) - Daily News Tue Dec 9 2003

Thaha Mohamed, president of Sri Lanka Malay Association (SLMA) advised that we reminisces Dr. Abdul Rasheed Deane's fond memory in the media, whilst his portrait is displayed at the Colombo Malay Cricket (CMCC) on Friday 12th November 03.

I feel it is a privilege to cover the good deeds of an amiable and distinguished personality and pay due tribute to him for his dedication and sacrifice towards the CMCC and the SLMA Rupee Fund.

Dr. Deane was born on 23rd February 1918 and passed away at the age of 85 on 21st July 2003. The epithet quieted in Arabic "Inca Illah, We Inna Illah Rajjoon" meaning that from him that we came and into him we return did not have its desired effect to overcome the grief of the mourners, whilst an elderly educated person was attempting to console the dear ones by explaining "a man is a thing of nought born but to die" and therefore it is indeed a matter of time for all of us to traverse to the very same destiny of the deceased sooner or later was also of no avail.

This reminded me of Mary Copt, the one and only to give holy Prophet Mohamed a son, who was named Ibrahim.

When he died in childhood, holy Prophet was overwhelmed with grief, sobbing bitterly, until he was reminded that he often proclaimed against the onward expression of grief.

Why was he sobbing when the child was so soon to enter paradise? Holy Prophet answered softly "It eases the afflicted heart. It does no harm to the dead, and does not profit him, but it is a comfort for the living". A massive crowd that was present at the internment of his remains prayed May Allah grant Dr. Deane "Janaothul Firdouse" meaning he be blessed to the heaven. We have lost another human being who had a human heart. His demise will cause a vacuum among his family members, members of the "Padang Complex" and several others.

His second home was the Padang Complex where he never failed to be present at all events before time like an early bird.

Towards his advanced age he was compelled to confine himself at his residence and ceased to appear as he practised in the past at the "Padang Complex" to the disadvantage and disappointment of the members.

I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity of a formal discussion with Dr. Deane in September 2002 during CMCC's 130th Anniversary celebration. I shall brief this dialogue.

Here he expressed cheerfully that the "Terang" the one and only news bulletin that covers Malay interest in Sri Lanka and circulated throughout locally as well as abroad need be highly praised. I posed him the question for those who have immensely contributed towards the interest and well-being of the country, religion and community, whether they distort history by keeping under blanket from recording their glorious achievements on grounds of modesty?

After a moment of silence, Dr. Deane smiled and made a humble request from me to pay a visit to his place and collect some clippings and to publish them in the "Terang" for posterity. Subsequently his sister-in-law Fareed Deane reminded me in this regard. It is a matter for regret that I fell seriously ill and was unable to keep up to my promise to Dr. Deane.

Had I have been fortunate to collect those documents from Dr. Deane I believe I could have written volumes covering him. While gleaming through the dilapidated records in my possession I gathered that the attachment and contribution towards the Padang Complex is not only confined to Dr. Deane alone but his forbears too. It has come down the line.

Dr. Deane's grandpa Amja Deane was a founder member of the CMCC established in 1872. He was its president in 1908 and compiler of the CMCC Jubilee Book printed in 1908 by the Ceylon Observer press. Similarly his beloved children, whose name appear below have also contributed articles in the periodicals of the "Padang Complex".

Dr. Deane's father A. A. Deane was the chief accountant in the H. M. Customs. He was highly acclaimed by the authorities concerned for launching of the famous "Harbour Lights" carnival splendidly and earning colossal profit.

A. A. Deane held office in the C. M. C. C. as the club captain 1919-1923, 1925, Hony general secretary 1908-1909, cricket captain 1912, 1911, president 1949 in the ACMA, general secretary 1925-1929. The portrait of A. A. Deane was unveiled at the CMCC on 23rd December 1961. Dr. Deane's brother Fareed served as the CMCC general secretary from 1972-1973.

I have gathered by heresay quite a lot of Dr. Deane's achievements, contributions, yeomen service and in cricket his stylish and elegant bowling, medium pace bowling and brilliant fielding. Regrettably most of the important events that have taken place in the Padang Complex after 1972 have not been recorded or may be I have not traced them. I therefore prefer not to pen what has not been recorded.

Dr. Deane and his wife Kathija are graduates of an English university. Dr. Deane was amongst the first batch to have passed the M. B. B. S. examination. Mrs. Deane was the first Muslim lady to be appointed in 1947 as a labour officer. She was later attached to the Royal College as a teacher. Dr. Deane was in the staff of Cell Barnes Hospital in England.

Dr. Deane was unanimously conferred to the esteemed positions mentioned above on recognition of his contributions to the service. His ancestral home was Slave Island where they lived at Union Place adjoining "Frostaire", Dr. Deane had his dispensary here and another at Hunupitiya, Wattala. He was engaged by the Colombo Commercial Company to treat their employees. Patients who had taken treatment from him had much to say of his benevolence. The most famous is that he advised them they fell sick because they are under nourished and in addition to free consultation he had provided them money to have a proper meal.

The members of the "Padang Complex" will now miss the most senior member and close companion and wish to convey all our sympathy to his beloved family members. purchasing land for the scheme.

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## **P T S DEEN**

**DEEN, M MANSOOR S JP** - Husband of **Sithy Safiya Nakeem**, father of Badurdeen, Shanaz, Shereen, Rihana and Shuaibdeen, mother-in-law of Cania, Mufti Naleer, Sa'adi Thawfeeq, Rimaz Saleem and Nasfa, 34, Clifton Lane, Colombo 9 - 16 Mar 1993

**DEEN - MARHOOMA SITHY SAFIYA** (nee Nakeem), Wife of the late Al Haj Mansoor S. Deen, mother of Badurdeen, Shanaz, Shereen, Rihana and Shuaibdeen, mother-in-law of Cania, Mufti Naleer, Sa'adi Thawfeeq, Rimaz Saleem and Nasfa, sister of Abul Mawahib, Ummu Ojeeda, Jiffry Hassan, Samsudeen, Ismail and Mihlar, sister-in-law of Al-Haj Marzook S. Deen and the late Hamzathul Fowzia, Zareena, Mackie, Mumtaz, the late Rouzie and Ruzeena, grandmother of Mariyah, Rabiya, Hafsa, Hamza, Hasna, Safra, Sadeem and Raheeb. Janaza took place on September 10, Sunday at Kuppiyawatte Muslim Burial Ground. 34, Clifton Lane, Colombo 9. DN Sep 11 2006

**ASHRAFF RUMI DEEN** (HNB City Office, formerly of Habib Bank AG Zurich), son of Marzuq S. Deen & late Ummu Hamzathul Fowzia, son-in-law of late Mr K.M. Jain and Ummu Zackiya Jain, beloved husband of Fazeena, loving father of Aadil & Afra, brother of Deena, Fazeena, Mueenudeen, Shihana, Makhzumideen, Aroosiya, Rifka, Bukhary, Zahra & Fazmila, brother-in-law of Zareen Thahir, Fahim Abdullah, Rafaz Jiffry, Shamila, Ifzal Salahudeen, Fahima, Fuad, Aneeza, Azard and Feisal, expired on 15th February 2006. Janaza took place on same day at Dehiwela Jumma Mosque Burial Ground. 36/3, Anderson Road, Kalubowila, Dehiwela. SO Feb 19 2006

**ALHAJ M.M. MARSUQ S. DEEN** - Former Building Contractor and Trustee - Clifton Lane, Katakalamarathadi Thakkiya, son of late Mr. P.T.S. Deen and Jenath Umma, son-in-law of late Alhaj I.L.M. Noordeen and Mrs. Binthi Ummu Khaira, beloved husband of late Hajjani Ummu Hamzathul Fowzia, loving father of Deena, Fazeena, late Ashraff HNB, Humideen, Mueenudeen (Millennium Constructions), Shihana, Makhuzumideen (Al Arafa Travels), Aroosiya, Rifka, Buharideen (Travel Air), Zahara and Fazamila. father-in-law of Zareen, Fahim, Fazeena, Rafas, Sharmila, Ifzal and Fahima, brother of late Alhaj Mansoor S. Deen. Janaza left residence **No. 25, Clifton Lane, Colombo 9** to Kupiyawatte Muslim Burial Ground on 14th June 2007 at 4.30 p.m. The members of the family thank all those who attended the Janaza. Regret inability to thank everyone individually. SO Jun 17 2007

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## ZACKY DEEN

**To those great days of thrills and spills  
Zacky Deen**

I was shocked and saddened to learn of the untimely death of my good friend Zacky, who was residing in Oklahoma U.S.A, a month ago.

We both started motorcycling (racing) together at the Ratmalana air strip. Katukurunda came much later on. His brother Rally who was in England came to Sri Lanka a little later on and the three of us raced together.

In those days, the Saturday morning papers carried the head line in the Sports page: Dean Brothers and Chandra de Costa to do battle once again.

Those days the circuit was full of spectators, nothing less than 40,000.

I am proud to mention here that Zacky was a great rider and the riders who were selected as the very first team to India in 1956 comprised Zacky Dean, W.D.P. Indraratne, Trim Seneviratne, A.A. Jinadasa and myself. These riders were selected purely on merit and they were managed by the late Andrew P. Miranda often considered the "Father" of the CMCC.(?)

Zacky Dean won the 350CC and the 500CC on his Manx Norton in exemplary fashion to thrill the Bombay crowd. The other riders also brought credit to Sri Lanka in their respective categories. Zacky participated in the Isle of Man (England) in 1953 on his 350 Manx.

After returning from the Isle of Man he used to win almost all the races because he had

the distinction of having the only Manx and it was such a powerful machine that the others had no chance.

I was riding a Triumph Tiger 100 and I was always behind him and I was called the Shadow of Zacky. There are plenty of more things I could write about Zacky, But I guess the above speaks volumes for him. I will certainly miss him very much.

May his soul Rest in Peace.

**Chandra de Costa** (Former All Ceylon and All India Champion)  
Sunday Times - June 18 20

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## DHEDHI

The history of the Dhedhi family, like most other Memon families, such as Bhoja's, Chana's and Patel's, is so inextricably linked to Kutiyana, a picturesque little town in Junagadh State in Gujarat. These details are based from the recollections of Dr Ibrahim Dangra, a veteran Memon whose dedication to the cause of his community is well known.

The Memons of Kutiyana, like the other communities here, lived in their respective Mahallas (areas). They figured very prominently in the social life of their town as they were a fairly wealthy community with families like the Dhedhi's, Chana's, Chalchal's, & Patel's leading the list. They were also reputed for their honesty and trustworthiness. They would never fail to repay their debts. Any landlord would always let out their premises to Memons and shopkeepers never denied credit to them on account of this strong character and discipline of honesty. They were also very well known for their meritorious acts of charity towards the destitute and the community.

Among these families, the Dhedhi Family stood out due to their immense contribution, not only to the Memons of Kutiyana, but also to the Islamic fraternity in general. Among their charitable endowments were the donation of a Girls' School, a Ladies Dawakhana, and a free dispensary to the town. The two most prominent members of this family are Haji Karim Seth and his nephew, and son-in-law, Sattar Seth Salay Mohamed. Like most other affluent Memon merchants, at that time, the Dhedhi men were addressed with the title 'Seth', a term derived from the Sanskrit 'Shreshtha' or "Great Man" and very often applied to a wealthy merchant suffixed to their names. This title borne by the wealthy Memons of those times distinguished them from their less fortunate brethren.

**1 Vali Mohammed Abdul Rahman Seth Dhedi**, leading textile merchant in Keyzer Street about the twentieth century.

**2 Salay Mohammed Vali Mohammed Dhedhi**, native of Kutiyana, arrived in Ceylon circa 1890 along with his three brothers and was employed at Seth Haji Jamal Perdesi's shop as a salesman. Later, started his own business, titled, Ahmed Salay Mohammed at Sea Street in The Pettah before moving on to establish the well reputed S T R Salay Mohammed & Company at Main Street, also in the Pettah, in the early 1900's. The name of the company was coined by Salay Seth who used the first, middle, and last alphabets of his sons name, Sattar, to form the prefix "S T R", by which the firm was popularly known then. Passed away after suffering a heart attack in Chandi Chowk in Junagadh Bazaar, leaving behind his young son Sattar who was about 7 years old at that time. Did much to

promote understanding and friendship between the peoples of Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Introduced distinguished members of the Pakistani business community to local social gatherings.

3 [1] **Sattar Seth Salay Mohammed Dhedhi**, born in 1916, d:31-Mar-1945, and was, initially, a sleeping partner in his late father's business and was also well known for his generosity to one and all irrespective of caste, creed or ethnic origins. Regularly donated a monthly sum of money to destitute families, widows and orphans as charity. Every Thursday there would be a long queue of beggars for him to come out. He would attend to them, one by one, speaking politely to each and give them a Rupee each. He once told his business partner in Colombo who had chided him on this account; "it is not a nuisance but a pleasure for me to help those who are in need of help. It is the will of Allah that I help them. After all, what Allah Has Given to me is His and not mine." Such was Sattar Seth, a man who treated Prince and Pauper alike. Died in his sleep in Colombo on 31 Mar 1945 at the young age of 29 only. + [2] **Hawwa Ma Haji Karim Seth** (first cousin of Sattar Seth Salay Mohammed and daughter of Haji Karim Seth, his uncle)

4 **Abdul Ghaffar Sattar Dhedi**, born in 1936, arrived in Colombo in 1947 together with his widowed mother and two brothers. It was here that he got an exposure to S T R Salay Mohammed & Company, at 245, Main Street, which was established by his grandfather in the early 1900's. The Company, at that time, was managed by Haji Salay Mohammed Sami and Osman Ismail Bhidiya. The family moved to Karachi in 1948 where a branch of STR at Newnham, opposite Gordhandas Market, had been established, in 1947. Around 1951, the Sattar brothers embarked on a sizeable Spinning & Weaving Mill with 250 looms in Karachi, and in a very short period merged their operation with those of Hussein Ibrahim and Latif Jamal to form Hussain Textile Mills. The family also bought a printing plant in Dacca under the name of G M G Industrial Corporation and also a Steel Re-rolling Mill in Chittagong known as Pak Steel. The three brothers were awarded citizenship of the newly established State of Bangla Desh in 1971. Abdul Ghaffar returned to Sri Lanka and engaged himself in the activities and business of STR Salay Mohammed, Lanka Tobacco "a tobacco growing and cigarette manufacturing establishment" and Lanka Tricotting "a warp knitting plant". The Government of Ceylon, within its nationalizing policies, took over the lands belonging to Abdul Ghaffar and also closed down the tobacco factory on the basis that he was not a national of the Island and was an illegal immigrant. Lanka Tricotting and STR, nevertheless, continued unharmed and are presently managed by his brother in law Nizar Haji Omar, the first Memon to captain a national sports team (Rugby Football) who played against the Bosuns from England. Married **Hadiya Omar Bhoja**, married:1959, daughter of **Haji Omar Bhoja** & a Syrian lady named **Turkiya Safadi**. Couple migrated to the USA in the mid seventies and started a fork lift company which closed down after running for 5 years. Hadiya was the first Memon woman contender for the Parliamentary seat at Negombo.

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## **Al Haj Dr M P DRAHAMAN MP, JP, MBE**

The year 2003 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary of Veteran Al Haj Dr Mohammed Pervis Drahaman, recognised as one of Sri Lanka's National Heroes and a key supporter of the Malays in their early struggle to gain official recognition, identity, status and representation in Parliament.

In 1928, the late Dr Drahaman was among the few Malays in Sri Lanka who became a Doctor of Medicine and entered Government service and served with dedication and distinction at many Government Hospitals before he set up private practice in "Kertel" (now Kompaneewidya) to serve his community and to devote much of his time to the welfare and well being of the Malay Community. The Medical Clinic, Surgery and Dispensary, were opened in "Kertel". A quote states "Spurning lucrative private practice amongst the elite, Dr Drahaman set up a Clinic in the heart of (then) Malay populated Slave Island area and began championing many of their causes."

Apart from his patients among the Slave Island residents and other members of the Malay community, Dr Drahaman attended to the medical needs of the Indonesian Naval crews who not only sought medical treatment but also board, lodging and assistance to tour the country. This venue also served as Headquarters for spearheading in Ceylon, the support of the Indonesian struggle for Merdeka (freedom) through KERIS. The Headquarters also served as a venue for the All Ceylon Malay Congress Movement and the Ceylon Malay Youth League of which Dr Drahaman's only daughter, Kartini, played a vital role in promoting the Malay Culture among the youth of the Malay Community.

In recognition of his many contributions to the country and the Malay community in particular, Dr Drahaman was appointed by the Government of Sri Lanka a Member of Parliament in 1956 and in 1960. During his tenure in Parliament, he is evidenced to have championed the interests, heritage, language and employment problems of the Malays. He also had the distinction of being recognised and honoured by Indonesia, Malaysia and Queen Elizabeth.

He also identified himself with the activities of many Malay organisations in Sri Lanka (too numerous to mention) and was a founder member and past President for many years of the Ceylon Malaysia Society. He took an active interest in the religious affairs of Masjid-ul Jamiya, Colombo 2, and was at the helm of affairs of this Mosque which was built by the former members of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment.

It is evidenced that Dr Drahaman played a key role in the introduction of the Malay Language Exam paper and the introduction of the Malay Program Series "Suara Melayu", which still functions; along with other documented contributions available in the Archives and also in the Hansard, from which is excerpted the following relevant quotes from the Vote of Condolence on the late Dr M. P. Drahaman in Parliament in 1963.

We express our appreciation of the many services that have been rendered to Sri Lanka by the late Dr M. P. Drahaman. As the President of the Ceylon Malay Congress, he led a deputation before the Soulbury Commission pressing for representation for Ceylon Malays in the Legislature. He represented a community which, I think has had a rough time over the last quarter of a century or so in Ceylon, and he represented them, very thoroughly, very conscientiously and well the vigour and the way in which he represented his community (in Parliament) in Lobbies and in private. As a Malay, he was very conscious of the role a Malay could play not only in Malaya and Indonesia but also in Ceylon. Although he was a nationalist, we all know how understanding and cooperative he was with all communities. He took a deep interest in the affairs of Malay people all over the world. When the Indonesians obtained "Merdeka" their "freedom", Dr Drahaman received special recognition for his efforts by way of Invitation from the Indonesian Government to be a distinguished participant at the Freedom Celebrations. The Malay community in particular has been made the poorer by the loss of one of its

very ardent and zealous fellow workers, and the medical profession has been adversely affected by the loss of a very able and experienced practitioner. He made a great contribution to his community and he has left behind him a record of which the Malay community may well be proud."

Dr Drahaman was married to the late Mrs Hazelyn Saldin, daughter of the late Mr M. K. Saldin a former member of the Ceylon State and Legislative Councils. He had four sons, the late Dr Siva Drahaman, Mr Vero Drahaman, Dr Revo Drahaman, Dr Sukarno Drahaman and only daughter, Mrs Kartini Drahaman-Mohamed.

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### **Editor SLAMA - Kind courtesy of Tony Miskin & Gunasmin Lye**

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The first Sri Lanka Moor Lady Deputy Editor – Hansard  
**Fathima YASMIN FAIZ (nee) ANVER**  
Deputy Editor Hansard (English)

Yasmin is the daughter of "KG" Anver and Sithy Huzaima, a well connected Sri Lanka Moor family.

She joined the Press Council as a young typist at the age of 20. She later became stenographer at the Press Council and later Assistant Secretary.

After serving the Press Council for 22 years, she joined the Parliament as a Hansard Reporter. Her rise in the Parliamentary service was meteoric. She was appointed Assistant Editor within a period of five years and then as Deputy Editor, Hansard (English).

This post is on par with the Deputy Director (Administration) and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.

In July 2008 she represented Parliament at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Hansard Editors' Conference in London and Scotland.

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### **FATANI**

The Fatani's of Sri Lanka trace their ancestry to two brothers, Tayoob and Abdul Ghany, both of whom hailed from the village of Wadasada near Kutiyana. Tayoob was married to Noorbhai and had a son named Abdul Latif. On Tayoob's death, his wife Noorbhai married his brother Abdul Ghany.

Abdul Latif arrived in Ceylon in 1939 and began trading in textiles between Kandy and Gampola. He subsequently opened a textile shop in Gampola which was named after himself. In 1942, with the Japanese bombing of the island, he returned home and three years later, came back to Ceylon, bringing his family along with him, which included his two sons Ibrahim and Abdul Karim. He opened a shop in Kandy, in 1942, which he named Abdul Latif Tayoob & Sons, and later, after having performed the Pilgrimage of Hajj, renamed it Haji Abdul Latif Tayoob & Sons or HALT.



Abdul Latif passed away in 1958. He left the business in the hands of his son Ibrahim, who continued with it till 1978 where he died in Madinah. Ibrahim married Mariyam Bhai Toofani and had three sons named, Abdul Hafiz, Farook, and Abdul Ghaffar, who jointly ran the business till 1987 when they moved to Second Cross Street Pettah in Colombo.

Haji Abdul Rahman, son of Abdul Ghani and Noorbhai, first worked at Abdul Latif Sulaiman, a leading textile company of the time located at Keyzer Street in the Pettah, of which he eventually became a partner. In 1952 he formed his own company, A R A Ghany & Sons, also at Keyzer Street.

Abdul Rahman, son of Abdul Ghany, worked in his fathers shop in his early years. Later he moved on to join M I Saleem, a fellow Memon, to start a small business dealing in fancy goods including costume jewelry from Hongkong which then had a big demand in Ceylon. He later went on to join Haji Anver at Bombay Stores in Dickoya near Hatton, of which he eventually became a partner. In 1980, he shifted back to Colombo starting AR Traders at Second Cross Street and later Sattar Text at Main Street, Pettah. He was assisted in his business by one of his sons, Ameen. His other son, Abdul Aziz is also involved in business, having an electronics store on Keyzer Street called Jumbo Electronics.

Ahamed, younger son of Abdul Rahman, like his brother Sattar, initially helped his father in the business before setting out on his own. Having mastered the art of textile printing he opened his first textile shop, Fresco Batik, in 1980, which is presently being run by his two sons, Aslam and Firoze.

Yet another Fatani family, who made Ceylon their home, comprises the progeny of Abdul Karim Ali Mohammed Fatani, who started his textile business named Fareeda Stores in Trincomalee Street Kandy, in 1943. He eventually settled in Kandy bringing his family down from India in 1947. He had three sons. He moved to Colombo in 1972 with Mohammed Iqbal and Abdul Majeed to pursue the textile trade in this booming capital.

It was in 1982, that Iqbal and Abdul Majeed, jointly formed a garment company called SPI Fashion (pvt) Ltd. with 50 machines. This factory is situated in the export processing zone in Mawathagama, presently has 600 employees and 275 machines producing quality garments for the export market. In 1966 they diversified into construction and in 2003 went their own ways with Abdul Majeed continuing the garment business and Iqbal managing his own construction company.

Haji Abdul Ghany Abdul Rahman Fatani joined VM Abba & Company in 1952 and served in it till 1967 when it was taken over by Haji Ahmed Bhaila and renamed Ameen Traders. He served here for a further 6 years until 1973 when he embarked on his own business, Basheer Brothers, in Main Street. He also served the Memon Association of Ceylon as an Elections Commissioner for several years. His sons, Basheer, Ashroff and Yaseen, have followed in the footsteps of their father, and in 1999, jointly set up FUJI Airconditioning (pvt) Ltd, which imports, supplies, installs and maintains airconditioners besides promoting a band of airconditions known as FUJICOOL. They have a customer list of over a 1,000 clients in both private and state sectors in their service agreements.

The brothers have also diversified into other areas and ave set up several companies including, World Trading Company (importers of textiles), Expo World Buttons (pvt) Ltd (manufacturers, suppliers and exporters of quality polyester buttons), and MyCo (manufacturers and exporters of narrow fabric tapes and draw cords).

ARM Yoonus, of the Fatani clan, made his mark in the field of insurance. He has been awarded the All Island Best Producer Award in General Insurance and also Colombo Regions best agent for General Insurance by the country's premier insurer, The Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation, for several successive years. In fact he has won the award continuously from 1974 to 2005.

Shiraz, eldest son of Yoonus, followed his father in choosing Insurance as a career, and in 2001, was awarded first place for best life agent in the Colombo region. He also ventured into the jewelry business and having brought two craftsmen from India in 1998, started Shiraz Jewellers in Sea Street Pettah, which manufactures and exports hand made jewelry to France, Switzerland, Canada and the UK. He also set up a farmhouse in Ganewalpola, Kekirawa, in the Anuradhapura District of North Central Province by the name of SM Farms (pvt) Ltd., thus fulfilling a childhood dream of having a farm of his own. The cattle and goats bred here go to meet the Qurbani, Sadaqat, and Aqeeqah needs of Muslim customers.

Sameer, the youngest son of Yoonus, took to the lucrative business of printing and started in a small way with an A3 Davidson machine in 1999. He was just 26 years old at the time. He is the only Memon to pursuit professional training in printing and received his diploma in the management and supervision of offset printing from the Sri Lanka Institute of Printing. He soon expanded his press to include a German made Heidleberg Kord machine producing quality print products for some well known Indian names. The company known as TOP Printers, based in Maradana, handles a range of orders from visiting cards to corporate newsletters and annual reports. His clientele include some big time Memon Corporates and Indian Firms having operations in Sri Lanka, viz; Reliance Exports, Paras Industries, who export Vanaspati Oil.

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## Aunty FATHUMA of Galle

# Aunty Fathuma

Daily News 17 FEB  
2003

I saw her for the last time on Thursday, January 2 at her home. Her elder daughter, Faika was by her bedside watching the saline 'drip'. Jane, the faithful domestic was like an express train, running hither, thither. I did not like the look of things. Early morning at 5.00 a.m. I left 'Faika's Guest House' next door as I had to take two bus loads of children of the Deshapremi Free English Class on the annual Maharaja-sponsored Educational Tour.

That very evening I had to accompany my wife to pay our last respects to the mother of a very close friend of my son, Changa, who is overseas. I told Malini, my wife, to be ready to leave for Galle at a very short notice.

It was about a month ago that Aunty Fathuma yelled at me., 'why don't you bring Malini? Tell her I want to see her'. It was a command from the Matriarch. That Friday, Malini made plans to go to Galle and see aunty on Sunday 'before she dies' said she. Saturday early morning, when yet in bed, I heard the phone ring but paid no attention to it as Malini gets her calls from about 5.00 a.m. It has been Suhail, Faika's younger son. He had asked Malini, 'Aunty do you know the news at Galle Fort? Malini had been alarmed - for that day Ranil was to attend a function on the grounds by the famous Dutch Fort in Galle. Momentarily forgetting the peace the country now experiences from North to South and East to West, Malini had panicked, 'My God' has there been a bomb attack? she had wondered. When Suhail told her 'Umma passed away', Malini asked me to get ready to be dropped at Dehiwala Junction to take an Intercity Bus to Galle. Then I knew, I didn't have to ask why.

Aunty Fathuma was born on 12-02-1914 at Galle Fort to a wealthy family in Galle. That was a time that schooling for girls was taboo. More so with the highly conservative Muslims. But Aunty was sent to the leading girls' school in the South at the time, Girls' High School run by the Methodist Church. It

is now known as Southlands College, Aunty Fathuma has the distinction of being the 1st 'Brownie in Galle in Guiding'.

Although Muslim girls married early, Aunty had a late marriage by Muslim standards. She was obviously waiting for the man of her dreams - a cousin-as inter-marriages are very common unto this day, particularly among the Muslim community. She was 30 years when she married.

M. H. M. Ismail, Aunty's husband, I have not seen or known, except that I have heard that he had a lucrative jewellery business in Trincomalee, 'Ceylon Jewellers'. Mr. Ismail managed the business and was stationed in Trinco. The family came up during children's vacation often by Air Ceylon and sometimes by the family limousine, a Wolesley.

Mr. Ismail died in 1974 after which Aunty Fathuma took over the business in Trincomalee travelling up once a month and staying up to about two weeks.

My association with the Ismail's and Rasik Junaid (Faika's husband) has not been long. I came to know them thro' Shaila (Saheed) the mischievous little girl who was my neighbour at Ambalangoda in the 60s and who was my Campaign Manager at the terror ridden General Elections of 1989. Shaila, a niece of Aunty Fathuma, 'turned a heavy Muslim vote in Galle to cast a preference to me besides the Muslim UNP candidate, Isath Ali. The result was that with the minority backing, I was returned to Parliament without having the benefit of my own vote which was at Kesbewa.

From 1989, two houses in Galle were like my own. Faizel Junaid's and Aunty Fathuma's. Aunty ran open house; any person dropping in around noon had to partake of a sumptuous lunch which was always ready. Aunty Fathuma adored children and was fortunate enough to see several great grandchildren.

Though I was no stranger to her house, I learnt of the death of Aunty's only son, only when I was

returning to Colombo in the company of Deen Sahid - the 'Car Man'. Deen told me how Kamil had died in a motor accident at Kadawata in 1969. Until then I thought that aunty had only two daughters - Faika and Simla.

Kamil was never mentioned in any of her conversations, which centred mostly round the family, business in Trinco and the school days of Faika and Simla at Sacred Heart Convent. She proudly spoke of her own teachers at Girls' High School who were foreigners and Aunty spoke impeccable English - a gift of the education system of that era.

Kamil's room was the one now occupied by Sohail and Suhail, Faika's two sons. When I asked Faika as to why Kamil was not spoken of in the house, Faika said, Mummy couldn't even bear to reminisce over her only son's death and from the day he died, she never even stepped into the room that Kamil had occupied.

She was like a queen. It was a familiar sight to see this bespectacled Matriarch surveying the surroundings and running the house from her favourite armchair. The chair is still there facing the Army Camp opposite. But a large vacuum looms around it. A vacuum that is ominous. A vacuum that has created a void which is irreplaceable.

The perfect hostess, she used to goad her guests with good serving relentlessly so much so it became a 'punishment'.

She had a fall and with that fall her health took a heavy beating. A lady of high spirit and valour, our Aunty Fathuma would be remembered with love and affection for a long time to come by all those who were fortunate enough to gain her acquaintance.

May Almighty Allah grant her Jennathul Firdhouse - Ameen.

May she rest in Peace.

May she attain Nibbana.

**Buddhika Kurukularatne**

## M T A FURKHAN

Held the prestigious position of General Manager of the Colonial enterprise, Walker Sons & Company Ltd. Ventured into the hospitality industry, together with his brother, A C M Thassim, in establishing the Confifi Group of Hotels, in Moragolla in Beruwela, a prime beach location on the south western coastline of Sri Lanka. Confifi Beach Hotel opened its business in 1970. The Group now owns and manages three popular beach holiday

resorts, in the same locality, catering to a wide range of tourists and holiday makers. The 5-Star Eden Resort and Spa has 158 elegantly furnished rooms, suites and penthouses, indoor and outdoor dining and an elegant spa. Riverina Hotel, a 4-Star outlet, is very popular with families on account of its spacious and lush green gardens. Club Palm Garden is a 3-Star hotel that offers 136 rooms. Confetti Water Sports Center offers a wide range of water sports, diving, game fishing and ocean activities for the tourist.

## **GADIT (CHOMASA)**

**The Gadit (Chomasa)** Family are said to have been so called as they were a folk engaged in agricultural pursuits and owned bullock carts which they used to transport goods and people for a fee.

It was in 1937, that Abdul Rahman Abdul Ghany Gadit alias Chomasa, arrived in Ceylon. His nickname Chomasa is said to have been passed down from his father Abdul Ghany Eshak Gadit, who used to work at Karim Dhedhi Seth's bungalow in KKutiyaana, as a gardener. As an employee he was required to work under all weather conditions, be it sun or rain. On one occasion when he was on his way to work his friends remarked in jest, "Oh Chomasa, where art thou going?". The name stuck and from that day he and his descendants have been known as Chomasa. In Memani, Chomasa means "rainy season" just as "Siyaro" means winter and "Unaro" means summer.

Abdul Rahman had six sons from four marriages. Among his sons, Yoosuf, semi retired, had four sons. His oldest son Haroon deals in textiles and owns a shop on Main Street, Omar Tex, while Abdul Rasheed is at Haji Iqbal Brothers at Third Cross Street. Haroon, a very demure person, along with Hashim Buddhani, established a Madarasah called Sabeel-ur-Rashad Arabic College in 1992 housed within the Mohiyuddin Jummah Mosque at Mayura Place off Havelock Road. The Madarasah has, presently, six Ustads and eighty students.

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## **GADAR**

The **Gadar** family traces its origins to **Haji Ibrahim**, who first arrived in the Island circa 1890's. His son **Salay Mohammed** went on to establish a textile business in Main Street, Haputale, in the Central province, called A K Salay Mohammed, and another in Welimada named Madina Stores.

Jafar, the eldest son of Salay Mohammed was born in Kutiyaana in 1941 and came to Ceylon in 1947. Having completed his education in Welimada, where his father owned a shop, he came to Colombo in 1954 and a decade later had amassed sufficient wealth to establish his own business, Saleem Textiles, in 1964. Around 1990 he started another textile establishment named Gulistan Textiles in Third Cross Street in The Pettah. Jafar, has six sons, all of whom are involved in business activities. His oldest son Saleem, owns Milky Textiles in Keyzer Street, while the second, Yoosuf is into garment manufacturing. Yoonus runs Saleem Textiles. Altaf runs Schezard Textiles and Shaukat owns Shaukat Textiles, both of which are also located on Third Cross Street in The Pettah. Shakir, the last son is at Gulistan Textiles.

Ibrahim, younger son of Salay Mohammed, born in 1948, is also in the textile business and owns SEEMA textiles on Third Cross Street. He has two sons, Mubarak, who helps his father

run the business, and Irshad, who works as Marketing Officer of a cellular phone company called Phone Company.

Captain Mohammed Ameen, son of Abdul Azeez Gadar, carved a niche in the Aviation Industry. Having commenced his flying studies at Air Taxi's Ratmalana, in 1988, where he obtained his private pilot's license, he worked his way up in obtaining his Commercial Pilot's Licence by sitting for the exams conducted by the Civil Aviation Authority of UK. He later proceeded to Airman Flight Training in Oklahoma, USA, where he obtained he obtained his Certified Flight Instructors Licence and Advanced Ground Instructors Licence. Returning to his homeland, he joined Asian Aviation Center as a Flight Instructor. Among his trainees were a number of pilots at Sri Lankan Airlines as well as other well known international airlines. He was, subsequently, appointed Flight Examiner by the Department of Civil Aviation, becoming the youngest Flight Examiner in the Aviation Industry. He later joined ExpoAir as a Flight Operations Executive, later becoming its Deputy Manager, Flight Operations. He was also instrumental in setting up the ExpoAir Cabin Crew Training Academy approved by the Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka.

Ibrahim Abdul Sattar Gadar, known simply as Memon Sattar, has made a significant contribution to the Tamil literature of the country, including a collection of poems titled "Olam Midum Ulakam". His son Abdul Sattar Mohammed Nawaz, has also contributed his might to Tamil Literature in a small way.

Haji Hashim Mohammed Gadar arrived in Jaffna in 1932 where he established Muneer Drapery Mart at Grand Bazaar before moving on to Kankesanturai Road. He was so good at composing poems in Gujarati that he was given the title "Muneer" meaning "brilliant" or "shining". His business was named after this title and his logo depicted the radiating sun. Whilst resident in Kutiyana he was the President of the Memon Association and later became the President of the Karachi Kutiyana Memon Association. An ardent social worker he rebuilt the Sammanthurai Hanafi Mosque at Grand Bazaar Jaffna in 1965. When the local authority wanted to close the nearly century old Memon Cemetery there on the grounds, which bounded two other cemeteries in Jaffna, he and his close friend Usman Bhaila fought a legal battle and ultimately won the case.

Abdul Azeez, son of Hashim Gadar & Hawa Baidhaga, arrived in Ceylon in 1952 and joined his father's business. In 1957 he espoused Zohara, daughter of Ibrahim Bawa Fatani, and had four sons, Ariff, Ashroff, Anver, and Ameen. The oldest son Ariff, born in 1958, joined MKC as a Clerk and rose to the position of Assistant Manager. He was later to refer to his employment at MKC as an University where he learnt many things and his boss, M H Omar, as his Guru. In 1981, he went on to establish Muneer Garments, reviving his grandfathers old business name. In this venture he was helped by his three younger brothers. In 1991 they established another business called MG Industries (pvt) Ltd.

The younger generations of Gadar's are slowly, but surely, moving into the professions. One of Ariff Gadar's sons, Muneer, is a medical student at Kasthurbha Medical College, Manipal, India. The other son Mohsin is an aspiring lawyer who graduated as a Bachelor of Law from Leicester University in the UK.

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## **GODIL**

**Habib Karim**, son of Abdul Karim Junagadhawala, arrived in Colombo in 1918 and worked at Abdul Latif Sulaiman & Company in the 50's after which he worked as a

partner at STR Salay Mohammed & Company for twenty years until 1979. In 1980 he started his own company under the name of Rizwan Textiles on Third Cross Street Pettah.

Iqbal, son of Habib Karim, had his early schooling at Hameedia College in New Moor Street, a well known school in the old days named after the famous Turkinh Sultan Abdul Hameed II. He started Lux Shirts with the help of his father in 1963 and in 1973, after it was bought over by a fellow Memon, M H Omar, started his own business under the name of Riyaz Traders, whicyh still continues in business.

Irshad, son if Iqbal, left for higher studies at The National University of Singapore, and later entered Santa Monica College, USA. While studying he did various part time jobs at Toys R Us, Robinsons-May, and Best Buy, which he says has taught him some very valuable lessons and skills. In January 2006 he successfully transferred to California State University North Ridge, having completed two years at Santa Monica.

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## **HADFA**

The **Hadfa** family has its origins in the town of Upleta, north of Junaghad in Katiyawad peninsular. It was in 1941 that Haji Saleh Mohammed Haji Ghulam Cader Hadfa first arrived in Ceylon, finding employment in a flourishing business run by members of his community. An enterprising man, he soon quit his monotonous job and entered the food industry where he met with tremendous success. In 1958, he opened his own business firm dealing in general items and foodstuff on Front Street Pettah, naming it after his first born son, Saleem.

Haji Bha, as he was known to his friends, contributed in no mean measure to uplif his less fortunate brethren. His social activities were not confined to this little island but also extended to neighboring India, where for many years he was in charge of raising funds for the Memon Education and Welfare Society in Mumbai and an Orphanae for destitute children called Taiba, in Ahmedabad. He breathed his last, leaving behind his wife and three sons, Salim, Mahmood and Razzak.

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## **A C S HAMEED**

AC Shaul Hameed was educated at St. Anthony's College, Katugastota, Vijaya College and Zahira College, Matale. He showed a flair for English writing and started with the Children's Corner in the Sunday Observer to which he was a regular contributor from the age of 15.

While in Standard VII, he launched a magazine for Matale schools called 'New Broom.' Later he organised the Matale Students' Union of which he was elected first president. Being interested in adult education and teaching of English he was responsible for establishing a number of educational institutions in Matale and Kandy districts particularly in backward Muslim localities. He was the director and principal of Winchester College, Matale (named after a famous Public School in England) which prepared students for foreign and local examinations conducted in English.

ACS, as he was affectionately known, was also elected President of the Central Ceylon Muslim Assembly and it was through this organization that the Kandy Muslim Teacher Training College was inaugurated. At that time there was a dearth of Muslim trained teachers.

In 1956, he became actively involved in politics and joined the UNP. He entered the arena of national politics when he successfully contested the general elections in March 1960. Since then he was returned to power in eight elections, counting 39 years as an MP. This was one of the longest unbroken parliamentary records in the country.

He was appointed to the Cabinet in 1977 when the UNP came to power and became the first Foreign Minister of this country. Since independence the portfolios of Defence and Foreign Affairs had earlier been held by the Head of Government.

By this time the Middle East boom had begun. Restrictions in the issue of passports and the existence of exit permits discouraged employers from recruiting people from Sri Lanka.

The Central Bank annual report of 1977 states that only 10,000 workers had gone for employment in the Middle East.

One of his first ministerial decisions was to remove all restrictions on passports and open Embassies in Middle East countries. Today more than one million Sri Lankans are employed in the Middle East.

Throughout his long and unparalleled stint of nearly 15 years as Foreign Minister, he spearheaded a number of discussions abroad and at home to settle many national and international disputes. He was involved in at least three of the major attempts made in those 15 years to resolve Sri Lanka's intractable armed conflict through negotiation - the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987, the Premadasa - LTTE talks of 1989/90 and the All-Party Conference of 1990-1992 of which he was Vice-Chairman.

He was the Chairman of the Ministerial Conference of the Non-aligned Movement from 1977-1979. He also visited many countries in Asia as an envoy of the United Nations to solicit support for a UN Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy. He served on the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Studies for 10 years. He was an ardent advocate of internationalism and regionalism.

He was also a proponent of greater understanding among South Asian nations for the resolution of common problems and played an active role in the formation of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC).

In 1981, he inaugurated the first meeting of Foreign Secretaries of South Asian countries held in Colombo to explore prospects for regional co-operation.

As a Cabinet Minister, he tried to respond to problems in a practical and positive manner, more professionally rather than as a dogmatic intellectual. He had enormous drive and a stupendous capacity for hard work. He established himself as a national figure because of his proven competence and leadership potential.

(extracted from an appreciation written by his brother AC Nuhuman which appeared in the Sunday Times of April 22, 2002)

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## **ASSENA MARIKAR HAMID**

Assena Marikar Hamid (1880-1952) hailed from an aristocratic family of Ceylon Moors and was raised in the lap of luxury. His father, S.M. Assena Marikar continued the crockeryware business at China Street in Pettah, which his forebearers Sultan Marikar and Aboo Lebbe Marikar had founded in 1840. Hamid, in association with S.M. Hashim built up the firm gaining international repute for integrity and honesty. This business house, "S.M. Assena Marikar & Co.", is among the very few Ceylonese firms which had survived a century and still continues to maintain its high repute.

Hamid, after his primary education at gas Works Street, Pettah, entered St. Thomas' College, then at Mutuwal. Among his contemporaries was the father of the Nation, Rt Hon D.S. Senanayake, his life long friend. Hamid was a blend of the occident and the Orient, imbibing the best of the cultures of both the East and the West, to emerge in later life as one deeply interested in learning. He was for long a member of that intellectual organization known widely as the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon). Besides, he was a respected member of the YMCA as well. By his quiet and unassuming ways he commanded respect and confidence.

He was a founder member of the All Ceylon Moors' Association and was closely associated with its activities. He was also a member of the Deputation of the All Ceylon Moors' Association led by Sir Razik fareed (then ARARazik) that appeared and gave evidence before the Lord Soulbury Royal Commission on Reforms of the Ceylon Constitution. He was also a member of the Executive Committee and Hon Joint Treasurer of the Maradana Mosque and was associated in its activities with the Moor leaders of the time, viz; Hon WM Abdul Rahman, Al Haj NDH Abdul Caffoor, ILM Abdul Azeez, NHM Abdul Cader and was also interacting with such intellectuals like Justice MT Akbar and chroniclers of Moor history like Muhammad Sameer.

Hamid was a founder member of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home and contributed in many ways for its growth. He held the position of Chairman of its Religious Committee and set an example to his colleagues by regular attendance at meetings, always punctual. His grandsons AN Ghouse, MI Azhar Ghouse BA, are carrying on the traditional business in their firm "A M Hamid". His granddaughters are married to Dr Shuhaib Ghouse and Mehdi Hussain, both men of learning and erudition – one a doctor of Medicine and the other an able Barrister-at-Law.

His brother is Saheed A Marikar, Barrister-at-Law.

The short, pleasant faced man, wearing a sarong, with his umbrella and boots, was AM Hamid. Any child would know him at sight. He is no more but posterity will always remember him. He was a pious Muslim devoting most of his time, in the latter part of his life, to the promotion of Islamic affairs.

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## **T M HANAN**

The late Tony Hannan was the eldest son of A Y Hannan (Police) and Raheem Hannan nee Mohammed. He passed away in 1994 at Ratmalana- Sri Lanka. He was married to Fareena Miskin the eldest daughter of M J T Miskin- retired Inspector of Police.



His eldest son Rohan is presently in the Computer field with Data Technologies while his second son Shammi is a Quantity Surveyor/Building Contractor.

Tony was a well known Journalist during the 1960's and 1970's. He started his career as the Kurunegala correspondent for Lake House and worked his way up the ladder. He was a brilliant writer and worked not only for Lake House but also for "Sun" -of Independent Newspapers Ltd, as a Sub-editor, and subsequently as the Assistant News Editor Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation before leaving Sri Lanka in search of greener pastures.

His next assignment was as a Copy Editor of the prestigious paper the Teheran Journal. Well known journalist Lloyd Fernando, had this to say about Tony in an article/tribute published in the Lake House papers;

"While in Teheran, even though Tony faced the interview at the Teheran Journal with much confidence, the outcome appeared to be doubtful as he was an alien not knowing Persian. It was here that he met a British woman journalist Anna Francis who paved the way for that much sought after break in life for Tony."

"What impressed the subsequent interview panel was an exciting headline devised by Tony for a delayed action by the customs at the Iranian-Turkish border. Tony's headlines "Customs men sitting on toilets" really hit the headlines. From then on it was "Veni vidi vinci"- I came, I saw, I conquered. "

"Within a matter of months Tony was promoted as the Foreign news and Features Editor."

Anna Francis the editor in chief had this to say about him - "Tony was given an extremely disorganised department, but within a short period of time he built it up into an efficient section that is today incomparable in this organization or any other establishment in Iran. This was due to his efficiency and to his absolute devotion to the job, no matter how many hours that may mean putting in to achieve it."

Tony was appropriately made Deputy Editor, in addition to retaining the responsibilities as Foreign news editor, and Chief sub-editor.

"Tony was entirely responsible for all activities of the editorial department during my absence and he managed his tasks very well winning praise from the President and the Publisher of the News paper" says Anna.

Anna went on to say " Tony was personally responsible for the editing , presentation, and layout of the all important page one, the feature and foreign news pages. No request was ever too much for him to handle and he has willingly stepped forward to handle supplements, write news, feature stories, and extra pages when others were absent. "

Anna Francis goes further to say "There was no one on the Teheran Journal staff and there has been none in the past 13 years I have been here whom I could recommend as highly as Mr Hannan. He is one of those unique newsmen ever ready to take up any challenge in a world where standards are dying "

"I am sure the principles of journalism he taught to those working under him and the manner in which he conducted himself with workers at every level from simple typesetter to department chiefs will remain as examples for his co-workers to follow."

Mr Hossein Baniahmed, the group editor of Teheran Journal in 1979 has this to say about Tony -" Mr Hannan's performance has been outstanding.. He is one of those unique personalities born to Journalism and is bound to produce the best of whatever he touches.. Mr Hannan is a top quality journalist and is a big asset to this News paper "

With the dethronement of the Shah , the Teheran Journal ceased publication.

Tony then moved to another prestigious newspaper the "The Strait Times" of Singapore , where he was special grade Sub-Editor- a rare honor indeed .

Tony's contribution to Journalism and his reputation and meteoric rise to fame did not surprise those close to him. He had all the required qualities to be successful.

It is with this optimism , confidence and courage that he changed his career in the latter stages of his life overseas. He decided to join the Hotel/ Hospitality industry.

He joined the Swiss managed Hotel Chain - AL BILAD Hotel Movenpick, in Saudi Arabia as a Sales/Marketing Manager.

Tony traveled all over the world discussing and learning new marketing strategies and meeting top Travel Agents, and Company Directors in an effort to further strengthen, co-operation and understanding. As expected Tony fared equally well if not better in the Hotel Industry .

Tony worked in this industry for almost 10 years before his retirement in 1993/94.

Tony always helped others during his stint overseas. He and his wife Fareena were kind and generous and extended their hospitality not only to many of their close relations but to the destitute, the hungry and the needy . Many Sri Lankans benefited from his kindness and generosity. He sponsored his relatives overseas and helped them seek employment.

During his younger days Tony was a keen sportsman. He captained Pelicans SC Kurunegala and played representative football in India. He was also a Referee of the Football Federation of Sri Lanka. He also coached St Josephs Kegalle, and St Marys Elpitiya in Soccer.

Tony was one of the few Malays who reached the top in Journalism.

What well known Journalist, Lloyd Fernando has to say about him summarizes his greatness -

"Some are born great, some have greatness thrust upon them. In the case of the renowned Journalist T M Hannan, greatness was achieved in no uncertain terms "

May he attain Jennathul Firdhouse.

24<sup>th</sup>December 1994  
Ratmalana, Sri Lanka

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## HALEEM ISHAK

### NMM Haniffa & NMM Ishak

**Nagoor Meera**, his brother **Meera Lebbe**, and their father Assen Ali, had left behind their landed property in their home village of Kongaraya Kurichchi when they came to Ceylon. Contacts with their relatives back home were, therefore, lost in time and the two brothers were busy carrying on their business activities in far-away Ceylon. This led to the caretakers of these properties becoming the de facto owners, enjoying the fruits. None of the children of Nagoor Meera and Meera Lebbe took any interest in staking their claims to their paternal properties back in Tamil Nadu.

After **Nagoor Meera's** demise, the herculean task of presiding over the huge business empire, he had laboriously built over the years, fell on the shoulders of his sons, **NMM Haniffa** and **NMM Ishak** who had already mastered the techniques of the old man reasonably well. Haniffa gave up his lucrative legal practice in order to devote his full time to the business, social activities, and religious work. The two brothers, acting with wisdom and caution, built up the business in spite of the many great challenges that came their way after the Great Depression in the early thirties.

It was in the late thirties that the two brothers decided to go their own ways in business keeping the family unity and integrity intact. Haniffa chose to run AM Nagoor Meera Sons & Company, engaged in Ship Chandelling and import & export, while Ishak launched AM Nagoor Meera & Son, specializing in vegetable marketing. Later on, Haniffa established another firm called EH Mohideen & Company.

Like his father AM Nagoor Meera, Proctor Haniffa was a keen student of Islam and an exponent of the Tamil language and literature. Islamic scholars from various parts of the country, and even South India, were regular visitors to Haniffa's Dematagoda Road residence. They used to conduct regular weekend sessions between Haniffa and the visiting Islamic scholars, seated on mats spread out on the sprawling visitor's hall at his residence. They discussed various subjects, interpretations, meanings and connotations on Islamic and Tamil works as well as Arabic Literature. They were also of a very high intellectual standard. Some of them were, Kakka Lebbe, Abdul Hassan (son of Muthuwappa Sinna Alim sahib of Kayalpattanam in Tamil Nadu who was the Imam of the Hanafi Jumua Mosque in Kandy) and Idroos Moulana of Maruthamunai in the Amparai District.

The Tamil speaking Muslims of Ceylon should be grateful to Haniffa for having it translated from Arabic into Tamil. Maulana Allama **AK Abdul Hameed** (Bhakavi), of Tamil Nadu in South India, commenced his historic task of translating the Quran into Tamil on February 19, 1926, the first ever attempt to meet the crying need of the millions of Tamil speaking Muslims living in Ceylon, India, Singapore, Malaya & Burma. At that time Moulana Abdul Hameed, father of AK Abdus Samad, the well known leader of the Tamil Nadu Muslim League, was already 50 years old. Exactly after three years of tireless labor and extensive consultations with religious scholars and experts, Moulana Abdul Hameed successfully published the first Tamil translation of Surah Al Baqarah on February 19, 1929. Slow and unsteady flow of funds impeded further progress of the project. He tapped as many sources as possible to complete his mission. Timely financial support by the Nizam of Hyderabad on the recommendations of his uncle, Nawab Nazeer Yar Jang Bahadur,

in 1938 enabled Moulana Abdul Hameed to complete the translation of the entire Quran on October 24, 1942.

By now Moulana Abdul Hameed was 70 years old. He sailed across to Ceylon in 1946 in search of generous minded souls who could extend a helping hand to have the translated manuscripts printed and published. It was Proctor Haniffa who generously donated a handsome sum of Rs 50,000 for the project. The translation saw the light of day on May 1, 1949. Sadly, Haniffa had already passed away when the historic mission was completed and fulfilled. However, his generosity was acknowledged in the foreword of every copy of the translation that was published ever since. It is also reported that during the publishing phase of the project Haniffa himself rushed to Hyderabad to bring paper that was in shortage after WWII.

An ever grateful Abdul Hameed sent several copies of the translated Quran to Sithy Naseema, Haniffa's second wife whom he married after the demise of his first wife, Ummu Hafeera. When Naseema travelled to Makkah to perform Hajj in 1950, accompanied by her oldest daughter Marhooma, she presented copies of the Tamil translation of the Quran to the Imam of the Ka'abah for the use of Tamil speaking pilgrims who visit on pilgrimage. They are still preserved there.

Since then, seven editions of the Tamil translation have been published, in 1949, 1950, 1955, 1958, 1978, 1986 and 1995. The last two publications were financed by the Rabitah Al-Alam Al-Islami (The World Muslim Council), which has its headquarters in Makkah, at the personal initiative and efforts of MH Muhammad, son of NMM Haniffa.

Haniffa was a towering personality in Colombo's social and religious circles, although he shunned publicity. It was in recognition of his contributions to the Community that Haniffa was inducted as a Member of the first Board of Trustees of the Maradana Mosque, when it was incorporated in 1924, on the personal recommendation of the Hon WM Abdul Rahman, Legislative Councillor and father of Sir Razik Fareed. A great honor at that ripe young age, indeed!

Nevertheless, Haniffa's charity was not just confined to the country of his birth alone. Sithy Naseema recalled how her late husband even helped the economically-backward Muslims across the seas. "In 1946, we went to Kayal Pattanam in Tamil Nadu in South India. Though there were Madarasas (Islamic religious schools), they were not enough to cater to the demand. My husband provided financial assistance to build a Tamil School and a Madarasa in a Kayal Pattanam locality that was populated with a large number of illiterate children. I remember that this institution was named "Naseema" after me." (Sithy Naseema in an interview with the late MS Muhammad of Thinakaran Newspaper on April 18 1991 Page 5). The people of Kayal Pattanam still recall, with gratitude, the generosity of Haniffa and describe the school and Madarasa as a testimony to the commitment of Haniffa to help the educational development of the backward Muslim children anywhere.

MH Muhammad, his son stated, "When I won my first Municipal election in 1947, I went to seek his blessings. His advice to me was, 'At times of triumph and in power, be humble. You must behave in such a manner that people would have the same regard and respect for you even in times of defeat. The people who were with you in victory should remain with you even in times of defeat -- forever.' I vowed to practise it to its very letter and spirit in my political and private life - never to be arrogant and uppish but to be always accessible, considerate and listening to various voices."

Haniffa was 56 years old when he departed this world on Friday, March 25, 1949. he was the proud father of 21 children, 10 sons and 11 daughters; 12 by Ummu Hafeera, his first wife, and 9 by Sithy Naseema who survived him. Sithy Naseema passed away in 2003. Her children are Yahya (deceased), Sithy Marina (wife of Sa'eed Sulaiman BSc, Petroleum technologist), Rabiyyathul Adhawiyya (wife of SAM Faleel, Lawyer & ex-Assistant Commissioner of Labor), Mumtaza (wife of Rasheed Sulaiman, ex DIG and first Muslim Police Officer to head the Prime Ministerial and later Presidential Security Division during the tenure of President Ranasinghe Premadasa and Dingiri Banda Wijetunge), Muwaffaque (who married Rosemary Ondaatje and later Haseena), Zainamb Farhana (who married Colombo businessman, Imamdeen), fazlul Haque (deceased), Fazlur Rahman (deceased), and Mariathul Qibithiya (wife of Muhammad Ashroff Hussain, prominent businessman of Batcha & Company fame and also socio-religious activist in Sri Lanka). The two Sulaimans who married two of Naseema's daughters are brothers and children of Marjoona Sheikh Sulaiman, the youngest daughter of Meera Lebbe (older brother of AM Nagoor Meera).

Haniffa's younger brother Ishak, who married Ummu Khulzum, daughter of Idroos Lebbe (elder brother of paternal grandmother Zainambu Natchiyar), passed away in 1965 when he was 64 years old. Ishak's five children are Sithy Aysha (wife of Dr MIM Nilar), Abdul Qadir who passed away at a young age, Muhammad Haleem Ishak, Sithie Mariam Muhammad and Sithie Fathima. Haleem Ishak passed away in Sep 2003.

Proctor Haniffa's family can be proud of their progeny who held top office in the national political organizations, dominated by the Sinhalese at that time. NMM ishak was the first Muslim to function as the Treasurer of the Ceylon Labor Union. Ishak's son, Haleem, rose to the position of Vice President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1978-1992, succeeding Dr Badiudin Mahmud. Dr MCM Kaleel, father-in-law of Haniffa's two sons, Jaffer Sadique and Dr Munsir Meeran, was Treasurer and later Chairman of the United National Party.

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**Haleem Ishak passes away - Island Thu Sep 25 2003**



Former SLFP Member of Parliament for Colombo Central  
Haleem Ishak passed away yesterday.

He was 74 years at the time of death.

The late Haleem Ishak worked closely with late Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike to strengthen the party at times of crisis.

He was a fine contributor in Parliament and spoke on selected subjects.

Haleem Ishak was a politician respected by all communities and all parties in an outside Parliament.

His funeral took place in Colombo yesterday

**Sunday Island Oct 5 2003**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen173.html>

### ***Appreciation***

#### **Haleem Ishak - (I)**

The passing away of Mr. Haleem Ishak, a politician of distinction on 24th Sept. 2003 brought sorrow, sadness and grief to the thousands who rushed to his residence to pay their last respects and to the many others who walked behind his bier to the Kuppiyawatta Muslim burial ground where his last remains were laid to rest.

Mr. Ishak began his political career being elected to the Colombo Municipal Council as a member of the Kuppiyawatta East Ward in 1962. He was the only SLFP member elected to the CMC out of 46 others from other political parties. Although the Kuppiyawatta East Ward has a cosmopolitan population and people are of different shades of political opinion, the late Mr. Haleem Ishak was able to comfortably win the election and was re-elected twice in 1966 and 1969 and went on to represent this Ward as a distinguished councillor until the Council was dissolved in 1977.

In the parliamentary election of 1977, when the United National Party won a landslide victory, Mr. Ishak was elected to the Multi-member Colombo Central constituency as the

3rd member from the SLFP, coming ahead of veteran politician, the late Mr. Pieter Keuneman. During the period 1977-1988, when the SLFP opposition in parliament was restricted to eight members, Mr. Ishak never failed to express his views without fear or favour.

In 1979, the writer was elected to the Colombo Municipal Council to represent the people of Kuppiyawatta East Ward on behalf of the United National Party which Ward was previously ably represented by the late Mr. Ishak for a continuous period of sixteen years.

An outstanding quality of the late Mr. Ishak, he never failed to acknowledge and commend progress and development being undertaken by the Colombo Municipal Council in the Kuppiyawatta East Ward during the tenure of the writer who represented this Ward from 1979-2002 as a Municipal Councillor and thereafter as the Deputy Mayor and Mayor of Colombo.

The late Mr. Ishak served the people irrespective of political affiliation during his four decades of public service as a Municipal Councillor and later as a Parliamentarian (1977-1994). Mr. Haniffa Ishak, elder son of the late Mr. Haleem Ishak continues the good work of his father serving the citizens of Colombo as a Municipal Councillor (1991-2002) and now as a party organizer.

The large gathering of mourners who came to pay their last respects at the burial ground in their thousands is ample testimony of the affection and admiration they had for the late Mr. Haleem Ishak — A Man among Men.

*"Inna Lillahi, Wa inna-illaihi-Raji-hoon"*

(From the Almighty Allah we come, and to Him we go)  
**Omar** **Kamil**  
**Ambassador for Sri Lanka in Iran**

## **Haleem Ishak - (II)**

Mr. Haleem Ishak's death was news of great anxiety and unbearable sorrow as he was one of my very close friends for the past four decades. In the sojourn of sansara, we come across all sorts of people, but I strongly feel that people of the calibre of Haleem is so rare and limited. I firstly encountered Haleem at the Colombo Municipal election in 1962 as the SLFP candidate for Kuppiyawatte. In a virulent attack on Mr. Somaweera Chandrasiri MP who was Haleem Ishak's key speake, in this election campaign, I supported the UNP candidate Mr. Karunathilake. My speech was so harsh that Haleem Ishak gave a press interview threatening libel action. But both of us became very good friends, representing governing and opposing parties in the CMC. Though I resigned from the Colombo Municipal Council our friendship never ended. We were "mango friends" through thick and thin. We fought many a political battle jointly in parliament and elsewhere. Haleem discarded all air of self-aggrandizement, he was a resolute campaigner against the corrupting nature of power at any level. He sincerely believed "all power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Circumstances of straight forwardness compelled him to change his political colouring, but so-called leaders got the best out of him and never reciprocated. I'm fully aware of

the assurances and the promises that were given to him by the governing powers of the country and never fulfilled. He was never a hot-headed politician moved by anger or indignation. He hated injustice, tyranny and immorality, he was always fair and generous to his opponents and always ungrudgingly helped his friends in their needs. Haleem Ishak even sacrificed his political career in coming to the rescue of so-called friends, who ultimately neglected or ignored him.

In the true sense of sports, Haleem Ishak was a true sportsman who played a "losing" game with pluck, patience and fearlessness. I used to meet him very often after he had fallen ill and a few days before his death, I spent a considerable time with him. I could visualize the height of his frustration and grief, when he requested me to visit him more frequently as it brought past memories and solace to him. He was very pleased to mention that he won parliamentary elections with majority votes, which he got from Sinhala people. I always consider him as a bridge builder who did his best to bring the Sinhalese and the Muslims together.

Haleem Ishak was a very devoted husband to his exemplary wife who happens to be Minister M. H. Mohamed's sister. He was an amiable father to his sons, daughters and grandfather to his grandchildren.

May eternal bliss be with him.  
**P. A. Jinadasa Niyathapala**

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## **NAGOOR MEERA MOHAMED HANIFFA**

### **Social worker and philanthropist**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen173.html>

Proctor Nagoor Meera Mohamed Haniffa was an eminent personality who shone in social and business circles in pre-independent Ceylon. He was from a great and illustrious Muslim family that could proudly claim to have.

Born in 1893 was the eldest son of the famous Nuwara Mudalali A.M. Nagoor Meera who in the Mid 1800 set up a successful vegetable business in Kandy. Later he returned to Colombo and established a thriving vegetable wholesale, ship channelling firm in a complex opposite the Old Town Hall in Pettah which was founded in 1886. The place was popularly called Nuwara (Kandy) Market. A.M. Nagoor Meera Sons & Company is 110 years now.

Proctor Haniffa married a granddaughter of M.C. Abdul Raheman who crated history being the first-ever Muslim Member of the Colombo Municipal Council and Municipal Magistrate (1886-1887) and the first-ever Muslim Member of the Legislative Council (1889-1899) during the British RJ.

Haniffa was elected to the Colombo Municipal Council in January 1944 as a member for the Maligawatte Ward and continued to serve the Council until December 1946.

A younger brother of Haniffa, N.M.M. Ishak represented the Maradana Ward. Ishak was a pioneer Muslim trade union leader who functioned as the Treasurer of the Ceylon Labour Union led by the repressible A.E. Goonesinghe in the 1948. Ishak's eldest son Halim Ishak becomes a Sri Lanka Freedom Party MCC for Kuppiyawatte East from 1963 to 1978 and SLFP MP from 1977-1994. Today Halim Ishak's eldest son, Haniffa, is occupying a seat in the Colombo Municipality.

After Proctor Haniffa's withdrawal from active civic politics, one of his sons, M.H. Mohamed, won the Maligawatte Ward and retained it without a break from 1947 to 1965 when he successfully entered the Parliament as MP for Borella and was appointed as a Cabinet Minister.

M.H. Mohamed, who had the honour of becoming the first-ever Muslim Mayor of Colombo in 1959, later became the Speaker of the Parliament, besides holding several Cabinet portfolios.

M.H. Mohamed's eldest son Hussain Mohamed succeeded his father to represent the Maligawatte ward from the early 70s and himself became a Mayor of Colombo.

Thus, the Maligawatte ward remained a pocket borough of Proctor Haniffa's family from 1944 onwards. At present both Hussein and his younger brother Shahul Hameed (Sons of M.H Mohamed) are members of the Western Provincial Council.

Proctor Haniffa's eldest son Munas was a prominent figure in political and business spheres. Munas produced several popular Sinhala and Tamil films and his only daughter

Sithy Nazly Married S.H.M. Zubair Farouge of Ceylon Civil Service who was first Muslim to occupy the post of Registrar General of Sri Lanka in early 1970s and is now a Professor of Law at the University of Adelaide in Australia.

Another son of Haniffa, Jaufer Sadique, was the first Muslim public servant to serve as the Chief Assessor of the Colombo Municipality in the 1960.

The first Muslim to rise to the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police and to become the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Representatives in 1947 was M. Ismail the elder son of Meera Lebbe who was the elder brother of Haniffa's father. Professor Mahroo of Ismail and Dr. Ifthikar Ismail are SSP Ismail's children who play a leading role in their respective fields.

Proctor Haniffa was a great Philanthropist who always shunned publicity.

It was Haniffa who set up the Arabic School at the Mina Mosque at the Dematagoda Road, a mosque built by his father. He also helped build a number of educational institutions, both Islamic and secular in South India. The Muslim Community honoured Haniffa by appointing him as a member of the first Board of Trustees of the Maradana Jumma Mosque in 1924 when he was just 31 years.

The Tamil-speaking Muslims in Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore and elsewhere are ever grateful to Proctor Haniffa because it was his outright financial contribution of Rs. 50,000 in 1946 that enabled the publication of the first-ever Tamil Nadu in 1949, thus fulfilling a long felt need. It was an astronomical sum at that time indeed. Unfortunately, Haniffa was not amongst the living when the Tamil version saw the light of the day.

Haniffa a proud of father of 21 children peacefully asset away on March 25 1949 at the age of 56 at his spacious bungalow, "Dharul Mina" (formerly Horton House) at Horton Place and was interred at the Kuppiyawate Muslim burial groups.

Though 53 years have passed since the demise of Proctor Haniffa, he has left an indelible mark in the Muslim community and is still respectfully remembered as a great humanist for the yeomen service he rendered both to the Muslims and other people with discrimination. May Allah grant him Jennethul Firdhouse.

- Al Haj M. Ashroff Hussain - Daily News, Monday Mar 25, 2002

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A PERCEPTIVE SHORTHAND WRITER

**M.C.A. HASSAN**

(Mohamed Cassim Abdul Hassan)

Mr. Hassan hails from Maligakande in Colombo 10. Born on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1932 at 1<sup>st</sup> Maligakande Lane, Maradana. His paternal grandfather, Sardar Khan, came from Peshawar, in the North-west Frontier of Pakistan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who was a Horse Physician in the then Governor's House. His father, Mohamed Cassim, was born in Sri Lanka to a Sri Lanka Moor mother, Shotha Umma.

His maternal grandfather was a building contractor and was known in Moor circles as "Kumbala Maashi" Abdul Raheem, hailed from Reservoir Lane, Dematagoda and had his properties and business there.

Mr. Hassan, while being a public servant, was a concerned and conscientious community worker. Scouting and service to the Moor community was his prime desire. A Scoutmaster who, for the first time, conducted a Jumuah service at the All Ceylon Scout Jamboree at the Vihara Maha Devi Park in 1962, at which many foreign scouts were present.

His public service record extends to a period of 48 years during which he held wide and varied positions.

His first appointment in 1952 was as a temporary typist at the Anti-Tuberculosis Institute. From 1952 to 1955 he worked as a permanent typist at the Income Tax Department.

In 1955 he was appointed as a lower grade stenographer to the Supreme Court and then as a Higher Grade Stenographer, recording verbatim evidence in criminal cases and taking down the judge's summing up to the Jury.

In 1964 he passed the examination for appointment of Hansard Reporters to the then Senate and was appointed a Hansard Reporter (Senate).

Upon Sri Lanka becoming a republic in 1972 and the consequent abolition of the upper House of Parliament, he was absorbed to the House of Representatives as a Hansard Reporter.

In addition to his government job, he worked as a freelance reporter to the newspapers in Sri Lanka, The Sun, and Sunday Times. He also contributed articles to the Daily News. In Saudi Arabia, he contributed to the "Arab News" and the "Saudi Gazette". His speciality was political stories and articles on Islam and Muslims which received due publicity. He was an original contributor to the "Al Eslam" and now functions as the Senior Writer of the eNewsletter, NZDawa.

He retired prematurely in 1980 December as a Senior Hansard Reporter upon being appointed as Secretary to the Gray Mackenzie International Services Ltd who which company was responsible for running the Jeddah Islamic Port.

He worked in Jeddah for four years and then he was transferred to the Dry Port in Riyadh where he served as Deputy Editor of the Ports Authority for three years.

In 1988 he was selected as an Economic Reporter to the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah. He joined primarily the Operations Department (3) as Secretary and was also made responsible for reporting the meetings of the Finance Ministers of the participating countries. He has travelled widely in the Middle East and Africa covering proceedings as an Economic Reporter.

In 1993 he retired from the Bank's service and reverted once more to his first job as a stenographer covering proceedings of the Admiralty Court, Labour Courts and special cases.

In 1995 he was appointed personal Secretary to Justice Ninian Jayasuriya, Judge, Court of Appeal.

In 2001 he migrated to New Zealand where he is resident now.

As for his community service, he was well known in Moor circles and was always in the forefront of all Muslim functions and conferences. He held a privileged position in every important conference as a verbatim reporter to the conference. Two of the important conferences in which he received commendations were the Law of the Sea Conference and the Chief Justices Conference held in Colombo in 1996.

He is the author of the booklets, "The Kataragama Mosque and Shrine", and "W.M. Abdul Raheman" and a biography of "Sir Razik Fareed – the uncrowned King of the Sri Lanka Moors".

He is the father of three daughters and one son. The son, Dr. M. Shiraz Hassen, is a Gastro-Enterologist and Consultant Physician. The daughters are in the Marketing Field and IT.

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## **Sheikh HASSANALLY ESUFALLY**

Sheikh Hasanally Esufally established the prestigious Hemas Holdings Company in 1948, initially, as a pharmaceutical and trading establishment. Diversified into travel and tourism in 1970 and Consumer Goods in 1980's and 1990's.

The Company is a diversified conglomerate with twenty active subsidiaries organized into five key sectors, viz; FMCG, Healthcare, Transportation, Leisure, and Strategic Investments. The Company is currently listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange.

The current Directors (2008) are Husein Esufally, Imtiaz Ewsufally, Abbas Esufally, and Murtaza Esufally.

## **AVUDUCANDU MARIKAR HASSEN (Ossen) LEBBE**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen108.html>

**Auvuducandu Marikar Hassen (Ossen) Lebbe**, a leader of the Muslim community in Sri Lanka, was one of the commissioner's who drafted the "Muhammadan" Code of 1806, under which the Muslims were governed in respect of their persons and property. According to a census taken in 1824, there were 14,847 Moors or Muhammadans in Colombo (see Ceylon Daily News 20 February, 1953).

**Avuducandu Marikar Hassen Lebbe** took a very active part in the management of the Colombo Grand Mosque at new Moor Street. Under the sanitary ordinance imposed by the Municipality, the burial grounds adjacent to the Colombo Grand Mosque was ordered to be shut down from 21 October, 1874. In view of this, Hassen Lebbe set out to establish a new burial grounds for the Muslims. He was assisted by several wealthy "**Mathichams**" (Managers) of the Mosque.

Funds were raised by this group and an extent of 37 Acres, 3 Roods and 13 Perches of land, depicted in Plan No. 1826 surveyed by S. G. Schneider, was purchased at Maligawatte (Title Deed No. 85, Notary C.H.Ahliph dated November 10, 1890). The land was vested in the Trustee for the burial of the dead bodies of Muslims.

Hassen Lebbe's sons were, **Othman Haji** and **Abdul Majeed**. Hassan Lebbe Marikar Avuducandu Marikar, having been the First Honorary Turkish Consul was succeeded to this position by his grandson Abdul Majeed, the Second Honorary Turkish Consul..

Consul **Abdul Majeed** took an active part in the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Sultan of Turkey in 1900. He also laid the foundation stone of the Hameedia School and the building of Ibrahim bin Ahmed's shop at Main Street on this day.

He was succeeded as Consul by **Mr. Muhammad Macan Markar** of Galle who was the Vice Consul for Turkey.

Consul Abdul Majeed had two daughters, **Mrs. M.A.C.Muhammad** and **Mrs. Zofi Abdul Azeez**.

Hassen Lebbe's other son, **Othman Haji**, and a cousin of his, **Shamsi Lebbe Mathar Lebbe** (father of M.L.M. Mackeen) succeeded him as trustee of the Maligawatte Muslim burial grounds. On the death of Mathar Lebbe, and, later of Othman Haji, Othman Haji's sons, **Noordeen** and **Sulaiman** succeeded them in turn.

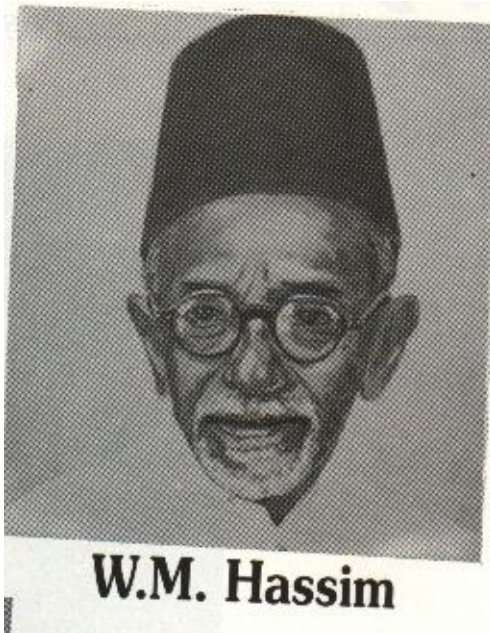
An unused portion of the Maligawatte Muslim burial ground was acquired by the Government and **O.H.M. Sulaiman** transferred all the right, title and interest in the trusteeship to the governing body of the Colombo Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, in 1875, on whose behalf the purchase was made.

A plaque at the Maligawatte Muslim burial ground commemorates the name of Hassen Lebbe. A photograph of him was published in the "**Olde Ceylon**" by John Capper in the year 1877.

It may be of interest to know that there were only two (2) mosques in Colombo in the year 1505 and there were seventeen (17) in 1824.

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## WAPU MARIKAR HASSIM



**Wapu Marikar Hassim**, affectionately known as **W.M. Hassim**, son of **Sheikh Marikar**, was born on January 26, 1880. His birth was registered by C.L.M. Abdul Majeed (son of **Shekadi Marikar Cassim Lebbe Marikar**), who was his mother's (Mariam, alias Puwachchi Umma, sister of ILM Noordeen Hajjar and daughter of Maimoona Umma) sister's husband. **Hassim** attended Wesley College, Colombo, and was preparing to appear for the Notary's examination when his elders recommended that he take up to trade and business. His eldest brother, **W.M. Abdul Jabbar**, was, at this time, the Manager of his uncle's (**I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar**) hardware business. Another brother **W.M. Thaha** was also involved in the same establishment. **Abdul Jabbar** assisted his younger brothers, **Thaha** and **Hassim** to start a separate business, in 1906, at No. 77, Main Street, Pettah. Being an enterprising young man, Hassim's business flourished. Thaha left Ceylon in search of greener pastures in the Far East.

On December 14, 1907, **Hassim** married the third daughter of **O.L.M.A.L.M. Alim**, one of the successful businessmen and landed proprietor of that time.

Another successful businessman, **S.L. Naina Marikar Hajjar**, who was a relative of **Hassim**, also gave him much encouragement in his new business venture.

**Hassim's** charity knew no bounds for both Muslim and non Muslim causes. The state, acknowledging his philanthropy and educational activity, honoured him with the title of Justice of the Peace on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King George V. The Maligawatte Denham School was supported by Hassim being the largest individual contributor of funds for its management. His ancestors had, previously, contributed magnanimously to the Maradana Mosque and the Grand Mosque in Colombo.

**Hassim** was a founder member and first Vice President of The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home. he also held the position of Vice President of The All Ceylon Moor;s Association. In the latter capacity, **W.M. Hassim**, together with, **Mohammed Hussain Alim**, Katheeb Maradana Mosque, **Y.M. Khalid**, **B.D.M. Cassim**, **A.L.M. Lafir**, **H.A.S.M. Raffiudeen**, **A.M.A. Caffoor**, **A.I.L. Marikar**, **M.M. Sulaiman**, **M.C.M. Fuard**, and **I.L.M. Thowfeek**, proprietor Hotel Bulgari, succeeded in forestalling the notorious Fatwa Meeting held at the Colombo Town Hall under the Chairmanship of Yaseen Moulana to erase the term "Sonahar", "Yonagar", and "Ceylon Moor", describing the race and to substitute the term "Ceylon Muslim" instead.

His sons are **Mohammed Thaifoor**, **Mohammed Kamil**, **Ahmed Jameel**, **Mohammed Mohideen**, **Mohammed Ameen** and **Mohammed Sulaiman**, who were all devotedly engaged in their father's business and have lived up to his bountiful acts of charity.

W.M. Hassim passed away peacefully on July 6, 1960.

Obituaries:

**MOHINUDEEN THAHA** - Husband of Ferozathul Rizviya son of late Naimathul Thaha and Naseem Akthar brother of Muzarath father of Sumaya son-in-law of Alhaj Amm Rauf JP and Hajiani Fathima Hinaya Nephew of MA Yaseen Readywear Garments late Gulam Yaseen Alhaj FA Yaseen late Banu Alhaj Shibly Hamid Alhaj late Mohideen Alhaj Zulfic brother-in-law of Hyder Ghany Alhaj Shamail JP Alhaj Sabry Alhaj Ifaz Ruzna Amjad Rusufa Faisal Niroza Rafi. Funeral took place on Sunday 6.11.2005 at 10 a.m. at **Jawatte Muslim** Burial Ground in the presence of large gathering. DN Tue Nov 8 2005

**HAJIANI - NOOR SANINA** Wife of the late A.L.M. Shabdeen, daughter of the late Zainudeen and W.M. Zawahira Umma, loving mother of Hajis Hussain -Saumi Electricals, Mohinudeen, Ghouse and Hajiyani Fareena, mother-in-law of Hajianis Himaya, Najiha, Wafiya and Haji Ifharm, darling grandmother of Haji Bishri Hajiani Zahra (Dubai), Haji Arshad and Hajiani Fazmina, Haji Firdouse and Hajiani, Rushda, Shadia and Azwer (Dubai), Haji Rizni and Hajiani Nihla, Shukra, Sarah, Yusri & Umar, great-grandmother of Jamaal & Jamaaliya, Imad, Farham, Sakeena, Amna & Rukaiya. Janaza leaves residence at **48, Arthurs Place, Dehiwela** at 10.00 a.m. for Dehiwela Muslim Burial Ground on Monday 09.10.06



**Wapu Marikar Thaha & Family**

Far Back: Servant, Servant, Servant, Servant, Servant, Servant Carrying Infant Mahmood Thaha  
Second Row: Rahma, Uncle Bascaran, WM Thaha (Senior), Mymoon Thaha, Aziza Umma, Saleema Thaha

Front Row: Noor, Mubarak Thaha (with Fez cap), Servant

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## HEBTULABHOY

### **The Founders of MS Hebtulabhoy & Company Ltd. Mohamedally, Tyeabally, and Abdulhusein**

#### **Introduction**

*"The Hebtulabhoy's of Sri Lanka - The origin and history"*, written by Hamzaally Abdulhusein in 1982 in Colombo, contains a very comprehensive account of the Hebtulaboy family tracing their origins from the time of their arrival of their ancestor, Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, to Ceylon in the year 1864. The book is, very appropriately, dedicated and revered to the memory of the founders of M/S M S Hebtulabhoy & Company Ltd., viz; Mulla Mohamedally Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, Tyeabally Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, and Shaikh Abdulhusein Shaikh Hebtulabhoy.

#### **Beginnings**

In 1864 Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, the first member of the family to arrive in Ceylon, founded a business in the Pettah within the business hub of Colombo. The Dawoodi Bohra Community in Sri Lanka is primarily a business community that eschews politics and is totally devoted to the pursuit of local and international commerce and trade. The organization and the family have achieved popular recognition and honor as an elite of the community in Sri Lanka over the years in keeping with the high standards set by Shaikh Hebtulabhoy.

The family business began as importers of food, in the year circa 1882, and developed into a large conglomerate consisting of M S Hebtulabhoy & Company Limited and several other subsidiary companies.

The Hebtulabhoy's have been trading in Ceylon for well over 125 years (in the year 2007) since Shaikh Hebtulabhoy arrived from Kutch Mandivi in India. He set up his enterprise was situated at Nos 145 & 147, Fourth Cross Street, in the Pettah. Having purchased the property on Sep 9, 1887, the family still own it, clinging on to it and cherishing its precious memories and beginnings. The ground floor consisted the office and shop while the upper floor was used by Shaikh Hebtulabhoy and his family as their residence. Most of his sons and some of his grandsons have spent the best part of their lives living in these premises since the inception of their life in Ceylon.

Shaikh Hebtulabhoy also extended the boundaries of his trade to the Maldivian Islands and Calcutta in India. His business in the Maldives was conducted under the trade name of "Moosbhai Mohamedally & Company" and the one in Calcutta was named, "Moosbhai Shaikh Hebtulabhoy". He also ventured into shipping and purchased two vessels, "Ganga Hussain" and "Ganga Alimadad", which carried goods regularly between Colombo and the Maldives. He later added another vessel, "Daria Dowlat" to his fleet.

Shaikh Hebtulabhoy also invested in real estate and acquired valuable property in Ceylon and India. Ironically, the only property that he owned which is still possessed by



his successors is the one at Fourth Cross Street in the Pettah where the family business was founded.

His eldest son Moosbhai was entrusted the management of his business in Ceylon and India, towards the latter stage of his lifetime. His younger son, Mohamedally, assisted Moosbhai in running the business. The company in the Maldives was assigned to an agent.

Shaikh Hebtulabhoy passed away on July 12 1897 in, his native land, India. He was survived by his wife, Sakinabhai, four daughters, Kulumbhai, Fatemabhai, Kathijabhai, and Amtulabhai, and four sons, Moosbhai, Mohamedally, Tyeabally, and Abdulhusein. As per the terms prescribed in his last will and testament the business was inherited by the four sons in equal shares. Moosbhai was 33 years old and Mohamedally was only 17 and they were both married. The two younger boys Tyeabally and Abdulhusein were still minors aged 9 and 5 years.

### **The sons**

Moosbhai and Mohamedally carried on the business as a partnership at the same premises at Fourth Cross Street in the Pettah. Their mother Sakinabhai managed the interests of the two younger brothers, Tyeabally and Abdulhusein. On May 30 1907, Moosbhai retired from the partnership and transferred his share of the Fourth Cross Street premises to his brothers, Mohamedally, Tyeabally and Abdulhusein. He then went on to start a new business, together with his sons, called "MSH Abdulally & Sons", in 1907 which was located in the adjoining premises at No 101 Fourth Cross Street in the Pettah. Moosbhai passed away on July 23 1903 while he was performing the pilgrimage of Hajj in Makkah in Saudi Arabia. He was survived by his five sons, Abdulally, Gulamhusein, Shaikh Adam, Gulamabbas, and Noordeen and one daughter, Amtulabhai. Two other members of his family, viz; his mother Sakinabhai and sister Kulumbhai also died on the same day. The business founded by Moosbhai, in 1907, is still carried on by his descendants at Grandpass, very near to "Selby Stores", the headquarters of the Hebtulabhoy business.

Shortly after Moosbhai's retirement, in 1907, his brothers, Mohamedally, Tyeabally, and Abdulhusein, the remaining partners of the family business which was started by their father, Shaikh Hebtulabhoy, closed down their business and founded another under the name of "M S Hebtulabhoy & Company", at the same location where their father began many years ago. The new company of M S Hebtulabhoy & Company was started as a partnership and then went on to become a private limited liability company and survived nearly eight decades. The principal lines of business of the firm, initially, was the import of food and hardware and the export of Ceylon produce.

### **M S Hebtulabhoy & Company Limited**

Since the inception of M S Hebtulabhoy & Company, Mohamedally and his brothers concentrated on the development of exports and within a short span of time had established themselves successfully in the export of tea and coconut products. Their entry into the tea export was remarkable as they were the first Ceylonese company to break into a trade that had been the monopoly of British based Companies for more than half a century. D M Forrest, in his book, "A Hundred years of Ceylon Tea", an official

publication commissioned by the Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board, states on page 152, as follows:-

*"Very large purchasers today, for the Middle East markets in particular, are such firms as Hebtulabhoy & Company and Jafferjee Brothers. The former, established in Colombo for several generations, began shipping tea abroad in 1907; the latter, a more recent off-shoot of an old family business, despatched tea for the first time to Bahrain in 1954".*

Following the excellent lead given by the founders, many years later the Hebtulabhoy family reached commanding heights in the export trade, scoring such achievements as the largest exporter of packeted teas in the private sector, the largest exporter of coconut oil (prior to nationalization of the major source of supply) and also pioneering the export of corrugated cartons from Ceylon.

## **"Selby Stores"**

### **Selby Stores, Grandpass, Colombo 14**

Shortly after the outbreak of WWII, in 1939, Hebtulabhoy's made a large investment by purchasing the commercial premises known as "Selby Stores" in Grandpass, from The National Bank of India. It was in 1955 that the company moved its head office and export department to Selby Stores. Subsequently properties adjacent to Selby Stores were also purchased for the organization in order to cater to the expanding business needs. Premises No 224 and 266 at Layards Broadway in Colombo in 1964, Premises No 275 & 277 Grandpas Road in 1979 were those acquired in later years.

After having traded as a partnership for more than four decades, M S Hewbtulabhoy & Company decided, that in order to keep pace with modern business trends they should move to a limited liability company establishment. On Oct 30, 1951 a company with the same name under the Life Directorship of the Hebtulabhoy brothers, Mohamedally, Abdulhusein and their nephew Akbarally (son of Tyeabally) was established. The company commenced business on March 6, 1953 when the business was officially taken over from the old partnership. The new shareholders, comprising members of the family were appointed as follows:-

Noordeen Mohamedally	Qurbanhusein Abdulhusein
Fazal Husein Mohamedally	Taherali Abdulhusein
Moizally Dawoodbhoy	Mohsinally Abdulhusein
Gulamhusein Tyeabally	Amiruddeen Abdulhusein
Hebtulabhoy Tyeabally	Asgarally Abdulhusein
Abbasally Akbarally	Hamzaally Abdulhusein
Abidally Akbarally	Shabbirhusen Anverally
Inayetally Akbarally	Zakiudeen Anverally

The admission of the new directors to the newly formed private company was followed by the appointment of three new directors from within the family, viz Mohsinally son of Abdulhusein (2 Aug 1956), Fazal Hussein (2 Aug 1956), and Noordeen (6 Dec 1956), both, sons of Mohamedally.

Mohamedally, one of the three Life Directors, was the first Chairman of the Company. He continued as Life Director and Chairman until his death on November 30 1956. He was survived by his sons, Noordeen Mohamedally and Fazal Husein Mohamedally, and daughters, Sugrabhai, Rubbabhai, Banubhai and Ameenabhai. Fazal Husein was also made a Life Director following the death of his father. Mohamedally's shares were inherited by his two sons, Fazal Husein and Noordeen.

Abdulhusein, who was also a Life Director of the Company, was appointed Chairman in 1956 as a successor to his brother Mohamedally. A year later, in recognition for the valuable services he had rendered to the community, the title of Shaikh was conferred on him by His Holiness Dr Syedna Taher Saifudeen Saheb, the 51st Dai-ul-Mutlaq of the Dawoodhi Bohra Community. Shaikh Abdulhusein continued as Chairman and Life Director of the Company until his death on February 24, 1968. He was survived by his sons Qurbanhusein, Taherali, Mohsinaly, Amiruddeen, Asgarally, and Hamzaally, and daughters, Asmabhai, Shirinbhai, Kulumbhai, Zehrabhai, Sakinabhai, Fatemabhai, and Hameedabhai. His shares were inherited by his sons and also grandchildren, Shabbirhusein and Zakiudeen, sons of Anverally, Shaikh Abdulhusein's oldest son who had predeceased him.

Between 1962 and 1969 the following members of the family, were appointed as Directors of the Company:-

Taherali son of Abdulhusein (Jan 1 1964)  
Amiruddeen son of Abdulhusein (Feb 19 1962)  
Hamzaally son of Abdulhusein (Jan 4 1968)  
Abbasally, son of Akbarally (Feb 19 1962)  
Zakiudeen Anverally, grandson of Shaikh Abdulhusein (Feb 7 1969)

### **Shaikh Abdulally passes away**

Following the death of Shaikh Abdulally in 1968, Akbarally was appointed Chairman of the Company, and he held that office until his resignation in 1970. It was during this reign that his sons, Abbasally (Director), Abidally (Executive), and Inayetally (Company Secretary), all left the services of the company suddenly. They were, at that time, all attached to the Tea Department which was then, as now, a vital sector of the Company's business.

Akbarally's sons resigned from the Company in August 1969 in order to take up appointment with a competitive business which they had established under the name of Akbar Brothers in May 1969. Akbar Brothers is, today in 2007, a very successful and flourishing business involved mainly in the export of tea amongst various other activities.

About a year later, on June 27, 1970, Akbarally resigned from the office of Chairman but continued to remain as a Director. He was succeeded as Chairman by Fazal Husein Mohamedally who was the only other Life Director at that time. Zakiudeen Anverally and Mohsinaly Abdulhusein resigned from the office of Director on July 31 1970 and September 30 1970 respectively.

On May 16 1972 two important changes were made in the Company's Articles of Association. One was the abolition of the office of Life Director and the other was the creation of the office of Managing Director. In pursuance of these new changes,

Akbarally and Fazal Husein Mohamedally ceased to be Life Directors and were given the positions of Ordinary Directors. At the Annual General Meeting of the Company held on December 28 1972, Akbarally was not re-elected and consequently ceased to be a Director of the Company. On February 3 1982 Akbarally severed all connections with the Company by transferring his entire shareholding to his sons.

### **The Great Fire of 1970**

The history of the Hebtulabhoy's would not be complete without reference to the great fire of June 5 1970, that completely gutted the main building at the Selby Stores premises. This building housed the offices and rubber stores, and the fire destroyed all the merchandise, furniture, equipment and records that were stored within this location.

It was a colossal loss for the Hebtulabhoy's and amounted to a calamity that inevitably retarded their growth for several years. But even before they could recover from the shock of this catastrophe, they suffered another blow. Akbarally resigned from the position of Chairman at the very first Directors Meeting held after the fire on June 27 1970.

Fazal Husein Mohamedally, who was appointed as Chairman to succeed Akbarally, led the other Directors in a successful resurgence of the company which, thanks to their dedicated and valiant efforts, enabled Hebtulabhoy's to rise like a Phoenix from the ashes. The Company grew with renewed vigor and even surpassed their previous successes in this period.

Unfortunately, Fazal Husein Mohamedally did not live long enough to witness, share and enjoy this new resurgence of success for which he was the Chief Architect. He passed away on April 1 1975 and was survived by his wife, Banbhai, daughter Nazneen and son Ali Asghar. Shortly after, the Directorate of the Company was enlarged to accommodate Moizally Dawoodbhoy, son of Sugrabhai Mohamedally and Asgarally, son of Shaikh Abdulhusein, as Directors on April 28 1975. Asgarally has ceased to be a Director since July 10 1979.

Hamzaally, son of Shaikh Abdulhusein, was appointed Chairman on April 28 1975 as a successor to Fazal Husein Mohamedally and functioned in this office until December 3 1976 when he resigned. He was succeeded as Chairman by Amiruddeen, son of Shaikh Abdulhusein, who held office from December 3 1976 to December 29, 1976, after which he too resigned. Thereafter, Taherally, son of Shaikh Abdulhusein, was appointed Chairman on December 29 1976 and he held this office until July 31 1982.

Hamzaally Abdulhusein was appointed Managing Director of the Company on December 29 1976 which was the Company's first appointment as MD. He held this office until May 31 1982.

The Company also fully owned two subsidiary limited liability companies, viz; Noorjohar Trading Company Limited, which was acquired on August 1 1977 for trading in rubber, and also MSH Packaging Industries Limited, which was established on March 21 1978 for the manufacture of packaging products, viz; corrugated cartons, Multiwall paper sacks etc.

For over a century Hebtulabhoy's, pursuing strictly conservative business policies, had confined their trading to such traditional lines as export of tea, rubber, coconut products, and spices and also the import of building materials and food. They had also purchased two tea plantations, Hydri Estate in Rozelle and Tayebi Estate in Ratnapura. They also introduced state of the art high-tech and sophisticated machinery for the manufacture of packeted teas and tea bags. Later on they also ventured into new commercial industrial ventures involving packaging, operation of tri-shaw taxis, imports of new lines of merchandise, road haulage, operation of luxury motor coaches for transport of tourists etc. They introduced three wheeler auto tri-shaw taxis to Sri Lanka in 1979. The Company has also participated in many local and international trade fairs. In November 1981 they operated a Trade Stall for Tea and Spices at the Sri Lanka County Fair in Dubai. This was followed by MSH Packaging Industries Trade Stall at the first Sri Lanka Packaging Exhibition held in Colombo in March 1982.

The Company has also expanded in its physical capacity by purchasing a large extent of freehold land at Weliveriya in the Gampaha District where a modern factory was established for the packaging industry. In 1987 they acquired premises at Mattakuliya in Colombo 15 for the Transport Department. A lucrative extent of real estate in Kollupitiya (Colombo 3) was also acquired with a view to construct a modern commercial complex.

Having commenced its business as a limited liability company in 1953 with a capital of Sri Lanka Rupees One Million the company has advanced successfully through the years amidst good times and bad ones.

### **Syedna's historic visit to Sri Lanka**

For more than one reason the year 1982 is a memorable one in the history of the Hebtulabhoy's. It is in this year that His Holiness Dr Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb, the 52nd incumbent of the holy office of Dai-Ul-Mutlaq, visited Sri Lanka and stayed at the home of the Hebtulabhoy's as their honored guests. One of the main events during this visit was the ceremonial opening and consecration of the Dawoodhi Bohra Community Center which was graciously performed by His Holiness. On the 14th day of March 1982, amidst a pageant and ceremony full of splendor and rejoicing, His Holiness unveiled the commemorative plaque and declared open the Community Center in the presence of a large gathering which included Ministers, distinguished guests, and a large gathering of Dawoodhi Bohra's. In the community life of Dawoodhi Bohras nothing could have brought greater distinction and honor to the Hebtulabhoy's than Syedna's visit to Sri Lanka as their honored guest. March 14 1982 also witnessed another happy event. Following the opening of the Community Center, His Holiness was pleased to confer the title of Shaikh on Hamzaally in recognition of his services to the Community.

About a month later, even greater honor was bestowed on the Hebtulabhoy's when His Holiness conferred the title of Shaikh on two other members, viz; Amiruddeen (April 13 1982) and Asgarally (April 23 1982).

### **The Crisis in 1982**

Sadly, the history of the Hebtulabhoy's had to end with an account of a major crisis which engulfed the family in May-June 1982. Disputes between the Directors of the Company escalated into a major crisis that was eventually resolved by the intervention of His Holiness Dr Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb in London at a meeting of all parties

concerned on June 17 1982. The settlement was implemented on July 31 1982, while resolving the dispute, led to the parting of some of the senior Directors and shareholders of the company. Hamza's group, consisting of Shaikh Hamzaally Abdulhusein, TAS Hebtulabhoy, and Shaikh Asgarally Abdulhusein, together with their children, sold their entire shareholding with MS Hebtulabhoy & Company Limited to Amir's group, consisting of Shaikh Amiruddeen Abdulhusein, Shaikh Noordeen Mohamedally, Moizally Dawoodbhoy and others. MS Hebtulabhoy & Company Limited sold their entire shareholding and other assets of MSH Packaging Industries Limited, to Hamza's group. By this separation, MSH Packaging Industries Limited ceased to be a member of the MS Hebtulabhoy Group on June 17 1982. The new Directors of MSH Packaging Industries Limited were TAS Hebtulabhoy (Chairman), Shaikh Hamzaally Abdulhusein (MD), and Shaikh Asgarally Abdulhusein (Director).

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## The Akbar Brothers Story



Abbas Akbarally, Chairman Akbar Brothers

**Shaikh Hebtulabhoy**, the first ancestor of the Akbarally Family arrived in Ceylon, from India, in **1864**. He was the founder of M S Hebtulabhoy & Company in Ceylon at P O Box 105, 257 Grandpass Rd., Colombo, Sri Lanka. The company was one of the pioneers in tea, rubber and coconut exports and subsequently branched off into more diversified business in the medical and healthcare services. Queen's Advocate Selby lived in a mansion called "Selby House", in Grandpass, which later went on to become the premises of M/S Heptulabhoy & Co, a flourishing export oriented business run by a **Shaikh Hebtulabhoy**, who renamed it to Selby Stores.

**Akbar Brothers** was formed in 1969, by three Akbarally brothers – Abbas, Abid and Inayet, and incorporated as a limited liability company, in 1972. Their father, **Sheikh Akbarally Tyeabally**, joined the Company in 1973. The company began diversification into tourism and warehousing in 1978 when the Welisara complex also commenced its operations. Quick Tea, inaugurated in 1979, handles the processing and export of tea bags. Hotel Reefcomber, a modern hotel in Hikkaduwa was also established in the same year.

The new Head Office of the company moved to T. B. Jayah Mawatha (Darley Road), in 1980. Akbar Brothers Exports was established, in 1984, primarily to handle the export of packeted tea.

Falcon Trading, another Akbarally family company, diversified, in 1988, into the manufacture of garments for export.

Akbar Brothers, for the first time, is the largest tea exporter from Sri Lanka, exporting over 21 million kilograms of tea in 1992. More warehousing facilities were built at Wattala in the same year. Tea House was also established, in 1992, to market specialty tea packs. In 1993, Falcon Apparels took over the garment manufacturing activities previously handled by Falcon Trading.

Akbar Pharmaceuticals commenced the import & distribution of medical products & surgical instruments in Sri Lanka, in 1994.

Flexiprint, producing flexible packaging to assist in the packing of tea including tea bag tags and envelopes, was also established in 1994.

AB Developments was established in 1997 and manages the warehousing facilities and requirements of the Group.

A state-of-the-art warehousing complex, Consisting of 380,000 sq. ft. of warehousing space, was built in Kelaniya, in 1999.

In 2000, Akbar Brothers continued to be the largest tea exporter, with an export volume of over 31 million kilograms of tea. This is the largest quantity ever to be exported by an individual company in Sri Lanka. In 2001, The Kelaniya complex expanded to accommodate a further 100,000 sq. feet of warehousing.

In 2001, 16 houses were built by Akbar Brothers Ltd., managed by the **Shrinbai Shaikh Akbarally & Fathemabai Kanji** Trust. The houses provide comfortable living conditions for 16 under-privileged families.

In 2002, Abbas Akbarally, Chairman, celebrated 50 years in the Tea Trade.

In 2002, Akbar Brothers continues to be the largest exporter of tea for the 10<sup>th</sup> year successively.

Quick Tea moved its operations to a state-of-the-art facility in Mabile in 2003. This expansion facilities the production of 15 million tea bags a day.

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## All-conquering Akbar Brand

Lynn Ockersz – DN Tue Oct 17 2006



Chairman Akbar Brothers Abbas Akbarally Picture by Sumanachandra Ariyawansa

An eye for quality and a quick responsiveness to changing market needs, coupled with a sensitivity to reasonable pricing, have brought the Akbar Brothers Group of Companies, the prime position of Sri Lanka's number one exporter of tea.

Today the AKBAR Brand of tea is marketed in over 70 countries and satisfied the taste buds of some 8 million customers world-wide, daily.

This is not only a measure of the popularity of the brand but is also reflective of the high esteem in which Ceylon Tea and the Country of Origin - Sri Lanka - is held by tea consumers globally, Chairman, Akbar Brothers, Abbas Akbarally says in this interview:

**Q:** You are noted as Sri Lanka's No. 1 Tea Exporter. What has contributed to your success?

**A:** Since the establishment of the Company in 1969, we have pursued a simple trading policy of providing our customers quality products with superior service at the best possible prices. During the last two decades, the global tea market is driven by continuous changes in technology, life style and other factors. We responded to these changing market needs.



From a trader in bulk tea, we transformed ourselves into a marketeer of consumer tea products such as tea packets and teabags.

We have heavily invested in capacity building of our automated and air-conditioned tea bagging factory complex at Mabile and equipped it with the most sophisticated German Tea Bagging machines.

We also built at Kelaniya the largest tea warehousing complex in the tea export trade for automated blending and packeting operations.

More importantly, we focused in marketing the tea products under our own brands to add more value to the product and enhance our corporate image.

These strategies led to our success. Today, our Group of Companies is not only the largest exporter of value-added teas as well as the largest exporter of branded tea products.

Our marketing operations contribute foreign exchange earnings totaling Rs. 14 billion annually to the country.

**Q:** How could Sri Lanka cope with the challenges emerging internationally to its position as a prime tea exporting country?

**A:** Tea industry in Sri Lanka has faced many challenges during its one hundred and fifty years of chequered history. The great depression of the 1930's, the controlled economy of the 1950's and the nationalisation of the 1970's had tested the survival of the industry.

The industry has proved that it is resilient enough to spring back to greater heights. Today the tea industry is private sector driven and doing well. Colombo Tea Auctions are fetching premium prices compared with other auction centers.

We cannot however be complacent. To sustain this premier position, we need to continuously strive to improve quality, increase productivity and reduce costs of production. On the marketing side, we should ideally export all our teas in processed form as consumer packs and bags. The exports of bulk teas in the form of raw material for processing in other countries should be phased out so that value-addition accrues to Sri Lanka.

The Government should provide the necessary fiscal and financial incentives to achieve this goal. The recent decision of Dr. Jayasundera, Secretary to the Treasury to exempt from income tax the profit derived from local manufacture of teabags is a strategic move designed to promote the local teabag processing industry.

**Q:** Given the fact that tea is no longer a prime foreign exchange earner for Sri Lanka, what, briefly, is your assessment of the future of the tea trade?

**A:** I am always optimistic of the future of the tea trade. The quality, character and flavour which are inherent in Sri Lanka's teas due to its agro climatic conditions are our primary resource base. Ceylon tea has a world-wide reputation like Colombian Coffee, French Wine, Scotch Whisky or New Zealand Dairy.

Sri Lanka needs to preserve this unique character and image of her teas without dilution. In order to compete with other countries and maintain a sustainable edge over our competitors, Sri Lanka needs to engage in continuous innovation, competitive effectiveness, market diversification and value to customers.

With private sector in the driving seat coupled with Government facilitation, I am confident that the tea trade will forge ahead in the years to come. The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Plantation Industries, Sri Lanka Tea Board and the Sri Lanka Customs have been always supportive of the tea trade through the introduction of various schemes for promoting export growth.

**Q:** Recently your firm was conferred a SLIM Award titled "International Brand of the Year". What were the considerations that led to the conferment of the award? And what are your sentiments on receiving it?

**A:** Our Akbar Brand was selected as the International Brand of the Year by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing. This brand has recorded an impressive growth during the last three years and is presently marketed in over 70 countries around the world. On the basis of 2 grams of tea per cup, AKBAR Brand is consumed on a daily basis by eight million customers world-wide.

This wide franchise is not only a measure of consumer confidence in the brand, but also projects the image of Ceylon Tea and the Country of Origin - Sri Lanka. Our brand strategy is to maintain and expand the focus of being a premium blend of pure Ceylon tea, sought after by customers world-wide for its taste, aroma and liquor.

We stay focused on continuous innovations of product lines, packing and processing. The Akbar Brand was selected by the Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing through a stringent judging process by a panel of judges comprising top marketers of the country.

The final stage of the selection included a verbal presentation of the Brands success story to the judges and replying to the questions they posed. The Board of Directors and our employees feel honoured by this award conferred by the prestigious Marketing Institute in Sri Lanka.

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**M A M HUSSAIN & his Mansion called "Mumtaz"**  
**reported in the Sunday Times of Ceylon Nov 7, 1993**

under the section titled "Stately Homes" by Raine Wickramatunga and Renuka Sadananden

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen010.html>

Since the dawn of independence in 1948, Mumtaz Mahal has gained eminence as the official residence of the Speakers of Sri Lanka's Parliament. A tradition that began with the colorful figure of Sir Francis Molamure, the first Speaker of Independent Ceylon, is carried on today by present Speaker MH Mohamed, who, interestingly is a kinsman of the man who built this splendid dwelling by the sea.

Having been built in an era when colonial influence was strong economically, culturally, and politically, it comes as no surprise that Mumtaz Mahal, like many other mansions of the day, bore the stamp of British architecture. It was one Mohamed Ali Mohamed

Hussain, a wealthy Muslim gentleman, who commissioned a promising young architect, Homi Billimoria, to create the elegant home he envisioned. Blending the luxurious lines of a Mediterranean villa with classic British, Billimoria completed the task and the mansion was later embellished with fine furniture created by French nobleman, Count De Mauny. The Count, who at that time had purchased an island off Weligama Bay, gained a reputation in Ceylon as a fine landscape artist, and Mohamed Hussain, recognizing his skills engaged him to lay out the lawns and sunken gardens of Mumtaz Mahal.

In her book, "Sri Lanka through French Eyes", historian Lorna Devarajah, writes of Count De Mauny, "*Count De Mauny gained a reputation in Sri Lanka after the beautiful garden he created in the island. His next love was furniture and he gained inspiration for French models, mainly Nedun inlaid with Ebony, Sandalwood, Satinwood, Tamarind and Calamander. He stamped the furniture he designed with his initial M surrounded by nine little circles.*"

To embark on the building of Mumtaz Mahal, Mohamed Hussain had to first demolish St. Margaret's French-style villa, bequeathed to him by his father Mohamed Ali. This he did much against the wishes of his wife Ayesha, who, it is said was a moderating influence on her easy-going husband.

The house was completed in 1929, and the family who had been resident in the neighboring "Icicle Hall" (later demolished to make way for Sri Kotha) moved in.

It was a family friend, lawyer Sri Nissanka who came up with the name that still endures. The friends were once strolling in the terraced gardens of the newly constructed house when Mohamed Hussain, turning to his friend, asked him whether he could suggest a name for the house. "What is the name of your youngest daughter?" Sri Nissanka queried, and on being told that it was Mumtaz, he replied, "Why not call it Mumtaz Mahal? After all Shah Jehan, whose wife was also Mumtaz named his monument Taj Mahal."

For the next few years, the family lived a life of leisure and abundance. The four elder Hussain children, Badr, Mahdi, Alavi & Mumtaz, were drilled in their lessons by an English governess, Violet Bell, who lived with the family for several years. Another son, Ali, was born later. Palmy days they were, recalls Mahdi, elder son of Mohamed Hussain and Ayesha.

"My father was essentially a product of the inter-war generation", he says. A scion of one of the wealthiest Muslim families in Colombo society, Mohamed Hussain had the added advantage of an indulgent father who lavished every luxury upon his son. As a young man, Mohamed Hussain travelled frequently in the continent, and developed a special fondness for Paris and the Riviera. On his travels, however, he was seldom accompanied by his home-loving wife who considered it her duty to be with her children at all times. It is, however, a reflection of her quiet strength of character that she undertook the Hajj Pilgrimage, a rough journey in the 1920's, making the trip from Jeddah to Makkah across the desert sands on camel back.

Mohamed Hussain's son remembers his father as a man who had an eye for all things beautiful and a highly developed aesthetic sense. He would return from his travels bearing a hand-picked collection of art pieces, and one in particular was an exquisite statue of Joan of Arc bearing a lamp which was placed on the banister at the foot of the staircase at Mumtaz Mahal.

Mohamed Hussain's collector's passion extended to sleek limousines and the Napiers, Minervas, and Ausburns of the early days gradually gave way to flashier Cadillacs and custom-made Chryslers.

Although not given to literary pursuits himself, Mohamed Hussain, nevertheless set his children on a good academic footing. Once, he even purchased the entire library of French books at Adisham, Haputale from its owner, Sir Thomas Villiers, to encourage his son Mahdi.

Mahdi also recalls childhood memories of his maternal uncles, Faleel and Yusuf Caffoor, cantering up the drive to Mumtaz Mahal on their polo ponies and even attempting to ride them up the steps of the house, much to their sisters disapproval.

"We children were however delighted and would rush to greet them with lumps of sugar and carrots for the ponies", he says.

When the Great Depression of the 1920's ravaged Europe, its effects were even felt in far away Ceylon, and many families - the Hussains among them - saw their fortunes decline. Soon the family moved back to Icicle Hall and Mumtaz Mahal was leased to the French Consul. Successive French Consuls made this their official residence until World War II when the Vichy Government took over power in France in 1941 and recalled its envoys. The last Consul, Morand, is still remembered by family members with wry humor. Morand's dogs, it seems - much to Mohamed Hussain's chagrin, mauled his prized Persian carpets.

Thereafter, Mumtaz Mahal was requisitioned by the British Government for Admiral Layton, chief commander of the South East Asian Forces in Colombo, who lived there until the end of the War.

It was then that a new chapter in the history of Mumtaz Mahal began. It happened when Sir Francis Molamure proposed to his friend Mohamed Hussain that he let the Government acquire Mumtaz Mahal together with its furniture - to be used as the Speaker's official residence. And so it was that the first Speaker of Independent Ceylon, Sir Francis Molamure, came to live at Mumtaz Mahal.

Sir Francis too had grandiose plans for Mumtaz Mahal, says present caretaker Sunil Dassanayake, whose father, Podi Appuhamy Dassanayake, served as caretaker from 1948 to 1977. He laid the foundation for a swimming pool on a side lawn but for reasons unknown this was never accomplished.

Sir Francis, however, made full use of the existing billiard room, like Mohamed Hussain before him. Interestingly, the billiard room, came complete with a hatch, used for delivering food from the kitchens. Not wishing to offend Muslim sensibilities, however, Mohamed Hussain had the billiard room built as a separate section adjacent to the main house.

Since then, many eminent Sri lankan Speakers have used this as their official residence. They were Sir Albert Pieris, HS Ismail, TB Subasinghe, RS Pelpola, Hugh Fernando, Shirley Corea, Stanley Tillekaratne, Anandatissa de Alwis, Bakeer Markar, EL Senanayake and MH Mohamed.

For Mr Mohamed, it has been a happy homecoming of sorts. Being a close relative of both the Abdul Caffoor (Ayesha's parents) and the Hussain families, Mr Mohamed, upon assuming office, hosted a reception to his kinsfolk who all had a sentimental link with the house.

Forty five years later, Mumtaz Mahal is still the grand old house of Mohamed Hussain's dreams. Still a landmark in Colombo with its tall wrought iron gates, its white wall facade is visible to the passerby on the busy Galle Road.

For the Hussain family, whose life at Mumtaz Mahal was all too brief, the house, nevertheless, evokes many happy memories. Among the Hussain family members is Mumtaz herself who immortalized a mansion.

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## **AMEENA HUSSEIN**

**A new Muslim talent in Lankan English writing - DN Artscope Wed Dec 22 2004**

**Refreshingly simple and characteristically Lankan, a sociologist writes realistic and personal anecdotes in the classic form of short stories. She is Ameena Hussein.**

Her collection of 15 stories, Zillij, (meaning 'captivating Islamic traditional art of creating intricate mosaic design using hand-cut tiles') is unexpectedly beautiful sketches of Lankan life without any pretensions and that speaks for the sincerity of the writer.

The publishers: Perera Hussein Publishing House, 80 A, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 07. I shall briefly describe what each of these stories tries to convey.

### **An ordinary death**

What happens to be an insignificant death at a bomb blast vis-...-vis killings of politicians becomes a very personal loss to a family acquainted with a fruit seller. The writer conveys subtly the individual reactions of a mother and a daughter. The simplicity in writing is a welcome style.

### **Muslim on the periphery**

This is a self-analysis of a male professing Islam and clinically exposes the weaknesses of the community in a larger context of human behaviour and ethical values. The narrator in the story asks: "It must have been left alone to lead his or her life without embracing the whole citizenry of Islam.

It must have been some fierce Karmic debt that I have to pay off in this life to be born into a religion as sociable as Islam while in comparison I have the personality of an eremite...." Cynical and critical of social norms among the Islamic community, this story is a kind of expose, never attempted before in Sri Lankan Writing.

### **More than rain**

In my own limited reading of this story, it is not very impressive or organically structured.

In the first place I am thankful to the writer for writing in English some aspects of Thamilian life in this country. This is a longish story, well written and covers the whole gamut of so many layers of Lankan Thamilians predicament.

Pleas read this story. Her descriptive power is a notable feature in her writing. It's a critical understatement of actualities as focused on a visa officer.

### **White Girl**

This is a story of an attempt by a white girl trying to adjust to local conditions. The emotional part of her alienation is brought out well. Ameena writes her stories in an interesting manner and the reader is absorbed unaware.

She uses adverbs and adjectives in a creative manner thus showing her ingenuity in expression. The story like her other stories is a very subtle and sardonic commentary on Lankan life as seen correctly by a foreign girl working in a Lankan social organisation. Sometimes the story reads amusing too.

### **The Immigrant**

This is a penetrating story at international level. It is also a fine expose of ordinary lifestyle in America. It is described through the experiences of two Lankans. Ameena brings out this effectively. It is a moving story of two unfortunate who are not at home in America.

But having lived in America for two years in much fortunate circumstances and working in two respectable jobs over there, I yearn to go back because of the wretched political climate here and the lethargic attitudes of the average people and the extreme nationalism of the unenlightened lot here.

### **Those Days**

This nostalgic story with Lankan English as dialogues clearly shows the distinctions in living then and now. Look at this passage:

How things change?, Hortense would ponder in silence.

Even youth have no time and respect for their elders, everything is internet, computer games, mobile phones, DVDs and other new fangled things that we never imagined would exist. I don't like these days, Hortense thought petulantly as she delicately nibbled a marzipan ball. I only like those days.

The story is a little longish as if it could be called a novella. Ameena writes not only of the middle class people and the subterranean and marginalized lot, but also of the Colombo 07 mentally colonized people. The social commentary or implicit criticism is remarkably done. The end of the story is ironic.

The book, *Zillij*, also contains the following stories: *The Pain of Imagination*, *Comfort Food*, *Images of a Short lived Love Affair*, *Beauty's Mother*, *Now and then: The natural Progression of things*, *Night Journey*, *Nandana* and *Noombi Story* all of which need appreciative commentary.

But due to lack of time to finish reading the book and the need to beat the deadline, I am stopping here. It's unusual to review a book in two parts and publish it on different dates. But let's be different and I promise next week I shall present what I feel about the rest of the stories.

The book also carries a note on the stories explaining some background an editor's note, which says: The words unripeable, extopulate, peripherality and thribbled do not exist in a standard dictionary, but have been coined by the author to enhance the poetry and fluidity of the script.

I must admit that I agree with the publisher that Amena Hussein writes of love, death, fantasy, identity crises, changing worlds and freedom creatively using language to shape raw life into evocative fiction.

Notes:

[Ameena Hussein](#) is the daughter of Mahdi Hussein and Marina Caffoor and grand daughter of Ayesha Umma Abdul Caffoor & M A M Hussein, the original owner of the mansion called [Mumtaz Mahal](#), currently the Speakers residence, and Yousoof Caffoor & Erifa. Ayesha Umma Abdul caffoor and Yousoof Caffor are siblings. Her maternal uncle, Falil Abdul Caffoor was the UNP member of parliament for Colombo Central on many occasions and her maternal grandftaher, Abdul Caffoor Noordeen was a notable Muslim philanthropist and gem businessman owning and managing the Ghaffoor Building in the Fort and also a lucrative gem abd jewellery trade. The family of Abdul Ghaffor's have been involved in many works of charity including the management of the Maradana Mosque, the establishment of the Ghafooriya School in Maharagama for training local Muslim Alims and other significant ventures

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## HINGORA

Haji Osman ValiMohammed Hingora, a native of Kutiyana, settled in Gampola in 1905 before starting a textile business in this quiet little town in the hills. The peace was shattered, however, one fateful day when, in 1915, his shop was torched by an unruly mob during the height of the Sinhala-Muslim communal riots which erupted in the Central Province and spread to all parts of the country in that year. He never lost hope and eventually established N M Abdul Karim & Company in Haputale, naming it after his two sons, Noor Mohammed and Abdul Karim. The establishment, however, had to close down in 1942 fearing a Japanese bomb attack which threatened Ceylon on account of the British Base being moved to Colombo after the collapse of Singapore.

Not long before WWII ended, in 1946, Noor Mohammed and his brother, established a textile firm known as Iqbal Stores in Welimada. He married a Memon lady named Fathima Somar who bore him two sons, Osman in 1935, and Ismail, in 1941, all of whom arrived, to settle down in Ceylon, in 1948.

In 1972, the two Hingora brothers established a company called Silkot Traders. Subsequently hey split up with Haji Osman continuing with Silkot Traders and his brother Haji Ismail starting Silkot Trading Company in 1989.

Osman runs a textile business on 2nd Cross Street known as Silkot Traders. he also serves as Trustee of the Memon Hanafi Mosque, which office he has held for the past ten years (in 2006). He is also involved in a Sunni Missionary Movement known as "Dawat-e-Islami". Besides textiles, Osman turned his attention to the booming construction industry of the country and four years ago formed Silkot Homes. He is helped in his business by his three sons, **Abdul Razzak, Shahid & Jahid**, who all serve as Directors of the Group.

The three Osman brothers are avid sportsmen. Abdul Razzak was once a leading Table Tennis player who played for various clubs. Shahid was the opening batsman for his school, Wycherly International. Jahid was a bowling champion who has won many trophies.

Haji Osmans younger brother, Haji Ismail, is also a businessman and runs Silkot Trading Company in Third Cross Street Pettah. He has also involved himself in many activities since joining the YMMA Hultsdorf in 1963. He served as President of YMMA Hultsdorf from 1977-80. Among the services rendered by him to the Muslim Community were he sponsoring of marriages for Muslim couples, free milk distribution for needy kids, and other activities concerned with the uplifting of underprivileged persons in the Peer Saibo Street area. He involved himself in the activities of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka, of which he was elected a Committee Member, in 1974, and eventually went on to become President from 1985-86. He was also elected a Trustee of the Memon Hanafi Mosque from 1984-1992 and functioned as the Mutawalli from 1992-2002.

Haji Ismail's sons, Ashroff and Altaf, helped their father in his business. Ashroff received his MBA from St Louis University in Missouri in USA before joining the family business in 1991. His younger brother Althaf is the Director of Supertex Lanka (pvt) Ltd. He served as the editor of the Memon Newsletter "Samachar" for a short period and has been instrumental in organizing the sporting events of the Memon Association, viz; 6 a side cricket carnival. He is also involved in the Rotary Club of Colombo Regency as Community Service Director and is an active member of a Tsunami Housing Project in the Eastern Province.

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## **'Araby' IBRAHIM**

**"Araby" Ibrahim from Zabeedi, in Yemen** was one of the many Arab families to settle down in Ceylon. He was married to **Moomin Abbas** from Surat in India, daughter of Abbas Mowlana and Sheikh Muhammad Navuda Mathunga Natchia

His children were as follows:-

**Hassan bin-Ibrahim** who married **Ayesha Umma**. He later married Ummu Nafeesa Colenda Marikar, daughter of **Hassan (Assan) Lebbe Colenda Marikar** of Dematagoda, Colombo 9, Sri Lanka

**Ahmed bin-Ibrahim** who married **Safina Umma Abdul Hameed** daughter of **Abdul Hameed I.L.M.** and **Raihan Umma S.L.M.** and granddaughter of **Idroos Lebbe Marikar-Haji:** and **Assena Natchiar Sheikh Marikar** from the progeny of **Yusuf Lebbe**.

**Salih bin-Ibrahim** who was married to **Assenatchia Periya Thamby**



**Ismail bin-Ibrahim**, who could not speak much Tamil, who bought a large Coconut estate in Demanhandiya, Negombo and named it Zabeeediya Estate, Zabeedi being the name of the place in Yemen where his father originally came from. He was married to **Sithy Huzaima Syed Mahmood Abbas**, daughter of **Syed Abbas**, Peddlar Prince, who traded in Arab horses and his wife **Sithy Mumen**. The **Syed Abbas** family claim their descendancy from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

**Ameena Umma binthi-Ibrahim**, wife of **Sir Razik Fareed JPUM OBE**.

The family owned and carried on many businesses in Colombo and Negombo, ne of which was the famous Bin Ahmed's Record Bar at Bambalapitiya. Most of their members married into Ceylon Moor families and have now become an integral part of the Sri Lankan Moor Community.

**Obituary Notice of Hussain bin Ghouse** – Sunday Observer April 21 2002

**BIN MOHOMED AL-HAJ HUSSEIN** Beloved husband of Munira, son of late Al-Haj and Hajiani Ghouse Bin Ahamed, son-in-law of late Mohideen Hassim and Moomin Zulaiha, loving father of Thajudeen, Muinudeen, Fathima, Musthapha and Aysha, father-in-law of A.G.M. Irshard, Sha Lamirdeen and Shihara, brother of Hamza and Fathima, brother-in-law of Ansar Jabir, Shibly Mohideen, Farhana and Fowzia, loving uncle of Ashker, Shehzaan, Ashiq, Shehab, Shaheed, Fayaz, Laika and Kadji. Janaza took place on 20th April 2002. 64/5, Dharmarama Road, Wellawatte.

## HUSAIN J IBRAHIM



### **Social and Personal Times of Ceylon 4/June/63**

The late Mr. Husain J Ibrahim who was born on October 1916 was the son of late Mr. MLM Ibrahim and Mrs. Jazeela Ibrahim. He was an old boy of St. Benedict's College Kotahena where he was a Senior Prefect.

He was an active member of the YMCA where and was elected as the Speaker of its Forum. He was popular known as the man with the silver tongue.

Beginning as headmaster of the Government Junior School at Aranayake he later joined the Customs and became appraiser in 1956 being the first Muslim to enter the service.

He was on the executive committee of the Appraisers Union and was the Principal Speaker of the Union dinner which took place a few days prior to his death.

During the war years he took an active part in ARP Unit for Dehiwela Mt Lavinia. He was also a member of the Committee of Management of the Ceylon Homeopathic Society.

With all his other activities he did not fail in his duty towards his religion and community. He was an ardent member of the All-Ceylon Moors' Direct Action Committee and Moors Islamic Cultural Center.

In 1958 he joined the Sri Lanka Magic Circle and immediately took a keen interest in its activities. He was unanimously elected as Honorary Secretary of the circle with his good friend BRP Goonewardena as his Assistant Secretary. He was a good organizer and with the guidance of the late Mr T C P Fernando he re-organized the Magic Circle and helped to increase its membership. Within the short period he was in the circle he

mastered the art of magic and became the one of the top performers and went under the stage name as '**Hussain of Zailan**' His Act was title as the 'World of Maya' which provided his patter theme advancing the theory that there is nothing material in this world all is Maya — or illusion.

He put forward this theory actual test with the able assistant of his charming daughter Jasminah.

During the last year he took part in the grand performances in aid of various charities besides other private performance at children's parties which he enjoyed the most.

He will live for ever in the hearts of all those who knew and loved him. We in the Sri Lanka Magic Circle console ourselves in the thought that we have contributed largely to make his last years the happiest years of his life.

May he rest in Peace

## **ACGS**

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### **Life and times of Alhaj H.S. Ismail**

**By Alhaj A. H. M. Azwer**, MP, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, President, H. S. Ismail Commemoration Committee. - Daily News Sat May 17 2003

H.S. Ismail is a distinguished product of Puttalam. According to eminent Greek, Roman and Arab historians, Puttalam, Manthota and Galle had Arab settlements several centuries before the birth of Christ. Ibn Batuta, the famous Arab traveller from Morocco, when he came to Sri Lanka in 1342 AD, he visited Puttalam. Therefore, Mr. Ismail's association with his ancient Arab settlement brings about a faint stir of historical memories.

Narrating the story of the Sinhalese, the Mahawansa records that Prince Wijaya landed in this region - North of Puttalam encircling the present Eluvankulam, Wanathavilluwa and Karaitivu areas and called it 'Thambapanni' (The Golden Plain) because of the golden colour of its sands.

The sands still retain its origin colour. Many persons ever since have come and gone leaving their footprints on the sands of time.

Alhaj H.S. Ismail was one such eminent personality. He belonged to a rare breed of great men, who are seldom seen in the public of this country. He led a exemplary life, displaying the highest standards of honesty, integrity and truthfulness. I might mention an incident, which eloquently illustrates the impeccable character of Mr. Ismail.

When coconuts were being plucked in his estate, he would patiently wait till the last coconut was plucked. If 2501 coconuts were plucked, he will record 2501. His honesty was such that he did not want even a single coconut that was plucked in his estates not to be included in his income tax estimates.

This was to enable the government to get his legitimate revenue.

In 1947, the first election for the first Independent Parliament of Ceylon has been announced. At the Puttalam Kachcheri the Government Agent Walwin A. de Silva accepted nominations from the sole contestant Mr. H.S. Ismail. After the nominations were closed, he waited for one more hour for objections and finding none, he declared H.S. Ismail as the winner uncontested and escorted him outside. His supporters adorned him with green garlands.

There were also people who waited outside with garlands for any other contestant. Having found no other, they put them on the G.A., whereupon for everyone's amusement Mr. Ismail said that Mr. Walwin A. de Silva is the other contestant. The G.A.'s little son who still bears witness to this event was hanging on to his father's hands. That child today is one of the the best-known senior journalists of this country and the Chief Editor of the Sunday Island, Mr. Manik de Silva.

Piety, humility and simplicity were the other noteworthy features of late H.S. Ismail. He held one of the highest positions in Sri Lanka as the Speaker of Parliament. There was no fanfare or ostentation about him despite his eminent position in the public life of this country. He led an exemplary Muslim life and his multi-faceted activities are an eloquent tribute to his desire to serve his fellow men.

Born in May 1901 in Puttalam to a well-respected family, young Ismail began his Qur'anic lessons in 1905. He had his primary education in St. Andrew's College, Puttalam and secondary education at Wesley College, Colombo. He then entered Law College, Colombo, passed his Proctor's Finals in 1925, carrying away the prizes for Law of Persons and Property, the Law of Contracts and Torts and for Conveyancing. He practised in Colombo only for a short period of time and decided to move to his hometown Puttalam.

He maintained the highest standard of legal ethics. When he wrote a land deed, its veracity was such that the Kachcheri, the Court of Law and everyone would accept it without question.

His briefs were few and far between. This was because he will not accept a case, unless he feels that it is morally correct to defend the client. If the client admitted his guilt to him he would take up the case and plead in mitigation for the offence committed before the judge.

The sight of Muslim women with infants in their arms prompted him to launch the Ceylon Baithulmal Fund (CBF). Ever since its inception, the CBF has contributed immensely for the welfare of poor Muslims. Many rich Muslims were able to make worthy use of their Zakat money by making contribution to the Baithulmal. He also addressed Muslim women on social service work and social reforms on various occasions.

He dealt with the social evils prevailing among the Muslims. He warned them that if they did not try to improve and remedy our social and economic life, we would find ourselves to be the depressed class of this Island. Everybody talks of evil but never work for the welfare of the Muslim society.

Mr. Ismail recalled the words of the late Justice M.T. Akabar who said, 'follow the religion and the rest will follow'. He took strong exception to liquor being served at public

functions. He said he would not attend any occasion where liquor was being served. True to his stand, he refused publicly to attend Muslim embassy functions that served liquor.

Mr. Ismail was the prime mover of the Puttalam hospital extension project. He wanted something done for ante and post-natal care and a maternity home for deliveries. He was instrumental in making representations to the Radio Commission for a separate Muslim section. Ever since its inception, the Muslim section of the Radio Ceylon (now SLBC) has provided yeoman service to the Muslims of this country.

Mr. Ismail also pioneered the construction of a mosque at the Peradeniya University Campus.

When a school for the teaching of Arabic and Quranic reading was declared open by Mr. Ismail, a local Moulavi in his speech said that the Holy Prophet's saying about 'acquire knowledge' meant the acquiring religious knowledge.

Mr. Ismail hastened to add that it has a much wider meaning and that in this context it encompasses all forms of knowledge that is required for the benefit of mankind both in this world and in the hereafter - fiddunya wal a'khira!

Mr. Ismail maintained a diary of his public life, which is meticulously recorded by his biographer Dr. M. S. M. Anes, Senior Lecturer, department of Philosophy, University of Peradeniya. It gives an insight into the contemporary life of his times. In it, he has mentioned about his association with the Tamil language despite not studying it beyond the 4th standard. After Sir Vaithyalingam Doraisamy in the State council, Mr. Ismail was the first Tamil speaking speaker in the Independent Parliament.

He was a source of inspiration and guide to all the Tamil speaking members. "If and when occasion arises I had always spoken in Tamil at public meetings. None is more conscious than I of my own limitations. I have to praise Allah for this state of affairs. He seems to be very kind and merciful to me," Mr. Ismail wrote.

Being a man of serene personality did not deter him from carrying out his duties to the letter, even during crisis situations. For instance, during the presentation of the 'Public Ordinance Bill,' he ordered the Sergeant-at-Arms to remove no fewer than 12 disputing MPs from the chambers, among whom were political giants of that era such as Dr. N. M. Perera, Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, Robert Goonawardene, Leslie Goonewardene etc.

Alhaj H. S. Ismail was a staunch follower of the Thabligh movement, the prime object of which is to enlist voluntary workers to enjoin Muslims to lead an Islamic life and to attend the daily prayers. His life was inspired by the highest religious ideals of Islam. As a Muslim he believed in the fundamental equality, dignity and fraternity of mankind. He was a man of PEACE, who was opposed to all forms of violence. In the pursuit of peace, we can draw tremendous inspiration from a person who was serene and tranquil. He made no distinction whatsoever on the basis of religion, race or class.

He had the unique distinction of becoming the first elected Member of Parliament in the first general election held for the Parliament of Independent Ceylon in 1947. He was elected uncontested on the nominations day. The people of Puttalam wanted Mr. H. S. Ismail to represent them and therefore no one else came forward to contest against him.

Such was the respect and admiration his they had for this illustrious son of Puttalam. Later on he also became the first Muslim Speaker in 1956 in the Bandaranayake Government.

Although he departed from us some thirty years ago in 1973, his memories have never faded away from us. On the contrary they always stay with us and act as a shining beacon to illumine the lives of all of us for generations.

The grateful people of Puttalam will be remembering him on his 102nd birth anniversary. As a tribute to his memory, the Philatelic Bureau will be issuing a stamp in his memory tomorrow (18th May, 2003) under the patronage of the Minister of Mass Communications, Imthiaz Bakeer Markar.

I had the honour to compile and edit a book containing his speeches made in Parliament, which is entitled 'The Golden Plain'. This is the third in a series of publications containing the speeches of eminent personalities made in Parliament.

The H. S. Ismail Commemoration Committee will also be launching a scholarship fund to assist poor students to pursue higher studies, worthy tribute to a man who strived hard to uplift the standard of his community.

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## **Al Qutb Al-Sheikh ISMAIL AI-YAMANI AI-SAILANI - Family**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen106.html>

Amongst the early migrants from the Arabian Peninsular to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), during the rule of the Sinhala Monarchs – that is, long before the South Indian Tamil kings and the Roman Catholic Portuguese colonists invaded Ceylon – was **Al Qutb Al-Sheikh Ismail Al-Yamani Al-Sailani**, also known affectionately as "**Arabi Appa**", a tamil phrase, meaning Arab GrandFather.

**Arabi Appa** was a great Islamic and Arabic scholar and also a widely respected theologian. His immediate ancestors were **Al-Seyed Sheikh Shaoosi Al-Rabahiyyi Zabeediyil Abbasi wa Siddiqui, Al-Seyed Salih Abdullah, Al-Sheikh Salih, and Al-Sheikh Izzadeen**. He married three times, first in Kerala, South India, then in Ceylon and was blessed with ten children.

**Arabi Appa** was interred at the Mohideen Jumma Mosque grounds at New Street, Weligama.

**Arabi Appa** married three times, first in Kerala, South India, and then in Ceylon, and was blessed with 10 children.

Of his sons, **Al Qutub Al-Sheikh Yahya bin Al-Sheikh Ismail al-Yamani** was, popularly and respectfully, also known as **Hajjar Appa of Matara** who died on June 7, 1884 and was buried at Matara. Another, **Al-Sheikh Abdullah Moulana** was interred at Maligawatte in Colombo. The other children were **Fathima, Haleema, Al Sheikh Abdus Samad Moulana Hafiz**, who is interred at the Town Uumuah Mosque in Akkaraipattu, **Moomina, Al Sheikh Abdul Razzak Moulana**, interred at Maligawatte, Colombo, **Al Sheikh Abdul Azeez Moulana**, who died young at Aluthgama, **Al Sheikh Abdul Wahid Moulana**, interred at Masjidul Mohideen at Kattankudy in the Batticaloa District, and **Al Sheikh Abdul Qadir**

**Moulana**, interred at the premises at Masjidul Sagheer (Shinna Palli) at Symonds Road, Maradana in Colombo.

**Arabi Appa's** eldest daughter, **Fathima**, married Muhammad **Cassim Bhoy**, a merchant from Surat in the State of Gujarat in Western India. They were blessed with four sons and two daughters, viz; **Muhammad Ismail, Khadijah, Amina Umma, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Ghaffoor and Muhammad Yousoof Salih Babu.**

### **Muhammad Cassim Muhammad Ismail**

**Sheikh Ismail's** oldest son and **M C Abdul Rahman's** eldest brother, **Muhammad Cassim Muhammad Ismail**, had four children. Of them, **Muhammad Ali** had the distinction of becoming the first ever Muslim Justice of the Peace in Ceylon in the 1890's, while holding the prestigious office of Consul for Persia in Ceylon. Perhaps, he was the first Muslim to function as a Consul for a foreign state in Ceylon. Another son, **Muhammad Haniffa**, was a member of the Colombo Municipal Council during the period 1884-1900, the second member in the family to become an MMC following in the footsteps of Abdul Rahman.

Both **Muhammad Ali** and **Muhammad Haniffa** married two daughters of Hajjar Appa. Ismail's eldest daughter, Yehiya Umma, married MLM Zainudeen Hajjar, who was also a member of the Colombo Municipal Council from 1900 to 1907. Ismail's grandson, Muhammad Hussain, son of Muhammad Ali, married Ayesha Umma, daughter of NDH Abdul Ghaffoor, the top flight landed proprietor who played a dominant figure in the country's business circles. Hussain's oldest son, **Mehdi Hussain**, is a graduate from the Oxford University and a Barrister-at-Law and his youngest son, Ali Feizal, is an MBBCh from Oxford. Hafsa, a daughter of Hussain is married to Dr Hamza Sulaiman of Sulaimans Private Nursing Home at Grandpass.

Two of Ismail's great granddaughters married Zubair A Caffoor, son of Falil A Caffoor, and Majeed Abdul Cader, while another great granddaughter, Ummu Kulzum, married the distinguished educationist and scholar, AMA Azeez, the first ever Muslim Member of the now extinct Ceylon Civil Service and later on the incomparably brilliant Principal of Zahira College, Colombo, in the 1950's. Azeez was also a member of the now abolished Senate, the Upper Chamber of the Parliament, for many years from 1953 and was also a member of the Public Services Commission. Another great granddaughter of Ismail, Sithy Fathima, married Jabir A Cader, a member of the Colombo Municipal Council from 1954, Mayor of Colombo in 1966-1969, and a United National Party Member of Parliament representing the Colombo Central Seat from 1977 to 1994. Although educated in English in the Colonial system of education, Muhammad Ismail was a deeply religious man. He, together with his younger brother, Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman, were the live wires behind the moves to expand the premises of the Colombo Grand Mosque at New Moor Street and also to provide a Muslim burial ground therein.

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### **IZZADEEN MUHAMMAD QC 1919-1977**

Born: 1919.

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Educated at Zahira College, Colombo.

Appointed MP 1968.

Took silk in 1969.

Army Captain CLI.

Died: 7-Sep-1977

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## **JAFFERJEE**

Sheikh Ibrahim Jafferjee was the father of three brothers, Mansoor, Gulzar and Yousoof, who founded Jafferjee Brothers, in 1944. The company deals in tea, spices, condiments, rubber, copra herbal products, coir fiber and other commodities across international markets. In recent times the organization has expanded into financial products and the power generation industry. They also manufacture textiles under the JB label.

Obits:

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**SHEIKH JAFFERJEE - MUNSOOR** (Partner Jafferjee Brothers) Beloved husband of Hussein, father of Sameema Esufali, Anver and Riyaz, father-in-law of Dr Shaukat Esufali and Nisreen, beloved brother of the late Abbas, Mohsin, Saifuddin and Taher, brother of Yusuf, Mohammedally, Gulzar and Shirin Esufally, grandfather of Shujaatali, Talib Hussain and hiraz and Rishaadali. Funeral took place at Bohrah Burial Ground, Kuppiyawatte on Thursday 21st October 2004. DN Fri Oct 22 2004

**JAFFERJEE - YUSUF SH. IBRAHIM** (Partner - Jafferjee Brothers). Precious husband of Masuma, beloved father of Muzaffer and Azra, father-in-law of Christoph, brother of late Sh. Abbas, Mohsin, Sh. Taher, Sh. Saifudeen & Munsoor, brother of Shirin, Mu. Mohamedally & Mu. Gulzar. Address - 3 Coniston Place, Colombo-7. Funeral took place on 16/1/2007.

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**A gentle scholar and a just professional**



## **JUSTICE M JAMEEL**

### **UNOUS LEBBE MUHAMMAD JAMEEL**

U.L.M Jemeel was a well Known Rubber Merchant in Grandpass, and had his business at No. 378, Grandpass, Colombo -14, Sri Lanka. As "**U.L.M JEMEEL**", Since 1917. The Company were dealers in Rubber, Copra, etc. Most of his Business dealings were with foreign companies, as Ceylon Trading Company, Grandpass, etc.

While he attended to his business, he also devoted more time for Religious activities. He was a Mureed of His Holiness Sheikh Abdul Sameeu Alim (Radiallahu Anhu) of Beruwela Buhary Thakiya, Nabawiyathul Qadiriya Thariqa. He was Well Known as "**Jemeel Matthicham**" in Malwana and among other Thakiya members.

He was the Chief Trustee (Matthicham) of Dalugala Nabaviyathul Qadiriya Thariqa Mosque, at Malwana. He donated land to Dalugala Qadiriya Tharika Mosque. Next to His Holiness Galle - Sheik-ul-Mashaiku-Mubarak Moulana Nayagam (Radiallahu Anhu) son's Darga Sherief.

He had a Close association with Holy Saadaath's of Yemen, viz, His Holiness Seyed Abdul Bari Al Ahdal (Ral), His Holiness Seyed Mahmood (Radiallahu Anhu), Seyed Muzammil (Radiallahu Anhu). When Holy Saadath's come to Sri Lanka from Yemen they chose to reside at U.L.M Jemeel's House, popularly known as "**DAARUL SADA**" **Walawwatte Malwana**. The name Daarul Sada was given by a Holy Sadaath (Radiallahu Anhu), (name not known) from Yemen. They Have Composed a special Awraad Named "Daarul Sada" to the house.

While being involved in religious and business matters, he also had a special interest in Politics. At the time of former Prime Minister, D.S. Senanayeka's victory U.L.M.Jemeel invited all the Cabinet members and there families, (Dudly Senanayake, J. R. Jayawardena, S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake, and more MP's) to "Daarul Sada" for a celebration party.

As he had a close friendship with Former M.P (Colombo) Mr.Faleel Ghafoor.Mr. Faleel Ghafoor's Municipal Council Election Nomination was proposed by U.L.M Jemeel.

U.L.M Jemeel was Married to Ummul Fukura On 1923 November 16th Sunday. Ummul Fukura was the Eldest Daughter of A.R.M Lebbe, a landed proprietor and Business magnate of Hanwella. Niece of Minna Marikar, Colombo. The Chief Guest of Nikah Ceremony was His Holiness Seyed Muhammed Hassen Abdul Bari Al Ahdal Mowlana (Radiallahu Anhu) from Yemen Hazaral Mawth. They had 7 children. 6 Daughters and 1 Son. They are Fathima, Azeeza, Hussaina, Asma, Kadija, Juwariya , M.A.Rahuman.

U.L.M Jemeel seemed to have known the moment of his death. He took his Ablutions (whudu), asked his nephew to close the door to avoid the contact of non Muslim at his death time. He laid him self to rest on his bed, and started to recite. While reciting he breathed his last, at Grandpass Nursing home, on 30/11/1960.

At the time of his death His Holiness Abdul Bari Al Ahdal (Radiallahu Anhu) (Yemen Mawlana) was in Sri Lanka. When His Holiness got the information of death they said, they

want to attend all the last arrangements of U.L.M Jemeel by themselves. As there request they attended all the funeral matters up to the burial. Alhamdulillah.

Danish Counselor Mr. Storup, General Chairman of Ceylon Trading Company, Grandpass, Colombo-14.(a main Rubber dealer With "U.L.M Jemeel")came to pay his final Special respect to U.L.M Jemeel's Funeral.

Last respect was given at the Family Burial Ground, Dalugala, Malwana.

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## **JANDULAH (CHOMASA)**

It was in 1914 that **Abdul Rahman Kassam Jandula** arrived in Ceylon. He worked as an Accountant at Vally Stores in Main Street and then at Salay Mohammed & Sons in Matale and Abdullah Jan Mohammed & Company in Kandy.

**Abdul Rahman's** only son, Noor Mohammed, first came to Ceylon in 1937 as a young boy with his uncle Abdul Rahman Abdul Ghany Gadit. Having attended St paul's School in Kandy he joined Abdullah Jan Mohammed & Company where he worked till 1942. He, however, returned to Kuiyana due to the Japanese bombardment of Colombo. He recalls a bomb, or as he calls it a "Golo", (a colloquial term meaning a bomb) falling on Second Cross Street near the famous Shammankot Mosque, a grand red and white edifice better known as Jamiyul Alfar Mosque. Having retired after the war he worked at Muthalib Brothers, an Indian Moor firm, thus becoming one of the very few Memons of his generation to work for a non Memon owned company. He worked till 1952 before joining Vally Mohammed Abdul Rahman & Company, Habib Taiyab & Company, and A R Karim & Company, finally settling down with his own business which he carries on till this day.

His five sons have all done well in their chosen fields. **Sattar** is a well known figure in the Pettah textile market, while **Farooq** is a Qari who has taken part in many competitions. **Ghouse** manages the famous A A Sattar & Company, while **Rafiq** works for H H Kassim & Company, **Mohammed** works for Lucky Industries and **Siddiq**, who is married **Anver Seth's** daughter, runs his own business.

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## **RADEN THURTHO PERMA JAYAH**

aide-de-camp to the King of Java and one of the 24 Noblemen deported by the Dutch to Ceylon in 1747.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen120.html>

## **Tuan Branudeen Jayah, Dr. 1890-1960**

**Tuan Branudeen Jayah**, famously known as **TB Jayah**, was a prominent member of the Malay Muslim community in Sri Lanka. He was born on Jan-1-1890 at Galagedara. Educated at St. Thomas' College, Modera he passed the Cambridge Junior Examination and won a scholarship to study in England. He was a trained teacher by profession

having passed his London Bachelor of Arts examination in 1911. He was teaching at the Prince of Wales College at Moratuwa, Dharmaraja College, Kandy, and subsequently at Ananda College, Colombo. Held the position of Chairman, Samasta Lanka Guru Sangamaya.

**Wapchi Marikar** transferred the management of Zahira College to the Executive Committee of the Maradana Mosque. This committee appointed **T.B.Jayah** as the Principal of Zahira College in 1921.

**TB Jayah** was an educationalist and an ideal Muslim fit to train the rising generation of Muslim youth in the country. His knowledge of Islamic history was vast. The Executive Committee gave him their fullest cooperation, both morally and financially, to continue the development of Zahira College. His salary paid by the Government for the Principalship being insufficient, the Executive Committee of the Maradana Mosque paid a thousand Rupees per month out of its own fund as a supplementary income, both for him and his staff.

**TB Jayah** strengthened the teaching staff of the school with highly qualified graduates and established a hostel for the students. Many of the present day older Muslims are products of Zahira College **under TB Jayah**. His schemes of building extension were supported by the Muslims. He was also the Manager of Hameedia School and Denham Muslim School.

**Jayah** took up to active politics and was elected the third member the the All Island Muslim Electorate in the Legislative Council, amongst a field of four, in the periods, 1924-1931 and 1936-1947. He led a Muslim deputation to London in support of adequate communal representation for the Muslims in the Legislature. He was also the President of the All Ceylon Muslim League for many years. He was an appointed member of the State Council from 1936 to 1945 and subsequently in 1947 was elected to the first Parliament as the second member of the Colombo Central electorate (1947-1952). He was appointed Minister of Labour in the first cabinet of Ceylon under the first Prime Minister, the Hon. D.S.Senanayake in 1947-1952.

Inexplicably, in spite of his efficiency, he was prematurely appointed the High Commissioner of Ceylon in Pakistan where he endeared himself to its people and Government. He was conferred a doctorate by the University of Karachi in recognition of his services. On his return to Ceylon he was appointed Member of the Fourth Parliament of Ceylon as representative of the Malays in recognition of his services to the United national Party in the General Elections of that year.

He also held the prestigious position of President of many Malay Associations. During the second World War, when the Zahira College buildings were commandeered by the Military for occupation of troops, he opened branches of Zahira College in Gampola, Alutgama, Slave Island and Matale.

He passed away at Madinah Al-Munawwarah on 31-May-1960, prior to performing Hajj, where he was visiting with the objective of acquiring a building to house the pilgrims from Ceylon. He is buried in the Jennathul Bakiya where many Muslim Martyrs from the time of the Prophet have been laid to rest.

TB Jayah was a member of the following Association Commissions and Committees:-

## **PATRON**

1. Kandy Malay Association
2. Muslim Library and Association
3. Panadura Muslim Association
4. Weligama Muslim Association
5. Young Men's Muslim Association

## **VICE PATRON**

1. Fine Arts Society (1941)
2. Galle Mahajana Sabha
3. New Entrants Teachers Muslim Conference (1939)

## **MEMBER**

1. Ayurvedic Commission
2. Board of Education (1926,1929,1935,1938)
3. Board of Education (newly constituted, 1939)
4. Board of Examiners
5. Board of Indian Immigration Labor (1930)
6. Board of Review on Income Tax (1932,1935,1938,1941,1944)
7. Buildings Grant Sub-Committee (1936)
8. Committee to Report on (1) Bill to incorporate Parameswara College (2) Hindu Board of Education
9. Dowbiggin Memorial Committee (1936)
10. Education Department Reorganization Committee
11. Education Commission
12. Executive Committee, St. Thomas' College Old Boys Association (1941)
13. Hambantota Land Settlement Commission
14. Hambantota Colonization Board (1939,1941,1942)
15. Headmasters Conference (1940,1941 as President)
16. Holidays Ordinance Committee
17. Jawatte Burial Grounds Committee
18. Judicial Appointments Committee
19. Muslim Deputation to the Donoughmore Commission
20. Muslim Electorate Committee
21. Muslim Education Commission
22. Muslim Marriage Law Committee (1941)
23. Muslim Property Law Committee
24. Motor Amendment Sub-Committee
25. Payment to Witnesses and Jurors Committee
26. Powers of Council Commission
27. Sub-Committee on Technical Departments and Technical Colleges (1927)
28. Scout Council (1941)
29. Teachers Pension Rules Sub-Committee
30. Teachers Salaries Scheme Sub-Committee
31. University Commission (1928)
32. University Council (1939,1942)
33. Unofficial Visitor to Hospitals and Dispensaries (1935,1936)
34. Wakfs Ordinance Amendment Committee (1933)

**GUEST LIST AT THE WEDDING OF TB JAYAH'S OLDEST DAUGHTER, GNEI ROWENA JAYAH WHO MARRIED EC AHLIP**

*Messrs DH Kotelawala, Dudley Senanayake, Samarakody, HW Amarasuriya, Dr & Mrs AP de Soyza, Rev & Mrs Dalby, Mr & Mrs L Mac Robison, Professor Pakeman, Professor & Mrs Sundaralingam, Mr & Mrs Perisunderam, Mr & Mrs A Mahadeva, Sri Pathmanathan & Son, Mr & Mrs J Thangarajah, Mr & Mrs GG Ponnambalam, Mr & Mrs A Nadesan, Mr & Mrs JN Jinendradasa, Mr & Mrs Rajapathirana, Mr & Mrs Weerasinghe, Mr & Mrs CV Dias, Messrs MWH de Silva, ACM Ameer, NDH Abdul Careem, S Marikar-Bawa, EO Abdul Wahid, Mr & Mrs James Joseph, Mr & Mrs CL Marikar (Balangoda), Mrs Wodeman, Miss GF Opie, Capt & Mrs Nugawela, Dr & Mrs MWH de Silva, Dr Ratnapala, Messrs RFS De Mel, ARA Razik (later Sir Razik Fareed), M Mahroof, Faleel Caffoor, AHM Ismail, SLM Hashim, Abdul Hameed, GBM Hussain, ML Habeeb, Abdul Rahuman (Muhamdiram), Mr & Mrs Mukherjee, JH De Saram, WR Watson, Mr & Mrs HS Perera, Messrs AC Mohamedo, ACL Abdul Cader, MIM Haniffa, MMI Kariapper, MMA Raheem (Proctor), Razeen (Proctor), Mr & Mrs SJC Kadirgamar, Mr & Mrs Ismail (ASP), Mr & Mrs RSS Gunawardena, Messrs Cunji Moosa, Mohideen Cader Ghany, Abdul Cader, MACM Sally, MV Khan, CB Meedin, AC Samsudeen, ML Ghouse, Abubacker (Proctor), MUM Saleem (Proctor), MS Cassim (Proctor), MK Cassim (Proctor), Mr & Mrs Tiruchelvam, Mr & Mrs JM Abeysekera, Mr & Mrs MR Pieris, Messrs Raymond Perera, CE Perera (Proctor), Dr EV Rutnam, Dr & Mrs HM Pieris, Mr & Mrs ACG Wijekoon, Mrs GS Wodeman, Dr (Mrs) Rutnam, Dr & Mrs Drahaman, Mr & Mrs Zahier Lye, Mr & Mrs BS Lye, Messrs David, Tagore, Beauchamp, MB Noordeen, B Jumar Bahar, B Johar Bahar, Mr & Mrs NP Pillai, Mr & Mrs Mathew, Messrs FX Pereira, Vythalingam, AP Jayasuriya, Jayaweera (Gampaha), George de Silva, K Balasingham, Mr & Mrs P Saravanamuttu, K Adamaly, Adamjee Lukmanjee, Dacood Hussain Alibhoy, MANK Coomaraswamy.*

**GUEST LIST AT THE WEDDING OF TB JAYAH'S THIRD DAUGHTER, GNEI GUNARA JAYAH WHO MARRIED TJ DOLE (Sub Inspector)**

*Mr & Mrs Mahadeva and daughter, Justice EAL Wijewardena, Sir Macan Markar, Messrs EW Perera, , Kotelawala, MHM Samsudeen, AV Macan Markar, Mr & Mrs Ponnambalam, Lady Ramanathan, Mr & Mrs Natesan, Mr & Mrs Raja Hewavitarne, Dr AP de Zoysa, Dr & Mrs MCM Kaleel, Mr & Mrs Peri Sunderam, Mr & Mrs SLM Hashim, Mr & Mrs S Marikar Bawa, Mr & Mrs AA Deane, Messrs YM Naina Marikar, WM Hassim, Mr & Mrs Abdul Wahid, Mr & Mrs Jinendradasa and daughter in law, Mr & Mrs EW Kannangara, Dr & Mrs GC Mendis, Mr & Mrs HS Perera, Mr & Mrs Jayasinghe, Mr Ramasamy Reddiar, Mr HE Weerasuriya KC, Messrs JA Cutilan, BD Amit, ILM Mashoor, MA Bari, HM Khalid, Dr SL Navaratne, Dr MWH de Silva, Hon SWRD Bandaranaike, Mr HW Amarasuriya (late arrival), Messrs KSAbdul Ghany, K Alvapillai, CB Meedin, Zahira College Staff, Hameedia School Staff, Advocate Syed Ahmed & Mrs Ahmed, Proctor FJ Botejue, Proctor MUM Saleem, Proctor MLA Saleem, Proctor ARM Razeen, Maulana Brothers, Proctor AC Mohamed JPUM, Proctor ACM Abdul Cader, Proctor MMA Raheem, Deputy Excise Commissioner Sinnethamby, Mrs IA Senanayake, Concy & Patsy, Messrs MACM Sally, OLM Samsudeen, RMA Raheem, Mr & Mrs Zahier Lye, Mr & Mrs ME Akbar, Mr & Mrs BC Ahlip, Mr & Mrs HE Ahamath, Mr & Mrs M Ismail (ASP), Mr & Mrs NP Pillai, Mr & Mrs SJA Doray, Mr & Mrs ANP Jainudeen, Mr & Mrs DS Gunasekera, EC Holsinger, ACE Wanigesekera, TP Laxana, Mr & Mrs TK Burah & Family, Mr & Mrs MH Amath, Rasheed Jayah, Murad Jayah, Mr S Kithcilan, Mr & Mrs TY Burah and family, Mr & Mrs TH Dole, Mr & Mrs MN Lye, Mr & Mrs ZD MUSAFAER.*

**LOCATIONS AT WHICH TB JAYAH RESIDED AND RENTS PAID FOR THEM DURING HIS LIFETIME**

1. 1915: Nelson Place, Colombo 6 – Rs 35.00
2. Station Road, Colombo 6 – Rs 45.00
3. Opposite Wellawatte Police Station – Rs 25.00
4. Lauries Road, Colombo 4 – Rs 50.00
5. Dematagoda (“Ebenezer”) – Rs 55.00
6. Temple Road, Colombo 10 – Rs 75.00
7. Ward Place, Colombo 7 – Rs 60.00
8. Dematagoda, Mount Pleasant – Rs 85.00
9. Dematagoda “Ebenezer” – Rs 100.00 – Rs 140.00
10. 1928 November: Lauries Road, Colombo 4 (“St Bernards”) – Rs 150.00
11. 1930: Stafford Place (“Fairlight”) – Rs 150.00
12. 1952: Campbell Terrace, Colombo 10 (“Sirisevana”) – Rs 140.00
13. April 1934-March 1935: Cotta Road, Borella, Colombo 8 (“Nova Casa”) – Rs 165.00
14. April 1935: Fifth Lane, Colombo 3 (“Argyle”) – Rs 150.00
15. April 1937: Galle Road, Colombo 3 (“Parnis”) –
16. Skelton Road, Havelock Town, Colombo 5 (“Shipton”) – Rs 150.00
17. No 2 Fairfield Gardens, Colombo 8 – Rs 60.00
18. Bungalow belonging to “MT” during the war period and later Sir Henry Kotelawala
19. Rajagiriya “The Hague” – Rs 200.00
20. No 2 Fairfield Gardens, Borella, Colombo 8 – Rs 60.00
21. No 15, Fairfield Gardens, Cotta Road, Borella, Colombo 8 – Rs 90.00
22. No 6 Fairfield Gardens, Cotta Road, Borella, Colombo 8 – Rs 100.00, Rs 128.00, Rs 118.00
23. 1944: No 28, Pendennis Avenue, Colpetty, Colombo 3 – Rs 390.00

## **CAR**

TB Jayah was the proud owner of a brand new Ford Prefect car bearing registration plate number CE 392 on May 25 1940. The total cost of the car was Rs 3,350 of which he initially paid one-fourth cash down and the balance spread over eighteen months. The initial payment with insurance was Rs 586.25. The man’s standing was such that the company did not request for any guarantors.

**Dr. T. B. Jayah: the politician, freedom fighter and brilliant orator**

*by Alhaj A. H. M. Azwer, M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs - Fri May 31 2002*



Dr. T. B. Jayah

Jayah... that very name evokes pleasant memories among us, a remarkable personality in the history of Sri Lanka and a peerless Malay Muslim leader. I can assuredly say that without his immense contribution in the field of education, politics, diplomacy and social work, the Muslim community of Sri Lanka would not be holding its head as high as it is today.

Jayah the educationist, almost single-handedly managed to elevate Zahira College Maradana from a tottering elementary school to a brilliant seat of learning. The College brought dignity to the Muslim community in no small measure. Those who learnt under his stewardship rose to highest position in society: Desamanya M. A. Bakeer Markar Dr. Badi-u-din Mahmud, M. L. M. Aboosally, M. H. M. Naina Marikkar, Justices M. M. Abdul Cader, A. M. Ameen and M. A. M. Hussain, former Attorney General A. C. M. Ameer, Professor A. M. M. Mackeen of the University of Malaya, and renowned sportsmen of the calibre of Albert Perera and Ben Navaratne are just to name a few who achieved great heights in their respective positions and were the proud children of Mother Lanka.

One would never be able to mention Zahira College without associating Dr. Jayah's name with it.

In 1935 he was appointed to the State Council and served on the Executive Committee of Education. Along with Sir Razik Fareed, he toured the length and breadth of the country and impressed on the Muslim parents the need to give education to their children. Zahira's sister schools in Gampola, Matale, Aluthgama, Puttalam, Mawanella, Slave Island and elsewhere were the results of their untiring efforts to impart both secular and religious education among Muslim children throughout the country. Dr. Jayah also fought for the rights of teachers and was largely responsible for the establishment of a pension scheme for them.

Jayah the politician, freedom fighter and a brilliant orator, his efforts to bring freedom to our beloved motherland from the colonial shackles are second to none. When the British expressed reservation about granting freedom to us on the grounds of possible discrimination of minorities by the majority, it was Dr. Jayah who rose to the occasion. He made an eloquent speech on the Dominion Bill in the State Council, very determinedly and forcefully assuring all those who are concerned that such a situation would not arise.

"We should fight for national independence without opting for any pre condition", he declared on that momentous occasion.

For him, self-respect of the nation as a whole was the most important ingredient for gaining independence. Subsequently it was accepted by many Sinhalese leaders that it was indeed an epoch making speech that paved the path to freedom.

In the Cabinet of D. S. Senanayake he held the portfolio of Labour and Social Services. As a Minister he was responsible in passing several enactments for the benefit of the working class.

Jayah, the diplomat par excellence, was Sri Lanka's first High Commissioner in Pakistan. In that newly created nation he even helped Prime Minister Liyaqath Ali Khan in the drafting of its Constitution. His contribution in the relations between the two countries was such that when Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala visited Pakistan the Pakistani Government requested him to allow Dr. Jayah to remain there for a longer period to which Sir John readily agreed.

The bonds between the two countries grew to such an extent that Pakistan has since on every occasion when demanded willingly come to the rescue of Sri Lanka. The Pakistani Government even offered him the citizenship of Pakistan an honour no other diplomat could boast of.

Jayah, the great student of Islamic history was a deeply religious man. He fervently believed all his belongings and his knowledge be used for the benefit of his fellowmen. He loved humanity. Never a harsh word did he speak. He had a monumental patience. He accepted happiness and sorrow as inevitable as the work of God.

It was for these that he had the all sought for death while performing the pilgrimage to Mecca, and that too in the Holy City of Medina, (where the Prophet himself passed away), on 31 May 1960. He lies buried with the companions of the Prophet.

Jayah, his memories linger among us always. He passed away 42 years ago but his name still lives among us, for he was no ordinary man, as Allah (S) reminded us in the Qur'an: "do not think those who died in the cause of Allah are dead, rather they are alive and well!"

The Malay community has given mother Lanka many distinguished sons. It is my fervent hope that the community will continue to produce worthy citizens such as Dr. T. B. Jayah who brought honour to the Malay community - nay the entire nation.

### **Dr. T.B. Jayah - the visionary**

*by Dr. M.S. Jaldeen*

Dr. T.B. Jayah was undoubtedly a pioneer, a visionary and a leader. This article is an attempt to portray the extent to which, what he envisioned, nearly a century ago, had become a reality.

At the turn of the twentieth century, in November, 1921 to be exact, speaking about the backwardness of the Muslim community as regards education said:-

"...Think of the large number of Muslim children who are being more or less denied the priceless blessings of education.... if they are to ask themselves the question, they themselves were to blame for that state of things. They had allowed matters to go on with the result that they found themselves in a really awkward position as compared with the other communities for the island who had made vast strides of progress."

He, therefore, emphasized that:

"The supreme need of the hour is education, not merely elementary education, not mere half-hearted education, but an education that will turn out heroes and heroines, leaders



and reformers, thinkers and philosophers, an education that will make us a progressive enlightened and powerful minority."

In 1924 at a Mass meeting he bemoaned the:

"...humiliating condition of the community and who realized that unless definite steps were taken to bring home to the Muslims the supreme need of education the time would come when ignorance would sap the foundation of Muslim society and cause its economic decay. Fired with this new born enthusiasm and inspired as they had been by the splendid traditions of Islam they set out in right earnest to raise the people from their lethargy."

Dr. Jayah pointed out that the Muslim community was:

".....A backward community, for on looking at their public life in the country, the public service, the learned professions - where are the distinguished Muslims to be found?..... Their backward position today was due to the utter disregard of the educational advantages which other communities availed themselves of, which ought to put them to shame. It was an admitted fact that their community as a whole did not take sufficient interest in education. It was a shameful confession to make. Yet they must make it, especially knowing as they did, that they were the inheritors of a glorious past."

Perhaps because of these exhortations, there were positive results even during his lifetime. In 1946, Dr. Ivor Jennings, the Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, writing to the "The Crescent" - Golden Jubilee indicated that:-

"When the University was formed in 1942, there were 904 students, of whom 25 were Muslims and today there are 1902 students, of whom 37 are Muslims. The University figures include, of course, the Faculty of Medicine, but in the other Faculties, which replaced the University College, there are 894 students, of whom 27 are Muslims.

Thus from 1928 to 1946 the number of students in Arts and Science has increased by 184% and the number of Muslim students in those Faculties by 800%. Proportionately the number is still small; but in education it is easier to multiply a large number than to multiply a small one. Because each generation has to educate its successors. The figures therefore bear witness to the effort devoted to Muslim education over the past 25 years."

Now in the 21st century let us take a head count of what the Muslim community has achieved. We have Cabinet Minister (not forgetting that Dr. Jayah who was the first Muslim to hold the portfolio of Minister of Labour and Social Services in the first Cabinet of independent Sri Lanka), Parliamentarians, Provincial Councillors, Municipal Councillors, holders of high post in the Public and Education Services, in the armed forces and Police; in the field of law, Judges (of the highest Court to the lowest), lawyers; in the field of medicine, Professors, Surgeons, Specialists, General Practitioners; in the field of science, civil, electrical and mechanical engineers; in the field of Information Technology and Computer Science; in the field of business and commerce, Company Directors, Executive officers, heads of professional bodies; in the field of arts and culture, musicians, artists, film directors, in the field of education, Professors, senior lecturers, principals; in the playing fields, ruggerites, soccerites, billiard players, just to name a few.

Inasmuch as Jayah envisioned the desirability of education in the upliftment of Muslims, he also emphasized that the community to survive, in a multi-lingual, multi-religious nation like ours, was only possible by projecting the community on to the political arena.

This ideal is best understood by a brief study of the political creed of Dr. Jayah. It is a well-known fact that he was drawn into politics while engaged as an educationist - Principal of Zahira College.

Dr. Jayah's selection to the Legislative Council in 1924 was a result of the agitation for increased representation of Muslims to that body. The Ceylon Moor Union formed in 1900 and replaced by the Ceylon Muslim Association founded in 1920 spearheaded these. Consequently, Muslim representation was increased to three members, Jayah being elected Third Mohammedan Member (and later referred to as Muslim Member on the initiative made by him).

Even as a member of the Legislative Council he advocated increased spending on education, the establishment of schools and increased teacher salaries. In 1925 he supported the motion for granting of leave to government servants to attend Jumma prayers.

In the meanwhile, the Donoughmore Commissioners had recommended universal adult franchise based on domicile, extending the vote to the Indian immigrant population shutting out representation to the minority communities particularly the Muslims. Several memorials were presented to the Colonial Office, Dr. Jayah being the leader of the Muslim delegation that went to England to present them.

Nevertheless, on the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission, the State Council was established and Jayah lost the elections. Fortunately he was nominated to the Council which enabled him to espouse the cause of expanded representation of Muslims, which was debated in the State Council itself. This was consequent to the several demands of the minorities and the Secretary of State authorizing discussion of the matter in the Council which resulted in the Reforms Debate of 1937.

Speaking in the Council as regards the Reform Debate, Dr. Jayah who spoke for three hours said, *inter alia*:-

"But I think I have to show you that in this great struggle for political freedom, freedom not only for one community but for all communities the minorities have been always prepared to contribute their share."

and elsewhere in the same speech:-

"That is why, Sir, on the 2nd March, Muslims from all parts of the island assembled in their hundreds and thousands, and perhaps they would have assembled in their millions if there had been millions in this country, to give expression to the feelings that were uppermost in their minds. On that occasion definite resolutions were adopted to be placed before the authorities and before this House. That meeting of Muslims consisting of all shades of opinion, ..... all of them without exception took part in this meeting because they felt that the occasion demanded their presence - resolved on behalf of a united Muslim community to put forward the demand for balanced representation in

which Muslims will have eight representatives in a Council of sixty-eight Members." And again:-

..."But I can say this much of the Muslim community, that the Muslims to a man stand by the demand they put forward at their public meeting and if the Board of Ministers or others who think they are in power think that they can brush aside the united wishes of a community like that I can only say that they are doing something which is calculated to harm not only the country but even themselves...."

The paramount consideration was national interest above communal (or Muslim) ones, when he says as a Muslim:-

"We might stand up for our community, but it cannot be said that we have stood against the interests of the country as a whole. I have always said, and I repeat it today, that I consider the interests of the country as a whole, to be paramount." Because:-

"...if we are going to have a party system on definite political and economic lines, we cannot have a communal majority party, under whatever name it may be disguised. We cannot have a communal majority invested with plenary powers. Such a majority would prove to be not only a great tyranny but a curse to the country."

The thrust of the speech was this:-

"As far as the Muslim community is concerned our position is bad enough under the Donoughmore Constitution; we have been reduced to a position of helplessness. There is not a single elected Muslim Member in this Council and if there is no amendment of the Constitution our position will continue to be as bad as ever. Therefore we are very keen that the constitution should be amended."

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, there was a deceleration of the demand for constitutional reforms.

Nevertheless, in February, 1940, there was a constitutional crisis resulting from the Governor usurping the powers of the Council and/or the Ministers over the Bracegirdle and the Moolaya Estate incidents. D.S. Senanayake and six other members resigned and later withdrew when the Governor relented by agreeing that a Select Committee studies the measure. By 1941, agitation for reforms was re-started which by 1942 was by way of a resolution of the State Council demanding "conferment of Dominion Status to Ceylon after the war."

Although the United Kingdom government called upon the Board of Ministers to draft a Constitution, which was started by had to abandon it as the Soulbury Commissioners were appointed.

In 1944, the Soulbury Report and the UK government White Paper was debated in the Council. Dr. Jayah spoke because he was in a position to say that the ".....Muslim Members of this Council have the fullest backing of the Muslim community in this island." He took up the position that even if the country was not offered full Dominion Status we should accept whatever is granted and thereafter work out a scheme of complete freedom for all communities, all of them working together to achieve that goal. His speech was commended by the late S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who said:-

"The Hon'ble Member, Mr. Jayah, has made a speech today that will have a great effect in bring about unity among the people of this country, in bringing some sense of reality to this struggle, however it may shape, that we are going to undertake to obtain a satisfactory measure of freedom. ....

.....There is provided in this Bill a scheme of representation under which the Muslim Community more than any other community in this country might suffer, in this form in which it appears, but yet he himself was so sincerely determined to work for the main idea of freedom that he was prepared to vote for the principle embodied in the Bill. But I can give the nominated Member (Mr. Jayah) this assurance on behalf of, I think, the vast majority, at least of the community that I represent, that in the struggle for freedom, whatever may or may not be the recommendations of the Soulbury Commission on representation, he may be rest assured, that I will be quite prepared to consider any reasonable point of view that he might put forward."

The matter was resolved, however, D.S. Senanayake decided that the Soulbury Report as modified by the White Paper be accepted for the interim period on 3rd November, 1946. Elections to Parliament were to be held shortly. By, September, 1946, the United National Party had been formed, the All Ceylon Moors Association and the All Ceylon Muslim League joined the party (as did the Sinhala Maha Sabha led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike).

Dr. Jayah contested the three-member Colombo Central seat and was elected the Second Member for that electorate.

History records that thereafter he became the first Muslim Minister in the first Cabinet of the first Parliament of Ceylon as the Minister for Labour and Social Services. We also know that he was later the High Commissioner of Ceylon in Pakistan. And then on the 13th May, 1960 on a visit to inspect and finalize the Ceylon House project at Mecca he fell ill and on the 31st May, 1960 - the 9th day of Zul Haj passed away and was buried in the Holy City of Mecca.

In retrospect we can be assured that Dr. T.B. Jayah has, as a Muslim, contributed greatly to the political scenario of our country.

(Excerpts of the speeches and most of the facts have been gleaned from the book "T.B. Jayah - A National Hero of Sri Lanka" by the same author. Published by the Law Publishers Association, 1996)

### **Dr. Jayah: A perfectionist in all his undertakings**

By A.H.M. Azwer

"I must say at the outset that I am strongly in favour of Dominion Status for this country. From the very beginning, when I was connected with the Ceylon National Congress

I have stood up for freedom for this country. And even as a member of the Ceylon Muslim League, it has been my chief and primary aim to see that this country gets freedom which is its birthright..."

The voice of T. B. Jayah echoed in the State Council in late 1945 on the motion for the acceptance of the White Paper proposals for self -government when it was debated in

Parliament. He was a freedom fighter in his own terms. His brilliant oratory no doubt helped our beloved motherland to come out of the colonial shackles.

When the British expressed reservation about granting freedom to us on the grounds of possible discrimination of minorities by the majority, it was again Dr. Jayah who rose to the occasion and very determinedly and forcefully said, "We should fight for national independence without opting for any precondition."

For him, self-respect of the nation as a whole was the most important ingredient for gaining independence.

By that frank and forceful expression, Dr. Jayah defined the attitude of the Muslim Community and therefore earned the gratitude for generations still unborn. Subsequently it was accepted by many Sinhalese leaders that it was indeed an epoch-making speech that paved the path to freedom. The immediate effect of Dr. Jayah's utterance could be gauged by the remarks made on that day by Mr. Bandaranaike, who said, "I say, that if any member has brought closer the achievement of agreement among the various sections of the people of the country by an attitude of generosity where even those with whom he is concerned stand to suffer. I say the fullest credit must go more than to anyone else among us to the Nominated Member Mr. Jayah. He has made a speech today that will have a great effect in bringing unity among the people of this country, in bringing some sense of reality to the struggle."

Dr. Jayah always promoted national politics as the ideal system of governance in Sri Lanka. For him, national unity should go hand in hand with political freedom, although he vigorously espoused the cause of Muslims. He said, "we might stand up for our community, but it cannot be said that we have stood against the interest of the country as a whole. I have always said, and I repeat today, that I consider the interest of the country as a whole to be paramount."

"If we are going to have a party system on definite political and economic lines, we cannot have communal majority parties under whatever names it may be disguised. We cannot have a communal majority invested with plenary powers. Such a majority would prove to be not only a great tyranny but also a curse to the country."

Indeed it was Dr. Jayah who seconded the resolution to form the United National Party which was moved by Mr. S. Natesan, M.P. for Kankasanthurai on 6th September 1946 at Palm Court, Albert Crescent. The resolution was passed unanimously and Dr. T.B. Jayah was elected as one of its Vice Presidents.

Born on 01st January 1890 at Galagedera, young Jayah was educated at St. Thomas' College, Modera. He passed the Cambridge Junior Examination and won a scholarship to study in England. He was a trained teacher by profession having passed his London Bachelor of Arts examination in 1911. Subsequently, he held the position of Chairman, Samasta Lanka Guru Sangamaya. Dr. Jayah first taught at Dharmaraja, Kandy, then Prince of Wales, Moratuwa and at Ananda, Colombo. It is from this Buddhist seat of learning that Jayah's greatness began to flow. He had the unique distinction of having tutored some of the greatest Leftist and Marxist leaders of the country, viz. Philip Gunawardene, Dr. N.M. Perera, Dr. S.A. Wickremasinghe, Robert Gunawardene etc.

It was the golden-era of P. de S. Kularatne at Ananda and the anti-imperialist agitation was at its peak in Sri Lanka and the fever was felt in schools as well. Students of Ananda College too joined in the campaign. Young and radical Philip who later became the

father of socialism in Sri Lanka was debarred from attending classes for his anti-British campaign. But student Philip was taken care of by his teacher Jayah, who took him to his house 'Fairlight,' at nearby Stafford Place and gave tuition for him to pass the examinations. Later, when Philip Gunawardena qualified from Wisconsin University, USA, he wrote to his mentor Jayah; "Sir, if not for you, I would never have been able to come to this position...."

Dr. Jayah was the foremost Muslim educationist of this country. He has been described as the Sir Seyed Ahmed Khan of Sri Lanka, who was the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University in India. He elevated Zahira College from being a tottering elementary school to one of the foremost educational institutes in Sri Lanka. Zahira College became the radiating centre of Muslim thought and activity under his guidance.

He set up branches of Zahira College in various parts of the Island in Aluthgama, Matale, Puttalam, Gampola and Slave Island.

In November 1923, Dr. Jayah said, "the supreme need of the hour is education, not merely elementary education, not mere half hearted education, but an education that will turn heroes and heroines, leaders and reformers, thinkers and philosophers, an education that will make us a progressive, enlightened and powerful minority".

In 1924, Dr. Jayah said that the Muslim community was "a backward community, for on looking at their public life in the country, the public services, the learned professions, where are the distinguished Muslims to be found? Their backward position today was due to the utter disregard to the educational advantages, which other communities avail themselves of, which ought to put them to shame. It was an admitted fact, that their community as a whole did not take sufficient interest in education.

It was a shameful confession to make. Yet, they must make it, especially knowing as they did that they were the inheritors of a glorious past."

Dr. Jayah roused the Muslims from their lethargy and helped them to make giant strides in the sphere of education. Dr. Jayah was elected as a Member of the Legislative Council in 1923. He was nominated to the State Council in 1936 and was elected to the State Council in 1947 when he became the Minister of Labour.

Dr. T.B. Jayah supporting in the State Council, the adoption of the Soulbury Scheme of Reforms said, "where the Muslims are concerned, it has been the practice, in fact it has been considered the duty of Muslims wherever they may find themselves, that they should be first and foremost in any movement that is intended to secure for the people of the country a full measure of freedom. If the fight is for full freedom, the Muslim community as far as it is concerned, will be prepared to work without any safeguards, because they know the spell of freedom can obliterate any differences."

Dr. Jayah was a diplomat par excellence. He was Sri Lanka's first High Commissioner to Pakistan. In the newly created nation of Pakistan he even helped Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in the drafting of the Pakistan Constitution.

His contribution to the relations between the two countries, Sri Lanka and Pakistan was such that when the Prime Minister Sir John Kotelawala visited Pakistan, the Government requested him to allow Dr. Jayah to remain there for a longer period to which Sir John readily agreed. The Pakistan Government even offered him citizenship-an honour no other diplomat could boast of.

Dr. Jayah was an eminent exponent of Islam, being so well versed with the Islamic religion, its culture and its civilisation. In 1936, Dr. Jayah was invited to deliver a lecture at the Jawatte Muslim burial grounds.

The subject was the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and the tragedy at Karbala. Justice M. T. Akbar, who was the Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon, presided at this meeting. Justice Akbar commented after Dr. Jayah's speech was delivered. His oration was very illuminating.

He said, "you have just now listened to Mr. T .B. Jayah, who spoke for nearly two hours, displaying great erudition and learning on Islam by his stirring oration. It looked as if Imam Hussein was martyred at the Jawatte burial grounds and not at Karbala. In other words, Mr. Jayah re- enacted the tragedy of Karbala at the Jawatte burial grounds."

In the arena of world politics, he was an arch-supporter of the Palestinian struggle. Hand in hand with contemporary Muslim leaders such as Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel, M.A.C.M. Saleh, O.K. Mohideen Sahib, S.H.M. Mashoor, S.M. Sahabdeen, M.A. Bakeer Markar, M.H. Amit, A.L.M. Hashim, and veteran journalists of the calibre of A.L.M. Kiyas, M.K.M Aboobucker and a host of young turks of his time, he influenced the thoughts of British Raj, in our freedom struggle as well as on the Palestinian issue.

Dr. Jayah was a perfectionist in every field of activity. He was highly disciplined. It will be of great interest to note what he had written in his diary, which was in the possession of his eldest son, T. A. Jayah. It is stated there, that Dr. Jayah never failed to attend a single sitting in the Legislature, was always present in the House before the Mace was brought in by the Sergeant-at-arms followed by the Speaker. Herein lies a great example for the present generation of Parliamentarians.

Many tributes have been paid to Dr. Jayah by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, both here and abroad. But the greatest tribute to his greatness comes from Almighty Allah who has destined for him a place in Jennathul Baqi in Madinah where the Holy Prophet and His companions are laid to rest.

The beckoning was on 31 st May1960, prior to performing Hajj, where he was visiting with the objective of acquiring a building to house the pilgrims from Ceylon. By the help of God Almighty, Jayah was able to establish the 'Ceylon House,' following his discussions with His Majesty the King Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz. (The writer is the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs)

Daily Mirror Sat, May 31,2003

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Daily News 2,June 2003

## **Mohammed Murad Jayah**

**Mohammed Murad Jayah**, son of Tuan Arifeen Jayah (Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co Ltd.) and Nona Sulaiha Packeer, was born on May 14, 1921, at No.11, Saunders Court, Colombo 2.

He attended the Madarasa of Wekande Mosque, in 1927, under **Non Junoos Alim** and subsequently entered Zahira College, Maradana in February , 1929.

In December 1936, he passed the Cambridge Junior Examination with Distinctions in Arithmetic, Elementary Mathematics, Latin and Physics, and in December 1937, he passed the Cambridge Senior Examination with Distinctions in Elementary Mathematics, Latin, Physics and Chemistry obtaining a First Division. In 1938 he was unanimously elected Speaker of the College Majlis.

In February 1939, **Mohammed Murad Jayah** walked away with the following prizes at the Zahira College Prize Giving:-

1. Cambridge Senior First Division Prize
2. Senior Essay Prize
3. Umbichy Memorial Senior Mathematics Prize
4. W.M.Abdul Rahman Memorial Senior Latin Prize
5. Saleh Macan-Markar memorial Prize for Senior Science
6. Senior History Prize
7. Majlis Crescent
8. Scholarship Crescent

In March 1939 he was awarded the **Saleh Macan-Markar** University Scholarship and in July of that year entered the Ceylon University College.

He passed the London Intermediate in Science in June 1940 with Distinctions in Pure Mathematics, Advanced Mathematics, Chemistry and a Higher Credit in Physics. In June 1943 Murad Jayah passed the Bsc (Hons) Physics and came first in the Island at the examination. He was then awarded the Government Scholarship in Science, tenable at a University in the United Kingdom and the University Research Studentship in Physics. He was the first Muslim student to gain this honourable distinction.

From 1941 to 1945 he worked as the Assistant Demonstrator in Physics at the University of Ceylon.

In April 1945, Murad Jayah was appointed Assistant Divisional Transportation Superintendent in the Ceylon Government Railway, being the first Muslim to receive an executive appointment in the Railway. he left for the UK, for training with the British Railway, and in 1949 and 1950 he travelled widely in Europe. He passed the Associate Membership Examination of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and was the first Ceylon Muslim to become a Chartered Mechanical Engineer. He returned to Ceylon in 1950.



Between 1957 and his retirement, in October 1962 on the language policy of the Government, **Murad Jayah** was appointed District Superintendent, Upper District, and later Northern & Eastern Districts. In March 1963 he was appointed Deputy General Manager, Sugar Corporation, but in July resigned in protest against political interference.

In 1961 and 1962 Murad Jayah was elected Chairman of the Society for Psychological Research. Since May 1965 as Secretary, Ceylon Malay Research Organization he devoted his full time honorary service to the Sri Lankan Malay Community.

**Murad Jayah**, an intellectual with the highest academic qualifications, carries his learning very lightly. His wide experiences of men and matters and his unflinching dedication to any task deem it necessary that his valued services should be made available to the Muslim Community in Sri Lanka, in particular.

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### **Dr. M C M KALEEL**

From the latter part of the 19th century, for three or four generations, Zone 12 of Colombo, comprising Messenger Street, New Moor Street, Grandpass, Hultsdorf and Barber Street, and their environs had a large Muslim concentration, with an aggregation of Muslim families, many related or inter-related, mostly friendly if not familiar. It was within this environment that Dr M C M Kaleel was born, on Feb 3, 1899 (Friday 22 Ramadan 1316 H), a great physician, social worker, politician and leader of the community. He was the son of **Cassim Lebbe Marikar** and **Yousoof Sulaiha**, daughter of Omerdeen 'Appa'. His paternal grandfather was **Colanda Marikar** (aka Soldier Colonda) and his great grandfather was **Thamby Lebbe Marikar** of Athikaragoda, Alutgama. The family is descended from **Muhammad Hajie Marikar** (Vidane or Headman at Athikaragoda, Alutgama appointed by the British Government).

**Dr Kaleel** lived in a large house at No 6, Messengerr Street, situated near the Hultsdorf Street-Messenger Street intersection, which was then popularly known as "Shalayankada Shandhi".

Historical records and legends reveal that his ancestors were from the descendants of a shipload of Arabs who left their homes in the Middle East, unable to bear the harsh treatment meted out by Umayyad Caliphs. They were said to be Hashimites who landed off the coast of Beruwela at Barbeyn in the year 1024 AD. There is also a tradition that in the year 1410 one of Dr Kaleel's ancestors, a theologian, was brought to Mutuwal in a Palanquin when he agreed to be the Khateeb (Imam) of the old Mosque in Mutuwal (palaya palli). The family still possess a copy of a Qur'an handwritten by one of his ancestors, who was famous Calligraphist.

Dr Kaleel had his first schooling at Hameeda School at New Moor Street. Prior to that he was taught to recite the Qur'an in Arabic at home. Hameedia School was adjacent to the Grand Mosque and managed by its founder, I L M H Noordeen Hajjar. Kaleel learned in Arabic and Arabic-Tamil medium and not in English. It was only when the family moved to live in Mutuwal in December 1909, at the age of ten, that Kaleel was initiated into English education. He started his English education at a small school run by the Baptist Mission on Elie House Road run by Rev Silva. Later on he attended St Thomas' College run by Warden Stone.

Kaleel's father, Cassim Lebbe Marikar, was, both, a businessman and a Moulavi (Islamic teacher), having qualified at the Bakiathus Salihath Madrasa, in Vellore, South India. The Muslims of the area, including the two officiating Katheebes of the Colombo Grand Mosque, had requested Cassim Lebbe Marikar to accept the position of Khatheeb of the Mosque. He accepted the position on an Honorary capacity and was carried to the Mosque on a Palanquin similar to how his ancestor was feted in 1410.

Daily News Obituary – Thursday May 16 2002

**KALEEL HAJANI NOOR RAHMANIYA**, daughter of late Al-Haj & Mrs Sulaiman Marikar Bawa, dearly beloved wife of late Desamanya Dr M.C.M. Kaleel, loving mother of Dr M. Nawaz, Dr M. Fahmy, late Sithy Huzaiifa, Fathima Hanoum, Sithy Niloufer, Ummu Zulaiha, Einul Azeema, Mohamed Aslam, Rizwi Suhada and Mohamed Shiraz, mother-in-law of Ummu Naima, Ereefa, late Muhsin, late Jouffer Sadique, Fayesz Mansoor, late Dr Munsif Meeran Tracey, Dr Faizer Buhary, Ashok and Deena, expired. Janaza leaves residence at 10 a.m. today for interment at Maligawatte Muslim Burial Ground. **21, 18th Lane, Colpetty, Colombo 3.**

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## **AL HAJ S M KAMALDEEN**

Aug 2008 - sent in by Mo Qamardeen from New Hampshire, USA

### **My father - a man of few Words**

**ALHAJ S.M. Kamaldeen** (retired Assistant Chief Librarian, Colombo Public Library and former Director of the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board) beloved husband of Haleema Hanem, loving father of Qamarudeen (U.S.A.), Father in law of Sharon (U.S.A), Grandfather of Anna (U.S.A.), passed away. Janaza and burial took place on Saturday, August 16, 2008, at Wattakkiliya Muslim Burial Grounds, Chilaw.



## **S.M.Kamaldeen**

B.A.(Cey.), B.ED.(Toronto), DIP. LIB (Cey.) FSLLA

My father, S.M. Kamaldeen, passed away on August 15, 2008. Until his death in August, he had lived a full life: provided for his family, achieved success in his career, volunteered his services to social causes and saw the world.

As I write this memorial to my father from my home in the United States of America, very recent words spoken to me by a relative praising my father over the telephone, resonates in my mind. However, his primary trait was described in just a smattering of words- that my father was a man of few words.

My father, who was always in the habit of giving others more so than he ever received, wasn't inclined to wasting too many words to highlight his accomplishments.

Being the bearer of my father's legacy to the world, I feel it is my duty to reflect on his contributions to the society that he lived in and recall highlights of his long and illustrious life.

My father who was born in 1922, attended elementary school at St. Mary's College, Chilaw, a town where his family from India had settled in British colonial Ceylon.

He pursued his secondary education at Zahira College, Colombo, where he was exposed to the intellect of many of the Sri Lankan Muslim leaders of the day. My father completed his high school education at Jaffna College,

Vaddukoddai, which was a pioneer institution of higher Western learning in the East run by the American Ceylon Mission, during his day. Following his education in Jaffna, my father attended the University of Ceylon where he acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree and a diploma in Librarianship. When my father married my mother, Haleema (Marikar), a graduate student at the University of Toronto, Canada, he used that opportunity to travel to North America and completed a degree in Education from the same University.

In 1948, my father began his career in education as a member of the tutorial staff, at his alma-mater Zahira College, in Colombo. He entered the field of librarianship in 1954, serving as Deputy Librarian at the Colombo Municipal Public Library. In 1973, while employed at the Public Library, he won a UNESCO Fellowship to attend a study tour of Libraries in Australia. My father joined the Sri Lanka National Library Services Board in 1975, and served as a Director of the Board, until his retirement in 1981. During his employment with the Board, UNESCO sponsored his overseas trip to an IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) conference on Public Library Buildings, in Bremen, West Germany. After his retirement, my father continued to be very involved in the development of library education in Sri Lanka and served as the President of the Sri Lanka Library Association.

I can remember numerous instances, where my father volunteered his services to helping others. However, two examples where he volunteered showing true heroism and dedication to the well-being of his fellow-citizens of the World come to mind. In 1978, he volunteered in a search and rescue mission following an international aviation disaster involving a Loftleidir Icelandic Airways DC-8 aircraft shuttling Indonesian Hajj pilgrim passengers that occurred in Negombo. Another instance in 1979, where my father stepped up to the plate to assist in a much needed relief- cause, was when a cyclone hit the Eastern province of Sri Lanka.

I remember him traveling to the affected areas in Eastern Sri Lanka shortly after that disaster, to provide the much needed humanitarian assistance there.

My father was responsible for instilling the love of books in me. As a child, he inspired me to read more than just comic books and learn about the World beyond the shores of Sri Lanka. In 1976, when the Non-Aligned Nations conference was held in Colombo, my father insisted and arranged for him and I to catch a glimpse of the international attendees as World history was being made. My love for international relations was born when from a front row seat my father and I waved to the motorcades of Indira Gandhi, Anwar Sadat, Marshal Tito and Colonel Muhammar Gadaffi, that drove past us to the BMICH. I would not have experienced this once in a life-time opportunity, if not for the influences yielded upon me by my dad, the internationally conscious citizen.

In summing up my father's long and illustrious life, it is necessary to re-state that he did not want to talk much about himself. However, from the examples above, my father's actions in life spoke louder than words. The meaning of his life was tied to promoting the path to knowledge thru books, and he dedicated his service to mankind thru volunteerism. I take great pride in the legacy of the kind of man my father lived his life to be. An idiom from William Shakespeare's King Henry the Fifth best describes my father's essence, "Men of few words are the best men."



## **Kamal's love of books enlightened the Malay community**

### **S. M. Kamaldeen**

The Muslim community of Sri Lanka has lost one of its most illustrious intellectuals. S. M. Kamaldeen, fondly known as Kamal to his friends, passed away recently. He was 88 years. He lived a full and fruitful life in the service of knowledge and humanity.

Kamal was a former librarian of the Colombo Public Library, and served as director of the Sri Lanka Libraries Board, in addition to holding other responsible positions in the field of librarianship. Kamal devoted his life to books and the dissemination of knowledge among students and all those who sought his help in finding information.

I first came to know Mr. Kamaldeen when I was a regular visitor at the Colombo Public Library in the early 1960s, when I was a student preparing for my university entrance examination. I would diffidently approach him and he would happily help me find the information I required. He was always accessible to anyone who needed guidance.

Many scholars have benefited from Mr. Kamaldeen's vast knowledge of history, politics and literature. It was he who drew my attention to the existence of the first Malay and Muslim newspaper, "Alamat Langkapuri", which was published by lithograph in 1869, in Colombo, by the great Sri Lankan Malay literary savant, Baba Ounus Saldin.

Kamal offered to give me a facsimile of this newspaper to use in my PhD research work at Monash University, when I left for Australia in 1974. That single finding changed my perspective on the history of the Sri Lanka Malays. Following Mr. Kamaldeen's lead, I discovered many other hitherto unknown Malay manuscripts in Sri Lanka. I am sure there are many scholars who owe a huge debt of gratitude to Mr. Kamaldeen.

Kamal's life was not confined to books. He was an active member of the community. He was a true leader and a dedicated social worker. His contributions to the Young Men's Muslim Association are widely known. He was also president of the All-Ceylon YMMA Conference, back in 1960. Inspired by the ideals of A. M. A. Azeez, founder of the Sri Lanka YMMA movement, Kamal enriched the intellectual life of our Muslim youth. He helped to build up the library at the

Dematagoda YMMA. Fearless and unbending, he stood up for principles, regardless of political influences. His unbiased report on the 1981 burning of the magnificent Jaffna library was further testimony to his integrity.

He is survived by his wife, Haleema Hanem Marikar, retired Director of Education, Kegalle. His son lives in the United States.

I am sure there are many who will miss this wonderful intellectual, whose memory will be perpetuated in the works of writers and scholars in Sri Lanka and abroad.

**Professor B. A. Hussainmiya**

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## **MUHAMMAD HASSIM MUHAMMAD KAMIL**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen040.html>

His exit was poignant. He had had his pre-dawn meal of Suhoor with the intent of observing the fast of Ramadan. He moved to his living room and rested on his sofa in order to invoke Allah. Shortly after, he passed away.

Kamil was the second son of the late WM Hassim, founder of that reputed firm in Main Street, Pettah, in Colombo. He was an old Royalist. His early public life was involved in the Ceylonese Textile Traders Association that was created to promote national trading interests. He was also involved with the Ceylon Moors' Association with a view to work for and protect the welfare of the community. He was elected as one of the Joint Secretary's and Treasurer of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH) in 1947, and was annually re-elected to these two positions, which was an indication of his dedication and commitment to foster cultural affinity and serve the needs of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. He also held the position of Joint Treasurer of the Maradana Mosque and Member of the Board of Governors of Zahira College, Colombo.

Kamil held the position of Vice President of the Jiffriyathul Alaviya Thakkiya and a Trustee of the Salih Thakkiya, which is father-in-law, WM Abdul Majeed had built, at New Moor Street. He also found the time to serve as a Director of the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society Ltd. And a Committee Member of the University Mosque Association, Peradeniya.

He was no noisy debator but his voice reached the ears of many, far and near, in any crucial issue in all the activities and organizations he was involved in. As the President of the Sufi Study Circle he gathered a section of the mystics in Sri Lanka. He stretched his hands covertly to aid and assist laudable and deserving projects. He headed a large family. Although he shunned politics he allowed his only son, Omar Kamil, to dabble in it and eventually hold the prestigious position of Mayor of Colombo. He is survived by many daughters well settled and one younger brother, MHM Ameen.

He lived a full life and many a milestone was reached during his participation in movements that had contributed to national unity and economic stability, education progress, cultural revival and social welfare.

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## KANDHOI

Ismail Omar was perhaps the first from his clan to leave the shores of his native Batwila in Gujarat for Ceylon in 1936 when he was only 12 years of age. He soon found a job at Kannady Bhai's Stores, a leading Memon firm in the heart of Kandy town run by **Osman Sakoor Chatni**. As time went on he established himself in the store and eventually won the trust of his boss, who, in a show of camaraderie for the young man gave his only daughter, **Fathima**, in marriage. He later ventured on his own opening a textile business in Kurunegala called Ismail Omar & Sons, which he transferred to Kandy town. He was no ordinary run of the mill Memon and had a variety of interests other than business. His intellectual discourses won him many friends and many would trek all the way to Kandy to enjoy his hospitality and company - which was legendary. His marriage to Fathima was a blessed one and produced five boys and three girls.

The family moved to Colombo after their father's demise in 1975 and are now well established in business and family life in the metropolis.

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## E A KAREEM

A textile merchant, belonging to the Memon Community, who founded EAM Maliban Group in 1974. The company has thirteen locations in Sri Lanka and Jordan with over 8,000 employees. They specialize in manufacturing garments for foreign buyers under various designer labels.

## AHMEDU LEBBE KARIAPPER

Cassim Marikar Hajjar of Kotabowa, in the Wellessa area, was a Tawalam (bullock caravan) merchant operating between the Eastern sea board and the Central hill country, mainly between Batticaloa, Badulla, and the Kalmunai areas. The nature of his business enabled him to move about these areas very freely and the British officer, Captain Wilson, established contact with him and induced him to spy for the British.

Captain Wilson was operating on the base from the present road between Welimada and Nuwara Eliya, known even today as "Wilson's" (Van Sanden pp98). When the association was well established at Wilson's behest a conference was arranged in the jungle. It was attended by 20-30 Kandyan Sinhalese and by prior arrangement a Malay Sepoy was seated between two of the Kandyan Sinhalese. The conference was a ploy to get the Kandyan Sinhalese to one place, and, at a given signal the Malay Sepoys stabbed and killed their neighbors. The corpses of the victims were left rotting in the jungle for months (see Captain Jones' Diary).

Shortly afterwards, Cassim Marikar himself was captured and shot dead somewhere between Passara and Lunugala (Van Sanden pp100). This raised a hue and cry among the Muslims and in order to appease the Muslim community the British Government divided Keppetipola Disawe's Disawani of Wellessa into two and appointed Cassim Marikar Hajjar's son, Naina Marikar, as Dissawe of Wellessa.

Keppetipolla's Dissawe's anger at fragmenting his Revenue Division led to the Keppetipolla Rebellion. Naina Marikar's fate is unknown but his son AhmeduLebbe was rescued and taken by the British Garrison to Negombo where he was educated and later came to Batticaloa with the Wesleyan Mission.

A man from Sammanthurai known as Kottayan Kayan who used to travel by boat across the lagoon between Sammanthurai and Batticaloa on business befriended AhmeduLebbe, having met him at the Batticaloa Mosque. Kottayan Kayan obtained AhmeduLebbe's consent to seek a propose of marriage for him, and, AhmeduLebbe apparently agreed to his request. In due course Kottayan Kayan brought a proposal of marriage from Sammanthurai and when the prospective bride's father wanted to see the intended bridegroom he visited Batticaloa and was taken by Kottayan Kayan to the Kachcheri to meet AhmeduLebbe. They found AhmeduLebbe seated on a desk and talking to the British Government who was seated on a chair! This conduct of AhmeduLebbe was too much for the girls father, and, on the way back he told Kottayan Kayan to forget about this proposal as, he said, "He will make salves of us".

Though Kottayan Kayan was disappointed he did not give up his efforts to find a bride for AhmeduLebbe and hence he now looked towards Kalmunaikudy.

At about this time, IbraLebbe Kariapper of Kalmunaikudy who had married a lady from Kilakarai in South India, had died leaving behind his widow, three daughters and two sons.

Kottayan Kayan now approached IbraLebbe Kariapper's brother-in-law, Periyathamby Alim, and requested him to propose a marriage for AhmeduLebbe to his widowed sisters oldest daughter (daughter of the late IbraLebbe Kariapper). This proposal was accepted and IbraLebbe Kariapper's daughter was married to AhmeduLebbe who was originally from Kotabowa near Wellessa.

AhmeduLebbe, who had no house of his own to which he could take his bride settled down in the brides house in Kalmunaikudy and assumed her family name of "Kariapper", thus becoming the founding father and ancestor of the "Binna" Kariappers. (see note below). He became AhmeduLebbe Kariapper.

The Union produced four sons and two daughters as follows:-

1. A.K. Kariapper – Notary JP
2. Dr. Ibrahim Kariapper
3. Hussain Kariapper (went to India and never returned to Sri Lanka)
4. A.L. Kariapper
5. (daughter)
6. Zainabu Natchia

Note: There were two forms of Kandyan Mariage practice, viz; DIGA and BINNA. The former, Diga, was the more respected one where the groom marries his bride and takes her to live in his home. The latter, Binna, which is looked down upon, is when the groom chooses to live in his brides home.

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## **THAMBY NEINDA KARIAPPER**

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## **KASSIM**

The **Kassim** family traces its origins to Haji Kassim Yusuf, son of Yusuf Bhangra & Haleema Bhoja, who was born on Feb 19, 1920. He married Hawa Hajiani, daughter of Haji Omar Bhoja in Oct 1939. The couple had four sons, Osman, Sattar, Farook, and Shafik, all of whom pursued very successful and lucrative business careers.

The four Kassim brothers, with Osman at the helm, went to establish the Expolanka Group of Companies, a leading business conglomerate in Sri Lanka for the past two decades (2006) involved in a variety of business ranging from manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, essential oils, garments, and packaging material, production and export of local agricultural produce, freight forwarding, aviation and information technology, with overseas branches in more than ten countries. The pioneering company of the Group, Expolanka Ltd., established in 1978, is presently the market leader in the export of fresh coconuts, desiccated coconut, fresh fruits and vegetables, from Sri Lanka. Expolanka Teas, established in 1989, is a leading exporter of all varieties of pure Ceylon Tea in the form of tea bags, packets and bulk, as well as specialty teas such as flavored teas, fruit teas, and herbal teas. One of the major subsidiaries, Expolanka Pharmaceuticals (pvt) Ltd., is involved in the manufacture of a variety of medicinal products extracted from Black Seed (*Nigella Sativa*), which figures in a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (sal), as a panacea for all ills except death marketed under the brand name Barakah. It today enjoys the position of the world's leading manufacturer of Black Seed Oil, exporting its Black Seed - based products to more than 30 countries around the world including Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and the USA.

Expolanka also ventured into the promising field of Aviation a little less than 10 years ago, forming Expo Aviation which handles cargo flights for leading airlines in the world, flying to India, Pakistan, Maldives and the Middle East, particularly Dubai & Sharjah. It also operates passenger flights to Jaffna in the extreme North of the island using 50-seater airplanes for the purpose. Expo Aviation also runs an aviation school which trains cabin crew with special emphasis on food and beverages and many of those who have passed out have found placements in local as well as some international airlines.

Osman, being the eldest, functions as the Chairman of the Group, and Shafeek, who is a Pilot is also in charge of the Group's Aviation Operations. Sattar is in charge of the Group's Trading and Pharmaceutical interests. The Group is, today, a global company with 20

offices around the world diversified into areas like logistics, aviation, real estate, manufacturing, shipping, and entrepot trade.

Farook is the Managing Director of Al Bogari Group of Companies, Dubai, which had a humble origin there a little over 30 years ago. It took to dealing in food, chemicals and cement, and later in dried fruits and nuts importing Cashew Nuts, Almonds, Dates, and Sultanas, for distribution in the region. He is content in being based in Dubai, where over the past three decades the business has seen considerable development in all spheres of its activities. He recalls that although the UAE of which Dubai is the Capital was a virtual desert at the time of his first visit, he could foresee the potential it held. In contrast, Sri Lanka, then under a closed economic regime restricted the movement of foreign currency to and from its shores. The UAE, on the other hand, had an open and liberal environment free from any restrictions even at that time - hence its rapid success in the past decade or two.

Osman, since recently, also floated the first Islamic Financial Institution in Sri Lanka named Amana Investments Ltd. which offers its customers Shariah compliant Islamic Financial transactions. With its head office located on the Galle Road at Kollupitiya, Amana Investments has branched out into Islamic Insurance with its subsidiary named Amana Takaful located on Duplication Road at Bambalapitiya. Since its launch in the mid nineties, many other privately owned Islamic Financial Companies have also sprung up, one of them being Ceylinco Investments run by Lalith Kotalawela. Several foreign banks in Sri Lanka have also embarked on setting up subsidiaries to sell Islamic Financial Products based on the Shariah.

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## **KATLIYA**

**Aboobucker Haji Kassam Katliya** and his brother **Abdul Rahman Haji Kassam Katliya** were among the very few Memons to arrive in Ceylon in the early days of Memon settlement in the Island. The two brothers set up a business in Matara which they wound off as a result of the Japanese bombing during WWII and returned home to Kutiyana. Aboobucker had two sons, **Haji Kassam**, named after his grandfather, and **Abdul Sattar**.

Abdul Sattar set up A R Aboobucker & Company in Colombo but later moved to Jaffna where he joined the famous Ghany Bhai Stores before setting up Aslams in Colombo, which was the turning point in his life. Aslam's, like all Memon firms dealt mainly in textiles. With the incentive given to exports it lost no time in focusing attention on the booming export trade which brought in valuable foreign exchange to the country.

The firm exported local produce, viz tea, coconuts, copra, arecanuts, and had a turnover of 12 Crores annually.

They later expanded to establish Aslam's Developments Limited which was involved in property development. Among their development projects are two supermarkets in The Pettah.

Abdul Sattar also served as the Qazi of the Memon Community and Trustee of the Memon Hanafi Mosque. He had three sons, Aslam, Jafer, and Abdul Razzak, of whom the second, Jafer achieved much distinction in the community. Jafer, an old boy of DS Senanayake College started business at an early age establishing Sumithra Group of Companies in partnership with Haroon Thowfeek. The company has three garment

manufacturing factories in Colombo, Polgahawela, and Weeraketiya. Jafer became the President of the Old Boys Union of his Alma Mater, DS Senanayake College, in 1995 and during his tenure of office was actively involved in raising funds for the College. He also became the President of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka in 2001 and held office for two terms ending in 2004. During his term of office he was also instrumental in introducing the six a side cricket carnival to instil social harmony within the community. He undertook to distribute school books and stationery among the community members who needed assistance to educate their children. He also renovated and refurbished the Memon Hall and was instrumental in organizing several medical camps during his tenure as President.

## **KHAKHU**

**Hamid Abdul Cader** was born in Sri Lanka to a family who had its origins in Upleta. His father Abdul Cader worked at Haji Habib & Company in the early days. Hamid started his career at PIA before moving on to establish his own export business exporting locally produced coconut oil to overseas markets. He also involved himself in social activities and became the President of the Memon Association of Ceylon in 1973-74, and again in 1977. An avid horse racer he had a horse named Windrose who participated in several races at the Old Race Course in Colombo and even won a prize. Hamid's son, Ayman, by Zahra Haji Omar is involved in the Forex Business. Died:

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## **Y M KHALID**

### **First Cricket Captain of Zahira College**

YM Khalid, the Moors' Sports Club bowler of several generations ago was never given his due despite his many prodigious feats with the ball.

The "Times of Ceylon" cricket writer, "Long Slip", deplored, in his newspaper on Jan 19, 1927, the omission of famous all-rounder Edward Kelaart from the All Ceylon team to play the MCC as follows:-

*"It is not fair to a cricketer with such a fine record of big achievements in real first-class cricket as Edward Kelaart has, to leave him to fight for his place in the three vacancies still remaining to be filled. It is up to the selectors to make amends in the only manner still possible by giving him the ninth place."*

*"The claims of S Saravanamuttu, JCO Ernst, Perimpanayagam and the de Sarams among the batsmen, of S Gunasekera, Jayaweera, Kanagarajah, AC Mendis and YM Khalid, among bowlers and of DA Wright and CC Senaratne as reserve wicket-keepers will need to be considered before the last two places are filled."*

At this distance of time it should be appreciated that more than seven decades (nineteen thirties) ago the very mention of a Ceylon Moor cricketer as a likely contender was creditable, although he was not picked for All-Ceylon. The most prominent of Muslim cricketers at that time were Malays, AC Amath being the most outstanding of them.

So YM Khalid's performance and his being held in high esteem for his cricketing prowess in that age was significant, if not unique.

Khalid was the first cricket captain of Zahira College, Colombo, during the time that JC McHeyzer was Principal in 1916. Some of his sensational bowling feats were 4 for 4 for Colombo Moors vs Galle Moors in 1920 and 7 for 27 for Moors Sports Club vs Colombo Sports Club in 1921, 4 for 4 and 6 for 26 vs Nuwara Eliya, and 8 for 7 vs Times of Ceylon in 1926.

Press Report: *"The Times of Ceylon C & AC in their encounter with the Moors SC were bundled out for the paltry total of 14 runs, six men getting 'ducks', the highest score being 8 by Austin Silva. Khalid's 8 wickets for 7 runs in 5 overs, two of which were maidens, represents a very meritorious performance. The Moors SC scored 159 for 8 wickets and declared. HHM Mohideen top scoring with 69."*

In 1924, Khalid was the only Ceylonese to take over 100 wickets, the other being WT Greswell, the famous European bowler. The Sunday Observer of January 4, 1925, giving his full list of bowling figures, match by match, said: *"For many years YM Khalid headed the bowling averages of the Moors Sports Club and in 1924 he reached his high-water mark capturing 102 wickets for the year."* That newspaper headlined its story: **"Moors bowler's success: YM Khalid completes 100 wickets for 1924."**

Some of Khalid's best performances for Moors Sports Club were 8 for 55 vs NCC, 7 for 29 vs Education Department, 6 for 12 vs PCM Yusuf's XI, 6 for 14 vs Orient SC, 6 for 30 vs Kotahena RC, 5 for 66 vs Zahira College, 5 for 12 vs St. Benedict's College, 5 for 42 vs BRC, 5 for 35 vs National Bank, 5 for 24 vs Notts.. In all he had 102 wickets for 884 runs in 286 overs (41 maidens) averaging a fantastic 8.6.

In 1926, he repeated this feat by taking 104 wickets this time. The Times of Ceylon of January 7, 1927 listed in detail all his bowling figures headlined in its story. **"YM Khalid captures 100 wickets."** His feat included that 8 for 7 vs Times of Ceylon. Other outstanding figures were 7 for 25 vs Walker & Grieg, 6 for 23 vs Cave & Co., 6 for 36 vs Kalutara SC, 6 for 13 vs Colombo Stores, 5 for 27 vs Colombo Sports Club, 5 for 10 vs Colombo Apothecaries, 5 for 30 vs Government Stores, 5 for 8 vs BYMCA, 5 for 35 vs Dehiwela YMCA, and 5 for 2 for Malays vs KV.

Altogether it was 104 wickets for 811 runs in 319.3 overs (69 maidens) averaging a little less than 8.

A familiar towering figure with an old tie as a belt round his waist to support his flannels, Khalid was a spectacle to watch when bowling.

He helped to found the Moors' Sports Club and was overjoyed when it managed to get a cricket ground at Braybrooke Place, Slave Island, Colombo 2, close to the Empire Theatre. The inside story of how this ground was obtained is not known popularly. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of West End Drapery Stores, a fashionable shop in Main Street, Pettah, Colombo 11, MLM Mackeen, was able to relate the story of how this ground came to the Moors Sports Club. he recalled,

*"The Moors Sports Club should really be grateful to Mr EW Kannangara for obtaining the grounds. The Moors did have their own grounds at Price Park in the early part of the century, however through neglect and lapse this ground was lost by the Club"*

*"The ground reclaimed from the Beira Lake at Muttiah Road and Braybrook Place was available and the Moors SC made a bid for it. However, their application was turned down."*

*"Fortunately and thankfully for the Moors, Mr EW Kannangara, CCS, became Office Assistant, Western Province Kachcheri and he had seen the Moor's application rejected by the authorities in the file."*

*"When Mr Kannangara met me at West End, he discussed with me the possibility of the Moors getting the ground if they re-applied. I informed the Moors SC Captain, HHM Mohideen and his inseparable friend CMM Mahroof (later Proctor) who was the Club's Honorary Secretary, at Hasana Drapery Stores."*

*"Mr Kannangara unstintedly supported the application and forwarded it to the Lands Ministry with his recommendation. Sir John Kotelawala was the acting Minister at that time and we had to appear in delegation before him. The delegation comprised HHM Mohideen, CMM Mahroof and myself."*

*"Sir John was an old classmate of mine at Royal College, Colombo, and we traded anecdotes of our old Schooldays. It was a pleasant meeting with Sir John recalling how he scored 50 for SSC vs Moors SC."*

*"The application was duly sanctioned. Mr Kannangara, with Town Mudaliyar Illangakoon and Kachcheri officials, officially handed over the grounds to the three of us."*

Khalid was one of those enthusiastic members who prepared the new ground and played in the first cricket match on it.

In 1956 Khalid was feted by Cathedral College, Kotahena, for completing 25 years on the staff, which he had joined on June 24, 1930, when the Rev GEH Arndt was the Manager. He was the Prefect of Games and chief assistant to the Boxing Instructor when Cathedral won the Stubbs Shield for schools boxing on four occasions.

During World War II, Khalid served in the Colombo Report Center of the Civil Defence Department as Officer-In-Charge of Mapping.

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## **A. C. M. LAFIR**

### **an incredibly brilliant batsman**

Sporting Personalities with Ken de Joodt: DN Sat Nov 25 2006

**SPORTING PERSONALITIES:** Amidst the green hills and misty mountains of the 'cleansing' climes of Kandy, it was the 'gentleman's game' of Cricket that captivated the hearts of many schoolboys, their parents and a wide circle of fans, to joyfully gather at the picturesque Cricket grounds and watch their 'Cricket Heroes' with intense interest.

Among them was a scintillating batsman of 'real class' and elegance whose techniques of 'twists and turns' of wrist and graceful use of feet were 'out of this world'!

He was a real treat to watch, whenever he was at the batting crease, bashing the little shiny 'cherry coloured' ball to all parts of the ground - and on numerous occasions - out of the grounds!!

It was in the 1950's that a dashing young cricketer, A. C. M. Lafir 'sprang-up' to dominate the batting scene, tearing the best of bowlers apart and entertained his numberless fans with brilliant stroke-play.

This was the 'real class' of a batsman, whose techniques and methods of play were meticulously perfected - with tremendous toil 'practice makes one perfect'!

What an incredible record 'A.C.M.' has established along his glorious pathway in Cricket, which began at St. Anthony's College, Kandy (Katugastota) in 1949. It was in an under 14 Inter-school cricket match that the famous, fabulous 1st XI SAC Coach, John Halangoda (an Old Trinitian) spotted Lafir's great talents, when he scored a splendid 60 runs.

With great gratitude to John Halangoda, from 1950 'A.C.M.' was picked to play for the 1st XI of St. Anthony's and went on to captain the college team for two memorable years! Through his consistency and excellence in batting during the season, he was selected to play for the Combined Colleges, skippered by Kenneth Serpanchy of St. Joseph's College.

Perhaps it may be simpler to 'find a needle in a haystack' than to list out the numerous centuries and half centuries scored during his 17 (seventeen) fascinating years of college, club and Sri Lanka representative cricket. Lafir's 'fantastic fifties' and 7 years of the seventy's, saw him 'notch-up' over 50 (fifty) centuries, 2 (two) double centuries and a number of scores past the '50 run' mark.

To briefly 'breeze' through his 'lengthy' list of achievements:

(1) in 1954, he was the first schoolboy from St. Anthony's College, to play for Sri Lanka, whilst yet in school, against the M.C.C. led by Sir Len Hutton.

(2) His distinguished service to the country, continued for a long 8 years period from 1954 to 1962.

(3) He scored the 'fastest 100' in 60 minutes against Ananda College Colombo, in 1954.

(4) A schools record for an opening stand of 266 runs by A. C. M. Lafir (176) and Ronnie Stephens (103) was established against Trinity College, which 'stands' to this day!

(5) Lafir was the first player on either side to make a century in the Gopalan trophy between Madras and C.C.A. President's XI in 1961.

(6) He led St. Anthony's in 1954 to become the unbeaten Inter-school Champions

(7) At the 'Big Match' he won four awards - Best Batsman, Best Bowler, Best all-rounder and Highest scorer.

(8) He scored over 1000 runs in '54 with an average of 108.06, breaking the record of 92.6 set in 1918 by the legendary Jack Anderson.

(9) He was the first batsman to win the Macan Markar Trophy awarded for the highest score of 256 not out, playing for Nomads vs University in 1966. He beat the previous best of 236 by Makin Salih.

(10) In 1954 A.C.M. Lafir won the Sri Lanka schools Best Batsman Award.

(11) A. C. M. skippered the Kandy schools and led them to victory over the powerful Colombo schools XI with a Captain's knock of 151 not out.

(12) His Mercantile record score of 236 against Rowlands.

(13) There are many more but space does not permit the listing to carry on!!

A. C. M. Lafir captained a strong, all-round Anthonian team who were unbeaten in 1954 and were 'unofficial' Inter-school cricket champions.

This 'mountain moving' team from the hills of Kandy, consisted of Ranjith Doranegama a good batsman, J. Sivananthan a master spinner of the ball, Ronnie Stephens a superb opening batsman, T. M. 'Tom' Deen fastest bowler in the schools in 1954, Cutbert Pereira School's Best Wicket-keeper, Saliya Doranegama an effective opening bowler, W. Premaratne an all-rounder (who was later elected the first 'Daily News - Schoolboy Cricketer of the Year' in 1956), Guy Fernando, J. Abdeen and Nihal Fernando, together with reserves Cecil Rodrigo, Adrian Berenger, C. Pamunuwa, Dicky Macky and Fred John.

This team was coached by Maurice Perera, a former Peterite and superb cricket commentator, who took over the coaching with the demise of John Halangoda in 1953.

On leaving College at the end of 1955, A. C. M. joined the police force as a sub-inspector. After a short period of service he got a 'break-through' in employment with an American Oil Company - Esso in 1957.

When Lafir played for Colombo Esso in a Stanvac '50 overs cricket tournament' in Bombay, he scored 60 runs out of a total of 62 (one run was a buy and Chinniah scored the other run and 'held the fort' until Lafir hammered 60 runs!!) to defeat Calcutta and win the Sinclair Trophy.

In 1962 he joined Lever Bros. Ltd. and played some match winning innings for the company. He did justice for Lever Bros. with a hurricane 121, which included 14 fours and 5 sixes, enabling Levers to regain the Lister Challenge Trophy from BCC in the 'Battle of the Soaps'!

A.C.M. also enrolled himself to play for Saracens Sports Club and established his place in the Sri Lanka team, with an impressive batting record, which had 27 centuries and 2 double centuries in the 'Sara' Trophy tournaments.



His batting performances for Sri Lanka were also outstanding, particularly his enterprising knock of 107 against Madras in 1955 and another century 132 runs, in the following year.

Some of his team-mates of the Sri Lanka side, captained by V. G. Prins, were C. I. Gunasekera, Dr. H. I. K. Fernando, Brian Claessen, Stanley Jayasinghe, C. T. Schaffter, Dooland Buultjens, P. N. Schokman, G. P. Schoorman, P. A. T. Kelly, N. Ponniah and M. Makkin Salih, who won the Gopalan Trophy.

In 1958 he was selected to play for All-Ceylon (Sri Lanka) team against the MCC, which was captained by Colin Cowdrey and had great England players of the past, like Tom Graveney, R. Subba Row, Peter Richardson, Trevor Bailey, Peter May, Frank Tyson, Jim Laker, Brian Statham, C. A. Milton and 'fiery' Freddie Trueman. Sri Lanka was captained by Vernon Prins, with co-members C. H. Gunasekera, A. C. M. Lafir, Michael Tissera, C. I. Gunasekera, A. Sethupathy, Dr. H. I. K. Fernando, Clive Inman, C. T. Schaffter, Tony Buhar, Malcolm Francke, 12th man Lasantha Rodrigo.

In 1960 the Pakistan Eaglets visited Colombo and played a three day match against the CCA led by C. I. Gunasekera which included Lafir and in the following year he played against India and scored a brilliant 55 runs. He also toured Malaca and Singapore in 1956 and 1957.

In 1961 the first consignment of Norm O'Neill cricket bats "Hydromatic Driver" was manufactured in Australia and imported by Dr. Subash Chawla's Sports firm Chands Ltd. At a special function to launch these new bats, an award to the first batsman to score 500 runs was made to A. C. M. Lafir by the Australian Trade Commissioner in Sri Lanka Desmond Mc Sweeney.

Once again in 1962, A. C. M. Lafir was selected to play for Sri Lanka against the MCC led by Ted Dexter in which Ken Barrington scored 93 runs before been dismissed by Abu Fuard, just 7 runs short of his century.

Dr. H. I. K. Fernando was named the Best Wicket Keeper in Asia by the Reuter's special correspondent Leslie Smith, for his splendid performance behind the stumps.

For his 84 runs in the test against the MCC, the British Trade Commissioner J. F. Saunders, awarded a prize for Sri Lanka's highest scorer to A. C. M. Lafir.

In 1975 Lafir opened his Cricket Coaching School at the Nomads grounds and conducted classes only on Saturdays, for boys between the ages of 12 to 15 years.

He recalled the names of some talented players who were coached by him, like Roshan Mahanama Asanka Gurusinghe, Nigel Fernando and many others who reached Sri Lanka levels.

In 1981 he decided to sojourn 'Down under' - to Melbourne Australia, with an intention to obtain employment and explore the possibilities of bringing his family over.

While he was there he took the opportunity to attend Frank Tyson's Coaching School at Monash and was awarded an intermediate coaching certificate registered with the Victorian Cricket Association.

Lafir also played cricket for the North Club on the invitation of Merrill Gunaratne a former Anthonian Captain of 1969, who scored a brilliant 139 against St. Josephs and more than 10 half centuries in his cricketing career. He is presently the active President of the Old Boys' Association in Melbourne, Australia.

By 1982, A.C.M. was back in Sri Lanka and glad to reunite with his family in his 'homeland'! His 'longest innings' has been with his charming wife Carmini (nee Ratnam) who is an English Graduate and continues in a Teaching profession.

They married in 1962 and 'bat-on' after 44 years of a happy and blessed 'partnership'! They produced a son Aashiq Cader Mohamed (ACM) Lafir jnr; (40 yrs.) who is today an accomplished Accountant with a double Degree and is working Director at United Motors. He is married to Lamina (nee Sameer) and has two daughters, Raahya (12) and Taahira (8).

In addition, ACM and Carmini have two daughters, Nirala (32) who works as an Executive Secretary and Mehra a Chartered Secretary, married to Mithila Mendis a Director of Airstan Telecommunications, who completed his degree in Electrical Engineering at Cambridge University, UK.

After his return to Sri Lanka his intention was to continue coaching and be active in the Cricket Fraternity.

However with the 1983 ethnic problems in the country ACM took up a two-year assignment in Saudi Arabia and when he came back in 1985 he had a great offer of employment in Bahrain, which he took and 'flew away' - until 1994!

He is presently Chairman of the Selection Committee of the Colombo District Cricket Association (CDCA), since June 2004, which covers approximately 65 Clubs. ACM has been a Match Referee for the Premier League matches and continues actively to this date.

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## **A L M LAFIR JP**

By the demise of ALM Lafir, JP., the Muslim community, especially the Moors, have lost a remarkable personality of rare grit, distinction and indomitable courage. The only son of Ahmed Lebbe, of a highly respectable family of Colombo, he was an alumni of Wesley College, Colombo, and was fastidious even in his school days, traveling daily in a rickshaw with electroplated rimmed wheels to and from College to his home in New Moor Street, Colombo.

He spoke polished English and won a Gold Medal in an Oratorical contest held at Zahira College, when he declaimed "Impeachment on Warren Hastings". He was the Secretary to the then Principal, T B Jayah, until the time when Colombo was bombed by Japan in 1942. His talent for organization became known and soon after he worked under Sir Mohammed Macan Markar.

He was a founder member of the All-Ceylon Moors' Association and was a member of the Association's delegation which appeared before the Soulbury Commission and

submitted a supplementary memorandum in the name of the Ceylon Moor Chamber of Commerce, without the knowledge of the Association, because one of the Jt. Hon Secretaries, Mr SM Ismail (the spokesperson), had opposed it. Mr ARA Razik (later Sir Razik Fareed), led the deputation. Lord Soulbury, quite surprisingly, took up this memorandum of the Moor Chamber before that of the main memorandum of the Association and began questioning Mr SM Ismail, the spokesperson, who dumb-foundedly hesitated to reply until the undaunted Mr Lafir stood up, with his monocle dangling, not unequal to that of Lord Soulbury's own.

His contact with A Hussain Macan Markar became even more closer. The two of them were the pioneers, amongst others, who founded the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH) in 1944 and even took up the responsibility of Hon Jt. Secretaries together with Mr AIL Marikar. In 1947 however, as excessive work necessitated an Administrative Secretary, Mr Lafir gave way for Mr MHM Kamil to take his place as Hon Jt Secretary. He took up the onerous post of Administrative Secretary which he carried out most successfully until he retired in 1979. However, he still remained an active member of the Board of Trustees – loyal, resolute and dedicated. He was also the Secretary of the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society Ltd. And the Serendib Sufi Study Circle, and Assistant Secretary to the Ceylon University Mosque Association, besides holding his parental link with the Zaviya Movement.

As a Justice of the Peace (JP), he held that office in high honor and integrity and served the people who went to him. He led a regulated life to furnish it with an illuminating record of service to the country and community – a life dedicated loyally to a cause, a mission that few dared to carry out, and a dream, he realized in his own lifetime.

His beloved wife, Saleema Noordeen, was a personality who was an example of Muslim womanhood – an avant garde type who held fast to the commands of Islam and Muslim society.

Saleema, realized correctly, that Islam has raised the status of women and that they could prosper if they live by its ideals, rather than be shackled by irreligious practices and alien customs. She inspired the other women to live ideal Islamic lives by her own example.

While still a maiden leading a sheltered life, Saleema was so progressive and prominent in women's affairs that special reference was made to her in a book "Muslim Womanhood in Revolution" by Syed MH Zaidi (Calcutta 1937).

Of the Muslim ladies in Ceylon who have taken a keen interest among the younger generation, Saleema will be remembered as an ardent well-wisher of her sex.

When she married ALM Lafir, who was then a Qazi for over a decade and held court at his residence, she was an asset to him, saving many a marriage from ending up on the rocks with her persuasive manner, personal charm and sweet reasoning, which helped to cement strained relations between contending parties. Usually these ended in compromises, settlement, and above all, reconciliation.

An United States expert, Fullbright Professor Harold Feldman, who watched the Qazi Court proceedings and the off-court reconciliation efforts, recorded, "The informality of the proceedings were most helpful in aiding the solutions of those difficult and complex

personal problems . . . . no one else could pay enough for this labor of love and love of justice and humanity I saw portrayed in your Court.”

Saleema was guided in this noble work by Islamic ideals. It was this same spirit which spurred her to spread bonhomie and cheerfulness to many families whenever relationships were strained, quoting the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) Hadees. And in an exemplary Islamic way her left hand did not know what her right hand offered as assistance to the needy.

To those into whose life she has brought sunshine is a great loss by her demise and everyone's prayer is that may Allah Grant her Paradise.

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## **MUHAMMAD JUNAID MUHAMMAD LAFIR**

### **World Billiards Champion 1973**

The unique success of Muhammad Junaid Muhammad Lafir in winning the World Amateur Billiards Championship in Bombay, in November-December 1973, being victorious against all his opponents and also scoring the highest break of 859, is an achievement without parallel in the annals of Sport in Sri Lanka.

Prior to this pinnacle of his success, MJM Lafir had participated in international championships in Billiards and Snooker in Edinburgh, Scotland, Malta, and Auckland New Zealand, since 1970, but had not won any of them.

At the World Snooker Tournament in Edinburgh, Scotland, in Oct-Nov 1970, Lafir defeated IL Glozier (NZ), Paul Mifsud (Malta), John Clint (N Ireland), D Sneddon (Scotland), but lost to John Phillips (Scotland) and Sidney Hood (England).

At the World Amateur Billiards Championships in Valeta, Malta, in Nov 1971, Lafir finished fourth defeating D Sneddon (Scotland), Paul Mifsud (Malta), Lance Napper (NZ) and losing to Manuel Fransisco (South Africa) in the preliminary rounds.

In Nov-Dec 1972, at the World Open Billiards Championship, held in Auckland, New Zealand, in which professionals as well as amateurs participated, Lafir lost to Clark McConachy (NZ), Eddie Charlton (Australia), Paddy Morgan (Ireland), Satish Mohan (India), Leslie Driffield (England) and Michael Ferreira (India) but won against C Everton (Wales), Jim Fryer (England), Kinsley Kennerly (England) and Jack Karneham (England). He failed to qualify for the Final Round.

Lafir won the World Amateur Billiards Championship, held in Bombay in Nov-Dec 1973, defeating all his opponents, viz; Clive Everton (Wales), Michael Ferreira (India), LU Demarco (Scotland), Alfred Nolan (England), Satish Mohan (India), Eric Simons (NZ), Brian Kirkness (NZ), Phil Tarrant (Australia), and Paul Mifsud (Malta).

On his return to Sri Lanka, after winning the title of World Amateur Billiard Champion, Lafir was given a red-carpet welcome on Dec 22 1973, and hosts of other receptions were awarded to him in celebrating the momentous and historical achievement. He was received and garlanded at the Airport by the Hon KB Ratnayake, Minister of Sports & Parliamentary Affairs, Hon Dr NM Perera, Minister of Finance, Hon Dr Badiudin Mahmud, Minister of Education, Hon Leslie Gunawardena, Minister of Transport, Mr I A Cader,

Deputy Speaker, Sir Razik Fareed and officials of the Billiards Control Council and the MICH.

Lafir and his wife, Misriya, were conducted in a long motorcade from the Bandaranaike International Airport through the more populous streets of Colombo where large crowds gathered to welcome him home and cheer his victory. He was given a rousing welcome at the MICH Fort and conducted to the Hall where many speeches of felicitation and honor were given by the VIP's present. A felicitation dinner was also arranged by the MICH, in honor of Lafir, at the Hotel Taprobane on Sunday Dec 23, 1973, where a bevy of 150 important and significant guests attended.

Lafir and his wife were also accompanied by the Hon Dr Badiudin Mahmud to pay courtesy calls on His Excellency Mr William Gopallawa, Governor General, and Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister, both of whom received him with right royal cordiality.

The Colombo Municipal Council accorded a civic reception in honor of MJM Lafir on Dec 31, 1973 with the Mayor, Mr Vincent Perera in the chair.

MJM Lafir made a valiant attempt to score a prestigious double when he participated in the World Amateur Snooker Championship in Dublin, Ireland, in Nov 1974. Although he won six of the eight matches he played in the preliminary rounds he lost in the quarter finals. Lafir won against ray Edmonds (England), holder and ultimate winner of the title, Shyam Shroff (India), John Skelazeski (Canada), Des Sheehan (Ireland), Geoff Thomas (Wales) and Patrick Donnelly (NZ) while he lost to Norman Stockman (NZ) and Eddie Sinclair (Scotland). He was beaten in the quarter finals by Pasqual Burke (Ireland) by 3 frames to 4. In the final round Ray Edmonds (reigning champion, England) beat Geoff Thomas (Wales) by 11 frames to 9.

### **Lafir, the Illustrious Loner**

By M M Thawfeeq, first Secretary of the Billiards Control Council of Sri Lanka and member of MICH

I have always maintained that Muhammad Junaid Muhammad Lafir was a rare genius and that there will never be another Lafir. There never was, though every national title winner is considered world class and sent at much expense to international competitions, only to be badly beaten.

Lafir was always a loner in his cue career. He was the only Sri Lankan to win a world title in any sport and the only cueist to be accorded a national welcome although he got none of the perks that were promised to him before he set off for the Championships.

He was the only cueist to win the National Billiards and Snooker titles over 30 times, performing the double thirteen times, the first and the only one to win the All India Snooker Championships, not once but six times, the first to become World Billiard Champion (1973) and Runner Up (1969), the only Sri Lankan to finish third (1963) and fourth (1965) in the World Snooker Championships, both times the best performance by an Asian.

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When he sublimated to World Competition after he made National title, winning was just routine and as regular and certain as the sunrise (32 titles in 20 years, a World Record). Lafir used all he learnt from the foreign cueists who played – Horace Lindrum, Bob Marshall, Tom Cleary, Wilson Jones, Frank Edwards and others. A foreign newspaper said that Lafir 'had the greatest touch the game has ever known'. There was no mystique or magic in his play, just cue mastered with micrometer exactness keeping the spectators spellbound and captured in crystalline silence. When he was pushed into world competition he had the bone-sure foreknowledge that though the opponrents were terra incognita, success here was no shoo-in or pushover. What was needed was pinpoint precision and consummate skill backed by dedicated practice. No gimmickry, no holus-bolus and pinchback pedantry about short cuts to success.

The story of Lafir and his brothers playing with brooms and marbles when they were kids is old hat. Wat is really not known is that when Lafir's champion cueist father "Vathyar" Junaid discovered him playing at the Hultsdorf "handey kadey", slapped him and drove him off. His friends pleaded with him, "Your son is playing remarkably for his age. He will be a Champion one day. Please let him go on." The "vathiar" relented.

That was the first prediction. When the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home discovered him and introduced him to big time Billiards and Snooker in national tournaments and exhibition matches with foreigners Bob Marshall, Horace Lindrum, Tom Cleary, Wilson Jones, and others marked him out as a coming World Champion. "Send him out, he has no competition here", was their advice. Again LKafir was to become the loner, the lone representative.

World Champion Bob marshall told the Australian Press, "There is a World Champion in the little Island of Ceylon. I know, for I have played with him."

Australian cue great Tom Cleary almost echoed that. Lafir was not only a Super Sportsman but humble and unobtrusive, even when riding on the Crest. He helped other cueists along as much as he learned from his superiors. Famous YMCA marker, Jainsabu Abdeen told me once, "While others thought they knew everything, Lafir was always willing to learn. I was so happy to help him and I was sure that such a player would one day hit the top."

The only time Lafir was ruffled was when injustice was done to him or to his fellow cueists. He would persue the issue to the bitter end. He was grateful to all who helped him, but in some cases they tried to exploit him, or even asked for too much from him. These attitudes made him sad, depressed and disconsolate. I remember talking it out with him round. Then he was Lafir all over!

Lafir was a loner in foreign countries but not only as a Sri Lankan Champion Player, but also as a one man Ambassador of Goodwill. Never did Sri Lanka owe so much for so long to one man, and that was Lafir. He was our lone Lion Flag Bearer.

The cueist, who, in the beginning of his career could gardly speak English, in fact his answer to an opponents query, "What's your highest break?", was only "Yes", soon picked up the language fast with every international contest. Not only was he quite at home with the foreign players but became their darling as he spread bonhomie and good humor.

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In 1963, when the first official World Snooker Championships was held in Calcutta, he lost by a whisker to Frank Harris, missing the vital blue. In the final decider the crowd was stunned when Gary Owen, the winner, cast his cue aside and embraced and kissed Lafir.

Lafir, who finished No 3 in this tournament made friends of all the players. To Gary Owen, who was fascinated by Lafir's own colloquial term for girl friend, "namdar", autographed for Lafir, "To my friend Lafir, a great player and a first rate Sportsman and in the rush, not too much of namdar"

Frank Harris wrote, "To Lafir, a fine player and Sportsman".

In the second World Snooker Championships, held in Karachi in 1965, Lafir finished No 4 to Gary Owen (England), John Spencer (England) and Bill Barrie (Australia). He here befriended Scotland's representative, L V Demarco, who wrote, "I'll never compete in any tournament unless our Lafr is there."

At the World Billiards Championships in Bombay, in 1973, which he won, he nicknamed Clive Everton (Wales), "Beauty Queen", for his handsome appearance and measured steps like a beauty queen contestant walking down the ramp. Alf Noland (England) was "No nap" due to his bald head. The sobriquets stuck. All the foreign players took Lafir to their heart – a perfect Ambassador.

When an Indian Championship protested and sulked in his room, it was Lafir, who was also a competitor, who talked him out of walking out and persuaded him to carry on like a true sportsman.

While the Billiard World hailed him we Sri Lankans were not so appreciative – a Prophet is never honored in his own country – and all that blah blah! Perhaps they took him for granted? Lafir was a loner even when he reached the peak of his career, winning the World Billiards Championship in Bombay in 1973. Though he beat every opponent (the only one to do so), Clive Everton (Wales) 1110-1094, Michael Ferreira (India) 1652-1267, I V De Marco (Scotland) 2850-624, Alfred Nolan (England) 1217-1131, Satish Mohan (India) 2213-1079, Eric Simmons (New Zealand) 2189-796, Brian Kirkness (New Zealand) 2032-1002, Phil Tarrant (Australia) 1775-1281, and Paul Mifsud (Malta) 1917-1427, and scored the highest break of 859 against Simmons, and the second highest score of 2850, the situation was that India's Satish Mohan had to lose to Clive Everton, a most unlikely happening, if Lafir was to clinch the title.

It did happen and though Lafir heard the news at a private dinner party he could not sleep through sheer joy and excitement. "I tossed about in bed, all alone in the dark unable to dose off. Though it was the most glorious moment of my life, it was also my loneliest." He recalled to me.

It is a pity that his last World Billard Tournament held here in 1980 was his unhappiest – his own compatriots being the guilty party. Some of the Billiards Association officials made life and Championship play hell for him. Petty jealousy and a sustained campaign to make him lose. How unpatriotic? Really, high treason. But they got away with it.

But, his standing, both at home and abroad was high. Tributes to him poured from all quarters when he died. The most touching was that by Clive Everton who competed with

Lafir so many times and the editor of the Snooker Scene Magazine in the United Kingdom.

Lafir became a deeply unhappy man in the last few years of his life because of the visious internal squabbling within his National Association. In a sense, I believe, he died f a broken heart.

HYaving knwn him for some 23 years and having competed against him on several occasions, I was extremely fodn of him. I know that the same feeling is shared by many British Players, like Norman Dagley was was very saddened when he heard of his death.

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## **Al Haj M. LAFIR CASSIM**

A life of dedicated and fruitful service to the Muslim community  
***AL Haj M. Lafir Cassim***

Al-Haj M. Lafir Cassim popularly known as "Lafir Haji" passed away peacefully at his Kohuwela residence at the age of 79 on April 6, after a dedicated and fruitful service to the Muslim community in the field of social, educational, religious and cultural activities. Haji Lafir Cassim was a pioneer and founder member of the All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association conference (Y.M.M.A.). When the Y.M.M.A. conference was formed he became its founder secretary when its president was no lesser person than senator Haji A. M. A. Azeez, the first Muslim civil servant and former Principal of Zahira College, Maradana.

He worked tirelessly along with senator Haji Azeez and other intellectuals to create a new generation of men worthy of the highest traditions of Islam and capable of the highest deeds to serve their country in every branch of modern life. His initial association was with the Maligawatte Jumma Mosque, Raulathus Shazulia Association and Maligawatte Y.M.M.A. These associations brought the youngsters of the Maligawatte area to the forefront of social, religious and cultural activities. He was the Secretary of the All Ceylon Y.M.M.A. conference from 1950 to 1952 throughout senator Haji A. M. A. Azeez's period as President of the Y.M.M.A. In 1957, he became the eighth President of the Y.M.M.A. conference succeeding veteran politician Al-Haj M. Falil A. Caffoor MP, prominent business entrepreneur Al-Haj M. A. Razak, former Principal of Zahira College S.M.H. Mashoor and veteran municipal councillor S.B.A. Hameed . Haji Lafir Cassim was solely responsible for starting the Maligawatte Y.M.M.A. in 1949 prior to the All Ceylon Y.M.M.A. conference at 179, Maligawatte Road at his residence which was also used as the headquarters to discuss matters relating to the Y.M.M.A. At the time of his death he was a patron of the National Council of Y.M.M.As of Sri Lanka and was also one of the trustees of the Maligawatte Jumma Mosque.

He displayed his efficiency, honesty and integrity as a competent youth leader under the guidance of late senator A. M. A. Azeez to organize the activities of the Y.M.M.A. conference from its infancy.

Mr. Cassim was also active in another voluntary organization "The Ceylon Baitul Mal Fund". This association provided him the opportunity to focus more on the needs of the poor such as providing scholarships to needy students, financing weddings of the needy, making provision for medical treatment etc.



The people of Maligawatte remember him with gratitude for the numerous services he rendered to them.

**M. Fowzul Aleem Farook** British Players, like Norman Dagley was very saddened when he heard of his death.

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## LAKHANY

The founder of the **Lakhany** in Ceylon, Ishaq Lakhany, wa a prominent personality in Kutiyana. He is said to have built Nawi Masjid, also known as Rasool Wari Masjid (in which he served as Mutawalli). A generous host, he is said to have had a house by the side of the Mosque which had a large portico. He would lay mattresses and large pillows where friends and VIP's would come in the mornings and evenings to enjoy some puffs of the Hookah.

Aboobucker, eldest son of Ishaq Lakhany, was popularly known as Bakar Lakhany, and had a business in Dalagoba, East Africa, to which he made voyages to Bombay in luxury steamers returning home from Africa once every five years. His son Ismail also had business connections with Africa, owning a factory in Laurenco-Marques in Portuguese East Africa. With the riots that followed the partition of India, in 1947, he arrived in Ceylon to move his family to Africa but died during the course of his short stay in the island. It was, thus, that his family came to reside in Sri Lanka.

Ismails son, Aboobucker, having lost his father, in 1948, was looked after by his maternal uncle, Abdullah Abba Lakhany, who, having only five daughters looked upon him as his own son. In the late 1960,s, Aboobucker, having lost both his mother and grandmother, took to music and had a local musical band known as Electronics Band. In 1971, he married into the well known Bhaila family. Two of his sons, Ismail and Ishaq, are successful businessmen dealing in textiles.

Abdul Karim's son, Yoosuf, started his own enterprise called Y A Karim & Company but closed it down when WWII broke out. He later joined Abdul Latif Sulaiman & Company, and during 1950, at a time of a threat of yet another war, when the state owned Ceylon Wholesale Establishment purchased textiles worth Rs 50 lakhs, Yoosuf alone supplied Rs 40 lakhs worth of it, solely imported by Abdul Latif Sulaiman & Company. He subsequently ran his own business, Multitraders, through which he imported textiles, dried fish, red chillies, and other commodities.

Abdul Sattar, eldest son of Yoosuf Lakhany, had two sons Na'eem and Rehan, both of whom excelled in the field of corporate management. Na'eem gathered a wealth of experience, having served in various companies, among them Ammirati Puris LDB LINTAS, one of the largest and fast growing advertising agencies, as Strategic Planner & Operations Specialist, and Phoenix Ogilvy & Mather, another front line ad agency as Account Manager. He is presently General Manager, Business development and Operations of Tradesmann SL (pvt) Ltd, a large local conglomerate involved in the manufacture and sale of hardware, tyres, and roofing sheets. The firm has manufacturing plants and sales offices in South East Asia, UAE & Africa.

Rehan also excelled in management. Having joined Timex Garments, a Memon Company, as a Management Trainee in 1996, he rose to the position of General Manager at the new Timex Plant in Nittambuwa. He later went on to join Hemas

Garments as a General Manager for two of its plants. He was later promoted to Director, Operations, and thereafter joint Managing Director of Hemas Garments, now known as Hela Clothing (pvt) Ltd., and the Fielding Group of Sri Lanka.

Haleema Yasmin, daughter of Abdul Sattar Lakhany, passed out from the Kathleen School of Dress Making and the Institute of Western Music & Speech. A registered teacher of IWMS, she presently teaches at Colombo's premier school for Muslim Boys, Zahira College. She is married to Hafeez Bhutta, perhaps the only pharmacist of the Memon Community, who runs a pharmacy in Colombo.

Abdul Karim, a younger son of Yoosuf Lakhany, took to business. Having started as a Shroff/Clerk at M Haroon & Sons at Keyzer Street in the mid 1960's, he soon gathered a wealth of experience serving in various other Memon firms like K H Kassim, Sirrul Khadeer and before long embarked on his own going on to set up Mid City Marketing Private Ltd., which is into the importing of food commodities, viz dates, dry fish. He was, for many years, the Chief Organizer of the two Eid Prayers held at the Galle Face Green.

Aqeela, daughter of Abdul Karim Lakhany, is a Gold Medallist for Public Speaking and an Associate Diploma Holder from the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in Recital of Verse, Prose and Drama. She is also a qualified web developer working from home on various website projects.

Abdul Karim's younger daughters, Nusrath and Sakeena, both chose a career in teaching. Nusrath, who holds a Diploma in Pre-Primary education and a Certificate in Child Art & Equipment, is a teacher in the Kindergarten of Asian International School. Her sister Sakeena, who is studying for her Diploma in Speech and Drama at the LAMDA Institute, is a Speech and Drama Teacher at Royal Institute.

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## **LYE FAMILY HISTORY**

Baba Aboo Sallay Lye the founder of our Lye Family in Sri Lanka, accompanied Dutch Governor William Falk to Ceylon (as the island was then called) in the year 1765. Captain Baba Lye came as second in command for the whole regiment and the chief in command was Colonel William Falk who was also the Governor (1765 – 1785AD).

Captain Baba Aboo Sallay Lye died in 1805 at Kalpentyn (presently called Kalpitiya, a peninsula north west of Sri Lanka).

The following piece of information is an extract taken from one of the "Kithabs" that was in the possession of Baba Muhajireen Lye belonging to his father Baba Juhar Lye, son of Captain Baba Aboo Sallay Lye.

Quote:

" Our original ancestor Capatain Baba Lye whose native place is Samarang in Street Kampong Patnakan on de Jambathan Leema de Peethak Simbilan – Captain Lye's relatives all reside in that place above-named. Nationality - "Perkan Cheena".

Unquote:

The Baba Name roots is also interesting. The most important thing was the extract in the Kitab which helped to identify the Baba Lye's as "Pernakan Cheena" and its meaning by B.D.K Saldin (from the Wikipedia) who is married to my first Cousin. The fantastic thing is it traces back to the 5th garden after the 9th Bridge in that locality in Java, in Samarang. It would be a great thing if you could include this very important information in the SL gen webside

### **Wikipedia:**

[Peranakan, Baba-Nyonya and Straits Chinese](#) (named after the [Straits Settlements](#)) are terms used for the descendants of the very early [Chinese](#) immigrants to the [Nusantara](#) region, including both the [British Straits Settlements](#) of [Malaya](#) and the Dutch-controlled island of [Java](#) among other places, who have partially adopted [Malay](#) customs in an effort (chronological adaptation) to be assimilated into the local communities.

The word Peranakan is also used to describe [Chinese Indonesians](#). In both [Malay](#) and [Indonesian](#), 'Peranakan' means 'descendants'. Babas refer to the male descendants and the Nyonyas the female. The word *nyonya* (also commonly spelled **nonya**) may originate from the Portuguese word *dona*, which means 'lady'.

Most Peranakan are of [Hoklo \(Hokkien\)](#) ancestry, although a fair denomination of them are of the [Teochew](#) or [Cantonese](#) descent. Written records from the 19th and early 20th centuries show that Peranakan men usually took brides from within the local Peranakan community. Peranakan families also commonly imported brides from China and sent their daughters to China to find husbands. A small group of Indian Peranakans, known as the [Chitty](#), does exist as well. Another similar group of Eurasian Peranakans also exist as [Kristang people](#)

The following piece of information is an extract taken from one of the "Kithabs" (books) that is in possession of Baba Muhajireen Lye which belonged to his father Captain Baba Juhar Lye, son of Captain Baba Aboo Sallay Lye:

"Our original ancestor Captain Baba Lye whose native place is Samarang in Street Kampong, PATNAKAN, on de Jambathan Leema de Peethak, Simbilam. Captain Lye's relatives all reside in that place above-named. Nationality :PERNAKAN CHEENA".

Regards,

**Shiraz Lye, Colombo, Sri Lanka**

N.B. All these years we just knew the verbose information that our first ancestor in Sri Lanka was one **Captain Baba Lye**. Also we had learned that the first name "Baba" (Which all the Lye men-folk carry to-date) signified Chinese Ancestry. This is indeed a valuable piece of information and and I hope someone can trace the ancestors on the other side of the water attempt must be make to follow up.

"Baba", on the other hand is also an Arabic word which means "Father". The "Lye" family name could have easily originated as a Chinese name "Lee" which may have transformed into Lye through time. The prefix "Baba" could have easily been attached to

the Lye family, as a form of respectful address for the males, on account of their conversion to Islam, through the Arab travelers who set foot in the far east for trade in the early 20th Century. This is only a possible conjecture which needs to be researched and confirmed.

### **More info received from Shiraz Lye in Colombo on Aug 1 2007:-**

Hi

The Baba Name roots is also interesting. The most important thing was the extract in the Kitab which helped to identify "Pernakan Cheena" and its meaning by B.D.K Saldin (from the Wikipedia) who is married to my first Cousin. The fantastic thing is it traces back to the 5th garden after the 9th Bridge in that locality in Java. It would be a great thing if you could include this very important information in the SL gen website

Regards,

**Shiraz Lye, Colombo, Sri Lanka - 2007**

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### **B ZAHIERE LYE**



B. Zahiere Lye was an Appointed Member of Parliament who spent most of his time in maintaining the image and unity of the Malay Community in Sri Lanka. He was married to Mashmoon, daughter of M.K.Saldin the first Malay to be represented in the Legislature.

As President of the All Ceylon Malay Association (now known as Sri Lanka Malay Association) he established cultural and social contacts with Malay leaders of the world. The Sultan of Selangor, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, the Governor of Singapore and the Deputy Prime Minister are only some of the Malay dignitaries who were entertained at the Association when he was President. The then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman was a special friend of Mr. & Mts. Lye whom he befriended when they were in London in 1947. A special invitation was sent to them to attend the independence celebrations in K.L as state guests from August 30<sup>th</sup>. to September 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1957.

Zahiere Lye has been the General Secretary of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club (which is the oldest Sri Lankan Cricket Club) from 1927 to 1934, the Club Captain for ten years and the President of the Cricket Club and Sri Lanka Malay Association from

1951-1964. He has actively served the Club and Association for a continuous period of over 40 years. He took great pains to encourage and improve all activities in the club be it cricket, hockey or netball.

The Club grounds and pavilion at Rifle Green, which was the home of the Malays for a period of 85 years, were commandeered during the war in 1942 by the British Army. It was subsequently taken over by Government of Sri Lanka in 1957 for construction of the new Police station and officers' quarters. After prolonged negotiations with the Government Mr.Lye with his committee were able to obtain for the Malays an alternative site at Kew Road. The club was also offered a Police hut at the new premises to serve for sometime as a pavilion and office. It was Zahiery Lye along with a few dedicated members who kept alive the club by regular gatherings and meetings. Finally by dint of hard work and effort by the President and committee, a new Pavilion was constructed. On the occasion of opening the pavilion September 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1960 by the then Governor General, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Mr.Lye declared that the new pavilion would be known as the 'Padang' - the new home of the Malays.

The Sri Lanka Malay Association Rupee Fund will stand as a lasting monument of the service to society by Zahiery Lye and his wife Mashmoon . The Fund which was inaugurated in May 1953 was the brainchild of Mashmon Lye. Annual distribution of rice and cash to thousands of poor families, annual treats to poor children, monthly assistance to pensioners, scholarship scheme for higher education and vocational training to the young on computing, English language and typewriting are some of the forms of assistance given to the needy and less privileged. Mr.Lye as the Founder President and Mrs. Lye as General Secretary guided the Fund with the able assistance of a band of dedicated Committee members.

In recognition of the Fund's services to the needy and less fortunate the Fund receives an Annual Grant from the Department of Social Services and is recognized as an Approved Charity. In 1978 it was Incorporated by an Act of Parliament.

Besides giving fresh life to sports activities Zahiery Lye made the Padang the focal point of all social, cultural and social service activities of the Malays. The Malay community owes a deep debt of gratitude to Zahiery Lye, the dynamic leader for the great leap forward made by the community as a result of his progressive ideas and actions.

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## **AI Haj AHMED HUSSAIN MACAN MARKAR**

### **Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar (AH): his life was exemplary**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen097.html>

July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1985 was a sad day for the Muslim community. When the Muezzin's call for Dhuhr Prayer from the Kuppiyawatte Mosque rent the air, his mortal remains were lowered into the grave. Fourteen years have gone by (2002) but sadly the vacuum created by his death has not been filled in the political, social or educational areas of the Muslim community.

Hailing from a family whose ancestral home was in Galle and the ancestral trade was gems, Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar proved to be a Gem of a Man and a real many faceted gem that adorned the community.

After completing his studies at Royal College, Colombo he proceeded to U.K. to enter the University of Cambridge. He returned to Sri Lanka, then as Ceylon as a Barrister-at-Law, not to serve as an erstwhile lawyer but to serve his country and community as a politician and a social worker.

"A.H." as he was popularly known, cut his teeth as a politician in local politics. He untiringly served the people of the Maligakanda Ward for nearly two decades and was one time Deputy Mayor. In parliamentary politics, he chose to represent far off Kalkudah and later Batticaloa seats, where lived a concentration of Muslims needing education for economic and social upliftment. As a politician in both areas - local and national he was sincere, honest and forthright - qualities which many a politician lack in current times. He always had the courage of his conviction to do what he thought was right. When the United National Party - the party to whom he belonged proposed a vote of no confidence on then sitting Mayor of Colombo, dr. N.M. Perera, "A.H." pleaded against the motion thus... "let him carry on, don't be overshadowed by self interest and petty jealousies. It will be the darkest day if we remove such an illustrious figure from our midst."

In his zeal for social service in general, and his goal for the progress of his own community, he actively participated in the activities of many organizations. He was the co-founder and the Honorary Joint Secretary and Treasurer of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (Inc.) from its inception and the vice president of the All Ceylon Moors' Association. He was also closely associated with the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society, Peradeniya University Mosque Committee, Ceylon Moor Chamber of Commerce, the Saracen Sports Club and many other societies.

The MICH building in the Fort of Colombo is a permanent monument that silently speaks of his untiring efforts. The university mosque occupying a picturesque spot on the campus of Peradeniya is another edifice that illustrates his zeal and vigour.

Coming to "A.H.", the man, he was simple unassuming and philanthropic. When he was representing the Maligakanda Ward, he was often seen walking along Dematagoda Road serving the poor and needy, when his wealth and status allowed him to ride in a limousine and was meticulously careful with public funds. In this sphere he was a great admirer and ardent follower of the Great Caliph of Islam Hazrat Oma (R.H.)

Thus, Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar was indeed a great and upright man. As a politician, social worker and above all a Muslim, he is an example worthy of emulation. Let us hope - even after 14 years, many an honest Muslim statesman will rise to fill the vacuum created by his death ere long.

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### **Sithy Macan Markar, wife of Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar**

It was a world of opulence and gracious living, where crystal tableware gleamed and sparkled and silver cutlery graced the, long, polished ebony dining table, too beautiful to be shrouded by a table cloth.

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Here, in this palatial house on Church Street in Galle, with a massive door studded with huge brass fittings guarding the entrance, lived one of Sri Lanka's most famous and affluent families, the Macan Markar's.

Of the Macan Markar brothers, one was knighted by the British sovereign. Sir Muhammad Macan Markar was an active participant in Sri Lankan politics as was his son Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar, a lawyer who counted many decades in Municipal politics, being elected Deputy Mayor of Colombo.

In national politics he served as a United National Party representative from the electorate of Kalkudah for many successive tenures of Parliament.

Our heroine, Sithy Macan Markar, married Hussain – her cousin, thereby making her uncle her father-in-law.

Her father, SD Macan Markar, brother of Sir Muhammad, looked after and nurtured the family's Jewellery shop, legendary for its craftsmanship and valuable gems throughout the world.

Sithy grew up in style, "I wore knee length frocks, knee high socks, court shoes with heels, and a hat". At school, Ladies College Colombo, the Principal, Miss Opie, pulled me up for being over-dressed. I wore gold bangles, fancy shoes and silk socks and they offended her puritanical tastes. Besides, a fancy shawl covered my head.

Her grey-green eyes sparkled as she recalled, "In those days we lived in huge houses. We had one in Galle where my wedding was held and one in Colombo, which today houses the Petroleum Corporation. I had three maids allocated to me by my doting mother. I was not allowed to lift a hand to do any work."

:However, on the sly, I swept and dusted my own room. The kitchen, with its many fireplaces was forbidden territory for me. When I was only eight, I walked along a back corridor into the kitchen. A frantic cook and kitchen maid threatened to report me to my mother. Unlettered, I made a curry of vegetables, took some bread, called my three maids, Alice, Emeline and Caroline, and together we sat and ate on the lawn."

"I used to drive, in purdah, to see my friends, Dulcie and Girlie Jayawardene, daughters of EW Jayawardene. A kindly Mrs Jayawardene always tried to keep me for a meal, but being in purdah my mother did not approve. Besides, there were JR (Dickie, as we called him), Freddie, Corbett and the rest lurking around, curious to see a girl in purdah! In those days, besides being in purdah, we were always chaperoned".

Sithy's face grew sober and tears welled up in her eyes when she recalled the death of her mother, aged 33 years at that time, leaving a much-loved daughter of only twelve years.

"A terrible gloom was cast on my life. It took me a long while to regain my composure. I was really devastated by her death. She died in childbirth and so it fell to my lot to "mother" my brother, Muhammad, and sister, Halima. My father, after a while, married again, Sithy Abbassiyah, the widow of his brother Muhammad Salih. She was kind and good, but very orthodox in her views. I recall that my friends, Leela, Dulcie, and Girlie, came to our house in Galle to spend a weekend. With them came Freddie and Dickie

(JR). A flustered step-mother called my father in Colombo and what she might do with the two personable young lads. He advised that they eat at our house and sleep at my mother's house".

"When I was nineteen, my father arranged a marriage for me to my cousin Hussain, who had returned from London qualified as a Barrister. We had somehow seen each other before although we were not allowed to meet and socialize as was the custom within the community. Hussain came home daily, ostensibly to play cricket, but hoping to catch a glimpse of me! I used to play the piano and so he used to send me words of love songs which he requested me to play. I thought, at that time, that it was, indeed, romantic. At his request, I made a fruit cake for him and after we were married Hussain complained that I never made a tasty cake ever!"

"Our wedding was held in Galle. My father bought Count de Mauny's furniture for my apartment, consisting of a bedroom and a drawing room in my father-in-law's house. The furniture was made of ebony and the walls were painted by Russian artists in gold and violet. The walls of my bedroom were in silver and mauve".

Hospitality has always been a tradition of the Macan Markar family until this day. No friend who visited left without a large gift bought from Paris or London by the Macan Markar brothers who traveled every six months. Thus, the wedding, in the palatial house at Church Street, Galle, was a big event and the Daily News of August 11, 1937, devoted a good half page to it.

"There were hundreds of white electric bulbs, which ensured an atmosphere of welcome. The staircase was a haven of loveliness with masses of pale pink carnations, with the two sides of the staircase meeting in a canopy of flowers and greenery. My stepmother personally supervised the décor".

"My wedding cake was in the shape of a lotus with tall columns rising on either side of a pool, from the center of which rose a large lotus bloom – my cake in pink and silver".

"My father and stepmother did me proud with over a thousand guests at the wedding. In those days this type of wedding was certainly possible".

"After my wedding, I lived with my in-laws. My mother-in-law was very strict. So I asked my friends to visit me at 3 pm and leave at 4 pm while she slept for an hour. You might think that being in purdah was irksome. Not quite. We used to attend the Royal-Thomian match and from behind our purdah, in the car, we threw eggs".

"I have been working at the shop for over twenty years and the gem trade is well known to me. I have talked, sometimes, for over two hours, to a single buyer. When the children came I moved into this present house with over fifteen rooms and mainly out-houses".

Sithy presides with taste and elegance over this large house, the gracious chatelaine ever-ready with entertainment for friends and relatives. "I have helped my husband in electioneering, sat in mud huts, eaten off plantain leaves, and instructed the illiterate women of Kalkudah on how to mark the cross on the ballot and the value of the vote".

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"It was strenuous and my husband won his seat, so it was workable. He always contested as a member of the UNP until 1977 when he crossed over to the SLFP and lost his seat. I was totally against his crossing over. Now he is dead and that is the only sorrow I have".

"I have three daughters, three great grand children, all girls, and one grandson, all of whom I am ver proud of".

Sithy Macan Markar epitomizes an era when living was bountiful, gracious, and ever friendly. Those days can never, conceivably, come back, though Sithy, in her own way, still maintains some characteristics of the living of those wonderful times. – **The Sunday Times Sep 20 1992**

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## **MADAR LEBBE MUHAMMAD MACKEEN**

Madar Lebbe Muhammad Mackeen, son of Seisma (Sheikh Ismail) Lebbe Madar Lebbe, was educated at Royal College in Colombo. He was a member of the Moors Town Guard, Colombo, during the Great War 1914-1918 and was sectional ARP Warden during World War II 1939-1945.

Mackeen was the Life Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors of West End Drapery Stores Ltd, which he successfully built up over the years to a position of high repute. He was also a director in other commercial and industrial ventures. He was also the Vice Chairman of the Ceylon Merchants Chamber during the years 1951-1954.

Apart from his close associations with the commerce and trade of the country, Mackeen has devoted his resources and energies to educational and Social Service matters. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees and of the Committee of Management, besides the the President in 1947, of the Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund. He founded a scholarship in memory of his son Shahul Hameed Mackeen. He was ex-Chairman of the Workers' Resort of the Ceylon Social Service League; member of the CNAPT and a founder of the charitable institution known as "Shahul Hameed Mackeen Memorial Society Ltd." And old member of the Moors' Sports Club, and a prime mover in obtaining the grounds at Muttiah Road for the club.

Mackeen married Wajiha Umma, daughter of C.M. Uduma Lebbe Marikar, and they had three daughters and a son now deceased as follows:-

- (a) Sithy Zoheriya, who married Mansoor Abdul Cader, a hard headed businessman and only son of AMM Abdul Cader. They had two sons, Muhammad Fareed, married to Mehfuzathul Kareema Ariff (d/o AJM Ariff) and Majeed Abdul Cader married to Ilham Muhammad, and a daughter Ummu Habiba married to Muhammad Jazeed Ariff (s/o AJM Ariff).
  - (b) Noorul Haseena, married to Dr. Mohideen Hassan, senior Physician Maradana Nursing Home. They had an only son Muhammad Fairoze married to Firdaus Mahroof.
  - (c) Izzathul Habeeba, marriede to AMM Sideek younger son of bookshop magnate WMA Majeed. Their daughter Sithy Zureikha is married to Omar Kamil, (s/o MHM Kamil) ex Mayor of Colombo and presently Ambassador to Iran.
  - (d)** An only son Shahul Hameed who died in a tragic motor accident close their home at Norris Canal Road at Maradana.
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## **MAGHOORA**

The Maghoora family of Ceylon originates with Haji Ismail Maghoora, who founded a textile trading company called Ismail Bawa & Company in third cross street Pettah, way back in 1942. His family came to Ceylon in 1948 and it was not long before his three sons, Abdul Sattar, Sulaiman and Mohammed were helping their father run the business. Ismail, popularly known as Ismail Bawa, was a prominent member of the Memon Community and was a founder member of the Memon Association of Ceylon, when it was established in the mid 1950's. Haji Ismail's two eldest sons, Abdul Sattar and Sulaiman, ventured on their own and jointly established a firm called, Abdul Rahim Trading Company at Keyzer Street in the Petah, which dealt in textiles and plastic rollings. The younger son Mohammed, decided to stay in the business with his father and continues to run Ismail Bawa's.

Sulaiman, went on to establish Maghoora's, a textile firm in Keyzer Street in 1972. He later established a textile manufacturing plant called, Magsons Synthetic Textile Industries in Ratmalana and a textile processing plant dealing with dyeing, finishing and printing of fabric at Hekitta, Wattala, called Maghoora's Industries (pvt) Ltd. In these ventures he was helped by his two sons, Iqbal and Yoonus, who now serve as Directors of this family business. Iqbal's eldest son Ishreth also joined the business and is presently CEO of Maghoora's Industries.

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## **T. H. MAHAMOOD**

Hansard Reporter, Parliament

Mr. Mahamood is now 82 years of age and lives with his daughter in California. He first served at Messrs. Dodwell & Company.

Then he sat the Government Stenographers' Examination and on being selected served at the Department of Medical and Sanitary Services (presently Health Department).

He was later selected to the Parliamentary service as Hansard Reporter.

After retiring from Parliament at the age of 60, he worked in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and from there moved to the company of his sponsor at Nigeria.

Now he is fully retired and is enjoying life as an artist and multifaceted handyman.

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## **SINNA LEBBE MAHMOOD HAJJAR 1868 - 1940**

Sinna Lebbe Mahmood Hajjar, born in September 1868, was the son of P T Sinna Lebbe, a wealthy merchant of Pettah. He received his English education at Wesley College. He studied Arabic under Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim who lived next door. He took up to business with his elder brother S L Abdul Rahim. He visited several Muslim countries in 1883 accompanied by his Arabic tutor. Their first visit was to Egypt. They then proceeded to Istanbul. Subsequently they visited Makkah and performed the Hajj pilgrimage and returned to Colombo.

S L Mahmood Hajjar contributed a sum of two thousand rupees towards a sum of twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees needed for the erection of houses for Zahira College.

Having made contacts with merchants in Arab countries, Mahmood Hajjar commenced exporting Ceylon produce and importing Middle Eastern products.

When the Muhammadan seat in the Legislative Council fell vacant in 1900 his name was submitted by a section of the Moors for nomination. He was the Secretary of the Jammiyathul Hameediah Educational Association which conducted the Hameediah School.

During his visit to England he visited Liverpool where Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam was carrying on Islamic propaganda and the British newspapers referred to him as a Singhalese Muslim. Early Muslims who settled in Ceylon were of the orthodox Sunnat Jama'at.

They followed the Shafi School of jurisprudence. S L Mahmood Hajjar was a keen student of Islamic Mysticism and well versed in Arabic. The Moors lived in the Moorish quarter of New Moor Street and Old Moor Street and the surrounding areas. After the First World War some Moors like A M Wapchi Marikar, Haji Ismail Effendi, M L M Ismail, S M L M Haniffa and a few others started migrating to Colombo South. Many other Moors followed suit.

SL Mahmood Hajjar was also one of the members of the Muslim congregation who was responsible for solving the issues that prevailed between the Shazuliya and Khadiyya sects during that era. His patience, understanding, and mitigation served the cause that, could have easily erupted into a serious situation, with sense and calm.

He was the Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, and was a prominent member of Salihi Thakkiya of Abdul Gani Bawa and President of the Jama-Athus Salihiya Burda Majlis.

He was conferred the title of Justice of the Peace by the Government and also was on the Fez Committee.

He passed away on June 24, 1940 at the age of seventy two and was buried at Maligawatte. He had one son, Muhammad Yusuf and three daughters, Nafia Mohideen, Ameena Mohideen and Ummu Thahira Naina-Marikar.

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## **ABOOCKER ISMAIL LEBBE MARIKAR 1907-1992**

AlHaj Aboobucker Ismail Lebbe Marikar, affectionately known as AIL Marikar, was destined to serve the community by the Will of Allah, for over two decades. Be it, the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, All Ceylon Moors' Association, Ceylon Moor Chamber of Commerce, Ceylon Moslem Educational Society, Maradana Jumma Mosque, Peradeniya University Mosque Association, Syed Jiffry Moulana memorial Trust, AIL was one of those at the helm to deliver the goods. AIL Marikar's ancestry can be traced back to Prince Jalaludeen of Armania. His father was ABLIL Marikar, a specially reputed Ceylon Moor English book seller. AIL was born on August 10 1907 at his ancestral home at No 263 Dam Street, Colombo 01200.

He had his early education at Hameedia School and later moved to Wesley College in Pettah during the Principalship of the Rev Highfiweld. He passed the London Matriculation Examination with honors in History and English Literature.

He chose to pursue his fathers business instead of venturing into higher education. Later, he started an indenting agency on his own under the name of "Cey-Jap Mercantile Agency". He was very successful and ventured easily into many religious and socvial activities. He married, Noor Razika, daughter of PTM Sheriff, who predeceased him.

On August 2, 1944, at his office at No 5 Second Cross Street, Colombo 11, in the Pettah, a few leading members of the Moor Community, who cherished a vision for the future of their people in their hearts, met and founded the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH). The founding fathers were, Sir Razik Fareed (then known as ARARazik), WM Hassim JP, Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar, ALM Lafir JP, and AIL Marikar. AIL held the position of Honorary Joint Secretary of the MICH, from its inception in 1944 all the way until his demise on January 4, 1992 – a record for anyone in any association or society.

When the need for a permanent Headquarters for the MICH arose, Sir Razik Fareed with customary zeal, at the instance of AIL, sponsored a motion in the Senate, on May 25 1948, to obtain a grant of a block of crown land in the Fort. It was seconded by Mr. R F S de Mel. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the then Governor, most graciously accepted the motion on behalf of the Government. When donations were invited for the building fund, the first contribution of Rs 31.50 was made by AIL and his wife. Today, a massive four-storeyed building stands tall at Bristol Street Fort as the HQ of the MICH.

During this period, temporary accommodation was found necessary for the activities of the organization. "Pasha Villa" at No 15 Dematagoda Road, Colombo 00900 fell vacant after WWII had ended, and money had to be found in order to lease it as a suitable location for the activities of the MICH. AIL induced Husain Macan Markar, another Joint Secretary, and arranged a string-hopper dinner at his residence and invited many active and rich members of the community to come forward to assist in this project. The required funds were immediatrely subscribed, a lease agreement was signed with the owners of "Pasha Villa", and eventually the whole propert was purchased for the MICH.

A scheme for the local training of Hafiz Al Quran (Quranic memorization), in view of their dearth in Colombo and the reliance of the services of Hafiz from neighboring India to conduct Night Prayers during Ramadan at the Mosques, was mooted on the initiative of AIL at the meeting of the Board of Trustees on October 8, 1946. Implementation commenced on August 20, 1950 when the first Annual Al-Quran (memory) Recital Contest was held for the first three sections (Jooz) of the Quran.

The complete Quran was completed in the first ten annual contests and now there is no dearth of Hafiz in Colombo anymore. At the elevnth Annual General Meeting of the MICH, held on August 25, 1955, AIL Marikar moved a motion for effective steps to be taken for the translation of the Quran into Sinhalese. Although it took 26 years, the translation was finally completed during his lifetime. The call for prayer broadcast on Radio Ceylon, daily, during the month of Ramadan, for the break and commencement of the fast, was also one of the actions initiated by AIL to the then Minister of Broadcasting, Mr S. Natesan. This commenced on June 5, 1947 and is being continued to date with the Rupavahini Corporation broadcasting it on TV too.

AIL Marikar has authored many books, both individually and also with A Hussain Macan Markar and ALM Lafir. On many occasions he also subscribed to the national newspapers on Islamic events and has also given talks on radio, one of them being on the "significance of Hajj in the light of cataclysmic changes in Muslim countries". The "Asrarul Islam", written by the late MC Siddi Lebbe, was also translated into English by his brother ILM Nilam.

During the 48 years of stewardship of the MICH, he rarely missed a meeting of the Board of Trustees. He was also a very rare example of a dedicated Secretary who set out to work for his community without any trappings or pelf. He was at his office at the MICH, Fort, as always until he breathed his last. During this time there were numerous callers with problems of whom many were students, for whom he would respond patiently and settle their affairs. Apart from his literary pursuits he also helped many worthy charitable causes without publicity and fanfare.

At the AGM of the Ceylon Moors' Association, held on August 4, 1941, AIL Marikar and SM Ismail were elected Joint Secretaries. During the early years of war, politics was at a standstill, yet the President of the Moors' Association, Sir Razik Fareed, AIL Marikar, and a few others kept the Ceylon Moor Flag flying in many other spheres. AIL, after his marriage, moved to his wife's home at St. Peter's Place, Colombo 0400, which was just a stone's throw away from the Fareed Place residence of Sir Razik Fareed. This was a tremendous convenience for him in most of his activities pertaining to the community.

The activities of the Ceylon Moors' Association, which after the Japanese Air Raid on Colombo lay dormant like most other voluntary organizations, were revived in 1943 at AIL Marikar's office premises at No. 5 Second Cross Street, Colombo 01100. It was the time when the War Damage Insurance were being refunded. The Ceylon Moor Chamber of Commerce had been functioning for sometime on the solo efforts of AIL Marikar, the Secretary of the Chamber. On July 4, 1950, a private members motion was moved by the President, Sir Razik Fareed, for the reservation, exclusively, to Ceylonese importers all imports from Japan and other foreign countries. AIL was the man behind the scenes who initiated this move.

With the gradual restrictions on the private sector the activities of the Chamber slowed down, although AIL Marikar's services were always at the disposal of the members of the Chamber. At the time of his death, he was the Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Maradana Jumma Mosque and was largely responsible for the multi-million Rupee expansion project of the Mosque which was in progress at that time. AIL Marikar was an active member of the Peradeniya University Mosque Association and his contribution towards its progress was immense.

AIL Marikar took a leading role in the formation of the Syed Abdul Rahman Jiffry Moulana Memorial Trust which helps many deserving students to pursue their higher education. In the year 1940 he was a member of the Muslim Mosques and Charitable Trust along with Sir Mohammed Macan Markar and Sir Razik Fareed. AIL was the last to survive of those who appeared before the Soulbury Commission to urge for adequate representation for Muslims in the Legislature.

He was a scholar, Master of written words and a very simple but active personality. The London based Guinness Book of Records has opened a file for his exemplary service and contributions made in respect of Islamic Culture in Sri Lanka - a very unique achievement, indeed.

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## MARIKAR of Kandy

The Marikar family of Kandy which originated from Moorish beginnings, can trace its Sri Lankan origins back to the reign of the Kandyan Sinhala king, Rajasinghe II of Senkadagala (1635-1687). It has been documented that the daughter of king Rajasinghe II's brother Kumarasinghe, married a Marikar. Thus, the family was given the royal "ge" name "**Galagaha Vidanalage Gedara**" and king Rajasinghe's niece was referred to as "**Galagaha Vidanalage Gedara Seeelawathi Kumarihami**". The 20th century patriarch of the Marikar family, **M.A.S. Marikar**, established the law firm of "Marikar & Marikar" located in Kandy. The family tree in this website begins with his father, **S.M.L. Marikar**, who was a representative of the Governor of Ceylon, Sir Henry Arthur Blake (1840-1918).

**GALAGAHA VIDANALAGE GEDARA** Seyed Mohamed Lebbe Marikar, born in 1840 At Madawela (Sri Lanka), D: Mar 1939 Buried: Madawela (Sri Lanka), Occupation: Madige Muhandiram (Regional transportation representative for the governor of Ceylon - Kandy district) + Safra, d: 1940?

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## CHINNA LEBBE MARIKAR

### Ismail Lebbe Marikar Sultan Marikar

Ismail Lebbe Marikar Sultan Marikar of Galle, received an elementary education but could converse in English fluently. He was able to write in Sinhala and Gujarati.

Sultan Marikar moved among Europeans in the business circles in Colombo and was also well known to the Borah merchants who were involved in the import and export trade, viz; TAJ Noorbhai, Carimjee Jafferjee, EG Adamaly, MSH AbdulAli Bhai, MSH Hebthulabhoy. In his export business he was closely connected to Dodwell & Company.

Sultan Marikar was well known and recognized as a planter in the 19th century and he had most of his business transactions in Tea and Rubber with M/S Bartleet & Company, Auctioneers & Brokers and also with JL Ross & Co, of Captains Gardens, Galle. He was a landed proprietor and owned a number of estates among which were: Noorani at Padukka, 200 acres planted with tea, rubber and coconuts, Meepilawa at Puwakpitiya, 160 acres with tea and rubber, purchased from Lady De Soysa. In 1902 some of his rubber fetched Rs 15/- a pound which was a record prize.

Sultan Marikar was said to have transferred, in trust, a tea, rubber, and coconut estate of 250 acres near Galle to the late Al Haj Ahamed Ismail.

He was a trustee of the two famous Thakkiya's in Ceylon - Bukhari Thakkiya of Beruwela and Mubarak Thakkiya of Talapitiya, Galle. He played a prominent role in the Fez issue in 1905 along with ILM Abdul Azeez, MC Siddi Lebbe and SL Mahmood Hajar, when Advocate Abdul Cader of Kattankudi was not allowed to appear before the Bench with his Fez on. Abdul Cader politely refused to carry out the behests of the Chief Justice and withdrew from the Court.

Sultan Marikar founded a Company with JL Ross in England, the prospectus of which was issued the very day of his death in 1911.

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## **HAIJIE MARIKAR (Wairooshi)**

H.L. Omer Lebbe Marikar, son of Hajjie Marikar from China Fort, (Deenagoda), Beruwela was married to Sithy fathima Umma of Princess' Gate, Colombo. They had three children, two daughters and one son.

The son, Omer Lebbe Marikar Muhammad Reffai (1904), also known as OLM Muhammad (Muhamad Nana), was nicknamed "WAIROOSHI" Muhammad on account of being a leading gem businessman who pioneered the elegant cutting and polishing of the famous Golden Topaz with eight facets, the shape and design for which is even in great demand today.

He was also at the forefront of amicably settling issues and disputes that arose in the village at China Fort Beruwela. His name has been rightly placed on record as "Wairooshi" even in the Hansard of the Sri Lankan Parliament (vide Page C 1364 – 4 May 1999 Volume 122 Number 15).

He married three times, first to the two daughters of Shamsu lebbe Muhammad of "Shana Muna" family who hailed from Akkara, China Fort, Beruwela and then to the daughter of "Meanna Kavanna" of Katukurunde, China Fort Beruwela.

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## **KASILA MARIKKAR**

### **Kasila Marikkar + Mohideen Patumuttu Natchiya**

#### **C.A.S.Marikkar (Sinhala Marikar) 1911-1970**

Born: 05-Jul-1911 at Hewaheta.

Primary education under Rev. Heenatiyana Seelarathna Thera, Kadugannawa, Sri Abhayaraja Pirivena.

Higher education at Dharmarajah College, Kandy, Law College, Colombo.

Joined National Congress contested and lost Galaha seat in 1947. Joined SLFP and won Kadugannawa seat in 1952. Won Kadugannawa under MEP in 1956.

Minister of Posts, Broadcasting, & Information.

Pioneer member of SLFP.

Popularly known as "Sinhala" Marikar.

Died: 18-Nov-1970

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## **M E MARIKAR**

### **M Enver Marikar: Remembering the great “Daily Mirror Mahattaya”**

Daily Mirror: Sep 19 2006

It is nine years today since the demise of M.E. Marikar, senior journalist and well known sports and public figure in Kandy.

The ever smiling Marikar, popularly known to his friends as “Mariks”, Enver to the family member circle, was a well-known sportsman and a writer. He was an all-rounder where he was involved in General, Social and Political writing., with his Yul Brynner – like head, he was a familiar figure and was the doyen of Kandy Press, and he dominated the English turf.

Late Mariks was an old boy of St. Sylvester’s College, where he excelled in many sports. He led this school team in three sports, football, hockey and athletics. He was also an excellent boxer and a cadet. Mariks was the first Sylvestian to play premier cricket, without playing for the school.

He played for Kandy Lake Club, Moors SC, SR (Army) Central Province, Up-Country, Times of Ceylon, Sri Lanka Press XI as a top notch medium pacemen and a hard hitting bat.

He was a fine footballer, played as right extreme, was famous for his cross kick and heading, for Green Field SC, Young Stars SC, Kandy, Up-country. 2 SR (Army) Saunders SC, Colombo, and Government Services XI. Later he was a top notch referee.

Mariks who was known as “Times and Daily Mirror Mahattaya” was an example as a journalist, sportsman and above all a friend. Human kindness flowed from him, he was also called “God King” by his journalist friends, and “King of Kandy” with the physique of body builder, He stood out in any company. Now his nephew Hafiz Maikar, a City Father, follows his uncle.

Late Mariks led a full and an eventful life, watched the great events from the side lines. Once, on his way to Sri Lanka’s inaugural Test match President J.R. Jayawardene spotting Mariks walking towards the ground, gave him a lift in his official limousine. President R. Premadasa had also offered him a lift once for a football match.

Mariks was also admired for his kindness and desire to help mediemen from Colombo whenever they were in need of help in Kandy. As a sports writer for Daily Mirror and Times he left no stone unturned to promote fair-play and gamesmanship.

Mariks is no more, but his memory will remain forever in the minds of all those who knew his sporting qualities.

(Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Elaihi Rajoon – From Allah do we come and to him is the return)

**- A. Sha**

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## **M E Marikar remembered**

Daily News Wed Sep 19 2007

PERSONALITIES: Ten years ago on September 19th Kandy lost one of the most senior Sports and General writer and Sports Promoter and above all gentleman of the highest calibre, M.E. Marikar.

M.E. Marikar was a senior journalist attached to the Times Group of Newspapers. Mariks, as he was popularly known among his friends, was a well known person in the country, he was known by every one, a well built person with a "ball head" he was recognized, wherever he was due to his physique.

He began his education at St.Sylvester's College where he excelled as a top class sportsman in boxing, hockey, football and Cadeting with the privilege of leading all the teams in school.

After leaving school he continued his sporting activities and played

Football and Hockey for several clubs and also represented Up-Country with foreign teams. Some of his football clubs were Green Field SC, Young Stars SC, Kandy YMMA, Marketing Department, Sinha Regiment, Government Services, Saunders SC, Mariks took up cricket, after leaving school, when Mariks went to St. Sylvester's they had not introduced cricket.

He turned as a fine pace bowler who played for Kandy United SC, Kandy Lake Club, Sinha Regiment, Up-Country, Kandy, Times of Ceylon, Government Services, Moors SC and Sri Lanka Press XI.

Cricket fans will recall his pace "in-swing" bowling, where he also delighted crowds, hitting the ball to all parts of the field batting in the middle order Mariks started his life with Marketing Department, later was in the Army

before he took up journalism and became a leading sports writer.

Mariks contribution for the citizens of Kandy in the field of sports and in general will be long remembered.

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## **M E MARIKAR**

An unforgettable sportsman of Kandy

**Sunday Times Oct 5 2003:** Sports fans in Kandy in particular and those in the metropolis in general, will not forget that veteran sports personality of the hills, M.E. Marikar, who left us five years ago. His service as a sports journalist of the former Times of Ceylon, the present Sunday Times and the Daily Mirror, was only second to that of his father, H.M. Marikar.

Both these sports lovers were known as Mariks in their native Kandy, as well as in Colombo.

Hailing from a respectable and well known family in Kandy, M.E's contribution to the field of sports was noteworthy. M.E's father, too, was known in sports circles as he skippered the Kingswood cricket team and was the goalie in the soccer team.

Son M.E's career as a sports writer spanned over four decades since his days at the Times of Ceylon. An alumni of St. Sylvester's, M.E's name will remain in the annals of the school's sporting events as he captained both the football and hockey teams. In the heydays of Sylvesterine boxing, M.E. was a good boxer and was also in the school Cadet Corps.

Having left college, M.E. continued his cricketing prowess at club level, representing the Kandy Lake Club, Moors Sports Club, the Government Services XI, the Sinha Regiment and even playing against visiting foreign teams.

Cricket fans will recall his pace bowling for The Times and The Ceylon Press XI, where he also delighted the crowds, hitting the bowlers with gay abandon, batting in the middle order.

Soccer fans will recall his skilful playing for the Greenfield Sports Club, Kandy YMMA, Young Stars SC, Sinha Regiment Kandy, Saunders, Govt. Services and Times of Ceylon teams.

It is said that Presidents J. R. Jayewardene and R. Premadasa admired this super sportsman and the latter had offered him a lift when M.E. was walking home. The late M.E. Marikar was helpful to all and sundry, especially to his sports colleagues. May God grant him Jennathul Firdous.

- *Len Ranjith Mahaarachchi*

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## **T C H MARIKAR**

He was born in Kandy, Ceylon in 1852. He belonged to an aristocratic family of ancestral landlords. In a family of eight, he was the second son of Thambi Cannu Marikar.

He was a sportsman and an athlete, his favourite game being football. Once when he was playing, the ball went into the school ground next door. It was when he went to pick it up that he met his future wife who was a teacher there. (Data collected in 1999 by Shamsu (Mohmed Ali mama's son), who was working in Colombo/ Kandy as engineer. He visited the ancestral home and met some of the surviving relatives too).

She was a padre's daughter. They got married with much opposition from the powerful Marikars and the Christian community. Her married name was Ayesha. She was well versed in the Bible and in the Quran. She bore him six children.

Much later, in the 1940s, her brother and his son Chelliah writer and family migrated to Munnar and settled down there. The son was employed in Marikar & Co and the family was very close to H.O.L.Marikar & Majid Marikar who had settled down in Munnar

Trade and the spirit of adventure brought (T.C.H.) to India. With his business acumen, he successfully built up his trade between India and Ceylon. He came to South India and established himself in the then States of Travancore and Cochin (Kerala) and parts of Madras Presidency (Tamil Nadu). Travelling between India and Ceylon could not have been easy-sailing in the eighties. He owned 26 dhows and did regular trips. In Travancore, he was attracted to Mundakayam and Peermadu, whose scenic beauty and climate & their similarity to Ceylon attracted him.

He started his business in Kottayam where he had a supermarket of sorts. He used to go to the mosque on horseback and that is when he fell in love with a Syrian Christian lady, who was renowned for her beauty and her long & flowing tresses. She used to watch him from the threshold of her house. One day, he carried her away on his horse. This lady, Kunjamma, was already married and had a child too, but nothing prevented the progress and fulfillment of their great romance. They married to the utter dismay, anger and embarrassment of the Syrian Christian, 'Chowkaparambil family', to which she belonged. Kunjamma's married name became Mariambi. They stayed in Kottayam for some time and later settled down in Rich Grove estate in Mundakkayam. (Kunjamma's daughter & family later settled down in Canada).

He set up his son Kasim in business in Mundakayam. It was then that Kasim was married to Meera whose daughter Mymoon was given in marriage in Ceylon. His daughter Halima was married to his brother Manzoor Shah's son Muqaddam Shah. On his death she was married to Buksh in Ceylon. Ummukulsu, another daughter was married to Jain, who was employed in a tea plantation Company in Ceylon and later came and settled down in the High Ranges of Travancore. Nachiar and Amina were also given in marriage in Ceylon. Both of them were widowed early, and as was the custom in Ceylon, the daughters came back to live in their parent's home in Peermedu.

TCH later met the two brothers Ibrahim Kutty and Abdul Khader, who hailed from Kannur and were doing business in Peermedu. Their friendship culminated in marriage alliances between the two families.

Later on TCH sold his property in Kottayam and invested in a large acreage of land in Mundakayam. Even during his life time portions of it were taken away for bridges, roads etc. He built a big comfortable house in 'Rich Grove Estate' where Mariam and the children lived and is still the home of that branch of the family.

Peermade and Mundakayam were little known areas, with virgin forests and malaria-ridden jungles. Only the pioneering spirits of a few daring British planters and people like TCH opened new vistas of development in these places. TCH foresaw the potentialities of Peermade and made it his business centre and did a flourishing business.

Being an enthusiastic equestrian with a great love of horses, he prided himself in his horses and stables.

In 1920, after his youngest daughter Saffa's marriage, TCH passed away peacefully. He was laid to rest in that part of his 'Rich Grove' estate in Mundakayam, which he had set aside for a family graveyard.

A unique personality, a daring pioneer of exemplary courage and foresight with a spirit of adventure and romance who was a link to two colonial countries of the British, he died in India, the land of his adoption.

### **AYESHA MARIKAR**

Ayesha, was the first wife of TCH Marikar. She was left behind in Kandy with her six children. She no doubt found the difficulties of bringing up the children with their father across the seas. Being excellent in needlework, and teaching, she managed the household on her own in the beginning. However when it became difficult to cope any longer, she took the bold decision to come to India. TCH settled her and the children in Periyakulam where he had a trading post. Another reason to choose Periyakulam was because it was in Madras Presidency, a Tamil speaking area as her language was Tamil.

She evidently made her peace and her home in Periyakulam. Her son H.O.L. was 10 years old at that time. She taught the neighboring children and her own, on the verandah of her home and continued her needlework.

This life of quiet acceptance, patience, strength and courage came to an end when she and her elder son were struck by cholera in an epidemic. After her death the children were taken to their stepmother's house in Mundakayam.

### **IBRAHIM KUTTY & ABDUL KHADER OF KANNUR**

In Peermade settled two handsome stalwart Moplah brothers with their young widowed sister and her baby daughter. They belonged to the Mannukadiyan family of Cannanore (Kannur). Ibrahim Kutty, the elder brother built up a thriving bakery business and Abdul Khader a flourishing general store. They were deeply religious and prominent Muslims of the place and were loved and respected for their generosity and large heartedness. They were plain spoken and forthright. Ibrahim Kutty with his towering height and fiery temper was a personality to reckon with. Abdul Khader, ever the younger brother, lived a peaceful life.

In these two brothers, T.C.H. Marikar found eligible husbands for his daughters by Ayesha.

Ibrahim Kutty married Salha, TCH's eldest daughter. She died at childbirth.

Salha's sister Nachiar, who had lost her husband and her two infants in a tragic fire accident, was then married off to Ibrahim Kutty, the young widower. They had six children. Nachiar died at childbirth when the youngest, Hameed, was born. Then her sister Amina, who had left her Ceylonese husband and was living in Peermade, was married off to Ibrahim Kutty to take care of the children. They had eight children.

Ibrahim Kutty, in his late years, married Kulsumbi an urdu speaking Muslim and had 4 children by her.

TCH's youngest daughter Zaithoon was married to Chinna Mama. They had eleven children.

The tie between the Moors and the Moplahs were further strengthened by H. O. L. Marikar marrying Mariambi, the beautiful little niece of the brothers. They had eleven children.

Ibrahim Kutty was a forceful character till the end. He died in 1935 and was buried in the family graveyard in Peermade in his property. His brother died in Trivandrum in 1950?

## **H O L MARIKAR**

H. O. L. Marikar was born in Kandy, Ceylon on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1882. He came to India with his mother and the rest of the family and TCH settled them in Periyakulam and H.O.L.'s education began in Periyakulam. After his mother's death the 10 year old H.O.L. & his sisters were taken to Kottayam to his step mother. In Kottayam School he studied under the late Mr.Mamman Mappillai. H.O.L. was the captain of the football team in his school.

As it was difficult for him to study in his stepmother's house, his father sent him to St.Joseph's school in Trichinopoly, where he did his matriculation. His unhappy childhood and frustration in studies made him resolve that he would have a happy home and give his children the best of education, for which he strove and succeeded.

At 25, a romantic young man walked from Mundakayam to Peermade to get the consent of the formidable Ibrahim Kutty to marry his 11 year old niece. It was no hitchhike! His determination took him to Peermade through cart tracks in the jungle. With the blessings of the two uncles, H.O.L. got married to their niece, Mariambi.

H.O.L. started his married life in Palar. He traded in small items like hosiery, and did not get any financial assistance. However, he took his wife to Peermade for the birth of the first four children.

TCH presented each of his sons with a pony from his stable. However an envious hand set fire to his stable one night killing the 20 horses in it.

In Palar, H.O.L. took up part time work with the Munnar railways. He would walk the distance to Munnar early morning to keep time at the station. Some times on shifts, he would walk home late in the nights. There were no roads, no lights and the weather used to be freezing cold. In the eerie darkness, he would walk alone amidst the tall trees. The next two children were born in Kallar, where H.O.L. had taken up the distribution of supplies to the estates. His greatest worry was the education of the children as there were no schools in Munnar. It was then that he had to take a major decision that would result in a lonely and hard life for him without the family in Munnar where he had moved. Thus his wife and the children were settled in Trivandrum entirely for their schooling.

In Munnar he set up his own shop. His visits to Trivandrum and their holidays to Munnar were events that the family looked forward to. The journey from Munnar was not as easy. From Top Station to Bodinayakkanoor the only way to travel was by trekking. One had to walk for seven miles through Korangani pathway, carrying home made eats for the way. His wife was carried in a 'Doli', if she felt tired. And at the end of the trail in Bodinayakkanoor, a hot meal and hospitality awaited from his good friend, Sultan Rowther. The other choice was to travel by car through the snaky Udumalpet road, with its hairpin bends and curves, which was equally exciting. During those days his was one of the first cars in the hills.

The colonial planters had envisaged only two roads to Madras Presidency from Munnar. One was the northern outlet to Udumalpet and the other to the northeast via Top station and Korangani to Bodinayakkanoor. There was an intended trace through Mankulam for connecting Munnar to the rest of the erstwhile Travancore. It was H.O.L., with his foresight, who met the Senior Maharani at Trivandrum and convinced her of the importance of opening the present Munnar Alwaye road via the now township of Adimali and Neriya Mangalam. For this meritorious service, the late Sir.C.P.Ramaswami Iyer, the then Divan of Travancore, creditably commended him.

When the family was in Trivandrum, came the devastating floods in Munnar, in 1924. The township which nestled on the banks of the river was washed away and with it H.O.L.'s shops, and all his hopes and dreams. M/s James Finley of Scotland, the colonial planters, were in two minds about continuing their activities after the floods. However, Mr. Pinches, the then G.M. In Munnar, an obstinate Scot insisted on re building the plantation and their company from the ruins. A personal friend of H.O.L.'s in whom he had immense confidence, Mr.Pinches threw a challenge to him, of taking up the Herculean task of reconstructing a new township and other contract works such as the roads and bridges etc. With his indomitable courage and determination, H.O.L. took up the challenge and with his capacity for hard work, the town was rebuilt in record time. His work was lauded by the company, both in Munnar and in Scotland. This was the turning point in H.O.L.'s life.

The floating of Marikar & Co. was the next step. Reputed for his honesty and integrity, friends and the public rallied round him. This was the forerunner of all the other Marikar Organizations that were to follow over the years. Under his able management the rapid growth of Marikar & Co., enabled him to take up the Ford Agency in 1933.

Setting his eyes on further horizons he expanded the business by floating Marikar Motors Ltd. in Trivandrum in the year 1940-41. The first branch was in Kottayam. However, none can forget the convoy of Lorries that plied between Alwaye and Munnar, daily transporting tea and other commodities, under the banner of Marikar Transports based at Perambavoor. It was not an easy achievement, considering the fact that those were the lean years of World War II.

Meanwhile the family had grown and the children's education was still his greatest concern. His eldest daughter Abusha had finished schooling successfully in Trivandrum and her Intermediate course in Queen Mary's College, Madras. Her ambition and determination was to become a doctor & she joined the Madras Medical College. She was the first Muslim woman to do so in 1930. It created uproar amongst the Muslim community as there were many who believed that female education was against the religion. H.O.L. stood every type of harsh and unkind criticisms and even physical threats.

The rest of the children also had the best of education in good schools and colleges in Trivandrum & Madras.

H.O.L. was a visionary in the field of education. He was of the view that emancipation of women especially Muslims could be achieved only through education. To this end he worked and contributed whatever he could. He helped many with scholarships and financial assistance.

He had definite views on marriage. He was a pioneer against the dowry system and he was strongly against polygamy. He would not condone a second marriage while the first wife was living, perhaps due to the memories of his own childhood.

H.O.L. was a patriot. He was an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. He spoke and discussed with the family the happening in India at the time. He encouraged his elder daughter to take part in the Swadeshi Movement, while she was in the Madras Medical College. He did not miss an opportunity to take his family to attend the Congress meetings held at Madras by the great leaders of that time.

It was owing to his exemplary character and discipline that he was appointed as a member of the Legislative Council by the Government of Travancore.

When the Munnar business was stabilized, H.O.L. wanted to concentrate on expanding the business in Trivandrum. With this in view he built a house in Pattom and moved in with his family. It was a staggering blow to H.O.L. when his wife suddenly passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1942 of a heart attack in Trivandrum while he was away in Munnar. She was only 48.

In conclusion, H.O.L. was one of those rare personalities. His courage and determination, his stamina for hard work, and stubbornness in his outlook to his principles in life were qualities that endeared him to every one. Though he was deeply religious, he never did flaunt it around. His sentiment in this area culminated in his initiating the building of the only mosque in Munnar, which was the only one even till 1991.

His end also came prematurely, two years after his wife's demise. After a short illness, he passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 1944 and was buried in the Palayam Mosque next to his wife.

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2[1] No details available of this branch of the family. Mymoon was married off in Ceylon. Probably Yousuf also went off to Ceylon (told by Beedar)

3[2] No details about Majeed's family, though Beedar who supplied me with most of the data, claims that Majeed's sons are all in Tanjore (where his father's illustrious family hails from) and the daughters married off in Moovattupuzha!

The ancestry traced in this Family Tree has been through the help of the older members of the family and what parents have told us when we were children. The attempt by the late Mrs. Halima Buksh, daughter of T.C.H. Marikar, to trace the family tree in Ceylon, was not very successful. She was able to trace the family of Thambi Cannu Marikar up to a point. Some of the dates are from taken from Mr. H.O.L. Marikar's diary, when his daughter Ayesha was attempting to compile it in the year 1990.

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## **MUHAMMAD LEBBE SIDDI LEBBE MARIKAR**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen128.html>

**Muhammad Cassim Siddi Lebbe** was born on 11-Jun-1838 in Kandy. First Muslim lawyer of Sri Lanka. Educated at Qur'an School, Kandy. Proctor, Social Reformer, Editor First Muslim Journal in Tamil "Muslim Nesan", 12-Dec-1882. Influenced by Arumugar Navalar. Established schools in Kandy, Gampola, Polgahawela, Kurunegala. Founded Madrasathul Zahira in 1892. Works include Gnana Teepan 1892, Assembly Udaya kathai - Tamil Novel - 1885, Abu Navas, Asrarul A'lam. Died 5-Feb-1898.

The ancestors of Siddi Lebbe were Arabs who had penetrated into the Kandyan District. His father, Muhammad Lebbe Siddi Lebbe, was one of the first Ceylonese Proctors and was also the Head Moorman in 1833. Muhammad Cassim was also known as Siddi Lebbe. Siddi Lebbe had an older brother, an Arabic educated Alim, under whose care he learnt to read Qur'an and study Tamil and English.

Muhammad Cassim (MC) Siddi Lebbe continued his studies and qualified as a Proctor of the District Court in 1862. Two years later he became a Proctor of the Supreme Court and practiced as a Notary Public. He married the sister-in-law of Casie Lebbe Marikar Muhammad Yousoof, grandson of O L M Shekhadi Marikar

He studied the Arabic language to perfection and read many significant works of Islamic scholars and thereby excelled in religious knowledge surpassing that of the local Ulema of the time. The educational movement in Colombo, which he began with Wapchi Marikar, constantly required his presence in Colombo and thus he was compelled to live in Colombo paying occasional visits to his hometown in Kandy. He started a Muslim journal called the "Muslim Friend", in English and Tamil, in order to educate his fellow Muslim community members. He also published a monthly journal called the "torch of Wisdom". He clamored to teach the Muslims their religion through these two journals where he urged the community to study the Arabic language. He also wrote and published "Hidayathul Cassimiya", "Tuhuwathul Nahwa" (key to grammar), "Shurut As Salat" (observance of Prayer), Arabic Study Book Part I & II. His Tamil works were "Tamil Primer, a novel story of Hassen Bey, History of the Turkish and Greek War, and History of the Moors of Ceylon. His wide scheme of educating the Muslim community resulted in the establishment of Zahira College, patronized by the cream of the community due to the munificence of Wapchi Marikar. He also established many Tamil and Arabic Schools in many parts of the Central Province, some of which he himself managed and financed. In Kandy, he founded a Girls' School where his sister was the Head-Teacher.

He used the medium of newspaper articles, books, and speeches to induce the Muslim community to make an attempt to uplift themselves from the backward condition they were in. Though numerous were his friends and admirers he did have his share of opponents too, who were not convinced of his understanding of the interpretation and philosophical understanding of Islam.

## **OBITUARY OF SITHY SALEEMA MAHMOOD (ISMAIL)**



**ISMAIL - HAJIANI SITHY FATHIMA (SALEEMA)** Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Rajjoon. Wife of Marhoom Al-Haj Mohamed Abdulla, Mohamed Ismail (Dulla) J.P.U.M. mother of Zainab, Salma and Maimoon, grandmother of Yakoob, Zaiithoon, Zeenath, Althaaf and Thabith, stepmother of Mirza and Haniffa, daughter of A.L.M. Mahmood and Zulaiha, eldest granddaughter of Mr & Mrs A.B. Casie Lebbe of Kandy, sister of Shafeek, Zareena, Zavahir and Zahar, mother-in-law of Zainudeen, Favaz and Anil, sister-in-law of Ummu Azeez, Sithy Jabir Cader, Cassim Ismail, Munthaha, Cader and Ayesha. Died on Friday 12th April, 2002. Janaza took place on the same day at Jawatte Muslim Burial Ground. "Windermere", Dampe, Madapatha, Piliyandala and 11, Gregory Place, Dehiwela.

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## **NOTARISLAGE AWOO LEBBE MARIKAR**

The roots of Notarislage Awoo Lebbe Marikar family have been researched from the year 1787. NAL Marikar's son, A L M Cassim, had 30 children of whom only 3 survived. They were MCA Jawad, MCA Raheem and MCA Saheed.

The family claim their origins from Hadramaut in Yemen. The Arabs from Yemen landed in Ceylon as Merchants, Notaries and Unani Physicians since several hundreds of years back. Some of them served the Kandyan Kings and settled down in a village in the suburbs of Kandy called KURUGODA in the proximity of Akurana. Many of them were wealthy and very successful in their trades and professions. They married the daughters of Vidane's (Village Headmen appointed by the Royal Court of Kandy). They also purchased land in Kandy and went on to become wealthy real estate owners in the locality. It is said that in the early years almost half of the properties in Kandy belonged to them which has been inherited by their descendants.

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## **SHEIKH JAMALUDEEN SALIHUE MARIKKAR**

of Panadura

obituary:

**RASHID - ALHAJ M.M. RASHID J.P.** (Ex. Lewis Browns), Ex. Trustee Mutwal Jumma Mosque, Asst. Secy/Investigations Officer - Baithulmal Fund. Passed away 26th December. Beloved husband of Hajiani Noorbee nee Salihue (retired Nursing Sister), son of late Packir Lebbe Mahmood and Aliyar Marikkar, Jenneth Umma, son-in-law of late Sheikh Jamaldeen Salihue Marikkar, loving father of Farhana, Fairoza, Farina, Farrag (Australia), father-in-law of Aseem, Fuzloun, Isfahan, Zeenath, brother of late Sulaiha, Farookha, Lafir, brother-in-law of late Mrs Mukthar, late Mrs Mohamed, late Sheikh Husain, late Mrs Buhary, late Mrs Azeez, late Mrs Sheikh Ismail, late Sheikh Nasrudeen, Jamal Bee, Sheikh Fareed, grandfather of Farabia, Sameera, Hamdani, Imdad, Fadhil, Rehana, Shanaz, Shamil, Shadika. Janaza took place 26th Madampitiya Muslim Burial Ground. 174, Muthuwella Mawatha, Colombo 15. SO Jan 5 2003

**JAMAL BEE ABDUL CADER** (nee JAMAL b. (bint) bee SHEIKH JAMALDEEN SALIHUE MARIKKAR). b. November 1st 1921 "Cader Nona" of Dharga Town Municipal Council / Maternal Health and pp of Ceylon Medical School, pp of St. John's Girls School, Panadura. Precious wife of late Saibu (past Lecturer / Principal at Teacher Training College in Dharga Town & Addalichenai) U.M.A. Cader (Usan Saiboo Mohamed Abdul Cader b. November 30th 1910 Mannar & d. March 1960, Dharga Town), beloved sister of

late MB-Mariam Bee (Mrs. Mukthar of Mt. Lavinia), late SM-Sheikh Mohammed (Modera/Panadura), late SH-Sheikh Hussein (Husain) - Unani Medical Doctor (Ratnapura), late SB-Sulaiha Bee (Mrs. Sulaikha Buhary of Modera), late KB - Khadeeja Bee (Mrs. Kadeeja Azeez of Ratnapura), Hajiani NB- Noor Bee (retired Hospital Matron, Ceylon Medical School & pp. St. John's Girls School, Panadura), late SI-Sheikh Ismail (father of Ghazali, Rumi, Shamila & Zainab in USA), late SN- Sheikh Nasrudeen (Dehiwela), SF-Sheikh Fareed, late Farsana Bee (Meadow of Ibraheem PBUH), dearly beloved mother of M.C.S. Nawaz (Muhammed Shah Nawaz Abdul Cader - Marketing, London, UK & pp Zahira College, Colombo), M.C.S. Isfahan (Mohammed Shah Isfahan Abdul Cader, MBA, FCCA, FCMA, London estate/business UK & pp Zahira College & Royal College Colombo), Dr. Muhammed Shah Roshan Cader, MSC, PhD Lecturer - Canada & pp Ananda College Colombo), Dr. Shereen Mumtaz Ramadan nee Dr. Mumtaz Shereen Abdul Cader, MD, PhDc, MSNc - USA & pp St. Paul's Milagiriya Colombo. adopted mother of Shyama (Sama) Cader (Sri Lanka), paternal grandmother of Sabrina Nawaz & Kabir Nawaz UK, Adam Abdul Cader & Sara Abdul Cader (Canada) and dearly missed loving maternal grandmother of Amina Tarek Ramadan USA Lakeside School, and Ayda Tarek Ramadan USA Univ Prep School, late Aisha Tarek Ramadan (Meadow of Ibrahim PBUH), left peacefully to Aa'khira on May 8th 2005, Sunday 29th of Raby' al-awal 1426 A.H. (Mother's Day USA) in London Borough of Lambeth UK at her loving son Isfahan's house SE27 9EQ. Janaza took place on May 11th 2005 at 1100 a.m. at Haji Taslim Funerals, East London Mosque, 45 Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JU and laid to rest at Muslim Burial Ground (Cemetery) "Gardens of Peace" on the same day at AA15/5 (plot). May Allah (SWT) grant her Jannatul Firdoze, Aamin. "Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Illahi Rajioon. From Him do we come and unto Him do we return" DN Sat Nov 5 2005

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## **MEERA LEBBE SLEMA\* LEBBE COMOSTER 1817**

\*Slema = colloquial form of Sulaiman commonly used in Sri Lanka

### **Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar Hajjar (#42 Main Street, Pettah)**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen093.html>

John Capper in his "Old Ceylon – sketches of life in the olden time" pp154-161 dealing with Ceylon Moor shopkeepers in main Street, Pettah, in the year 1848 describes Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar as "Number 42" based on the address of his business located at No 42, Main Street, Pettah. Many of the Moor businessmen were thus called by the assessment number of their respective businesses in the Pettah as their names were too complex to be remembered and pronounced by the Colonial rulers (British). Capper describes Sulaiman Lebbe as follows:-

***"The most flourishing of these gentry is certainly Number Forty Two, a portly oily-skinned, well conducted Moorman with a remarkably well shaved head surmounted on its very apex by a ridiculously little colored cap like an infantive bee-hive. His bazaar is admitted on all hands, especially amongst the fair sex to be "fi.....chop". Yet a stranger would imagine that the fiscal had possession of the place and was on the point of selling off by auction the entire contents; so confused and motley an appearance do they wear.***

***The doorway, narrow and low, is jealously guarded by a pile of grindstones, surmounted by a brace of soup-tureens on the one side and by tools and weapons of offence on the other"***

## **Sahib Doray Naina-Marikar Hajjar**

A clan of Ceylon Moors moved from Beruwala to Panadura and set up business establishments in Colombo where they subsequently settled down once business prospered. One of these families contained a person named **Sahib Doray Muhammad Lebbe Marikar**, who married **Assen Kandu Natchia**, the third daughter of **Meera Lebbe Slema Lebbe Comoster**, in 1817. Their son was **Sulaima Lebbe** (Jahil) who in turn had a son named **Naina Marikar** in 1868.

**Naina-Marikar** received his Arabic education at home and Tamil at a night school and also attended Wesley College, which was then situated next door in Old Moor Street, for his English education. As was the prevailing custom then, he also attended his father's shop during his free time and learnt the mechanics of business.

His father passed away in 1892 and **Naina-Marikar** took over the business at Main Street, Pettah. His business flourished rapidly and he opened up several new shops in the Pettah.

**Naina-Marikar** was resident at No 43, New Moor Street, Colombo, and in 1900 he purchased a palatial bungalow, that contained a large garden, at Turret Road called "**Muirburn**". Within this compound he built another shop called Victoria Drapery Stores. He also worked as an indenting agent and imported large stocks of goods from Europe to be disposed of wholesale to other big merchants in Ceylon. He sold on credit and his stock in trade was valued at several hundreds of thousand Rupees.

**Naina-Marikar** made a donation towards the construction of the Wesley College building at baseline Road, Colombo. This donation, along with many others, has been gratefully acknowledged on the plaque near the main entrance of the school even till today. He took an active part in the educational movement of **Wapchi Marikar** at Zahira College and of **I.L.M.H. Noordeen Hajjar**, his Father-In-Law, at Hameedia School.

The prevailing system of Muslim Marriage Registration in Ceylon was not beneficial to the parties in the event of any disputes arising between them. The Government found it quite difficult to settle such disputes, especially in the Eastern Province. As the Muslim Marriage Registration Ordinance had not been compulsorily enforced on the Muslims, the Government Agent, Mr. Lushington, addressed **Naina-Marikar**, in 1907, on the subject as he was considered the leader of the Muslims of Colombo.

**Naina-Marikar** summoned a meeting of the Muslims, consisting of both lay people and Ulemas, at his residence at "Muirburn" and explained the difficulties of the Government in settling marriage disputes. Several other meetings followed and, finally, a request was made to the Government to make the registration of Muslim marriages compulsory. The congregation of the New Moor Street Mosque had always opposed the registration of Muslim marriages on the grounds that it was not Islamic and hence not required. This opposition was prevalent since the inception of the marriage registration ordinance in 1886 for which the Muslims were not required to comply at the time of introduction. A meeting of the congregation of the New Moor Street Mosque, under the Presidency of **M.I.Muhammad Ali** JP, paternal grandfather of Mrs. **Ummuna Azeez**, was held in the Mosque to protest against **Naina-Marikar's** proposal and the proceedings of the meeting were published in the "Crescent" of **Sheikh Abdulla Quilliam** of Liverpool Muslim fame as follows:-

"A General Meeting was held at 8.00 p.m. on the 12th July 1907 at New Moor Street Mosque, to discuss the subject of introducing registration of Muhammadan marriages. Mr. Muhammad Ismail Muhammad Ali, Khan Bahdur, Persian Consul and Justice of the Peace, presided and Mr. A.K.Uduman hajar acted as Secretary, and there was a respectable assembly of some of the leading Muhammadans including Alims and Mullahs. It was unanimously resolved that this Registration Ordinance should not be introduced, as it is against the Muhammadan religion and serves no purpose. There was an assembly of about 5,000 people".

Nevertheless, amendments were made to the Muhammadan Marriage Laws and registration became compulsory.

**Naina-Marikar's** ancestors were members of the Maradana Mosque congregation and they contributed money for the purchase of a property in 1840. Naina-Marikar, at his own personal cost, erected a building for the Maradana Mosque Ablution Tanks (Howl) in 1899. R.H. Bassett, CCS, remarked, "**the Howl or the ablution place at Zahira College Mosque is extremely picturesque seen through its low circular arches**".

He contributed two thousand rupees for the Zahira College houses (from Nos. 105 to 121) to make up the twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees required. He also paid two hundred and fifty rupees to equip **Wapchi Marikar's** second building with furniture.

As a member of the executive committee of the Maradana Mosque he was elected Treasurer for several periods. He was also a contributing member of the Jameethul Hameediah which managed the Hameediah School.

**Oduma Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Alim** (OLMALM Alim) was one of the wealthy amongs the Ceylon Moors in Colombo. He did extensive hardware business and was possessed of several immovable properties. He had several sons who managed each department of his businesses. He passed away in 1917 and his estate was valued at approximately two million rupees. When his last will was submitted to court some of his heirs contested it. The will was not proved and the Court declared that he had died intestate. The Supreme Court rejected the appeal and preparations were being made by the heirs to appeal to the Privy Council. Some of the elders in the community advised them to stop legal proceedings and allocate the properties to the heirs. The parties concerned agreed to the selection of **S.L.Naina-Marikar Hajar** as the arbitrator and his award was accepted as final.

**Naina-Marikar** was engaged in the hardware business during the latter years of his life. His establishment was situated at No. 188, Keyzer Street, Pettah. Prior to that, in 1920, he was also engaged in the automobile business, in partnership with Weerappas, and was involved in importing motor vehicles from Britain and Europe.

**Naina-Marikar** passed away on December 24, 1926 leaving three sons, **Muhammad Rawoof** (who pre-deceased him), **Muhammad Sulaima**

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**TONY PREENA MISKIN - FAIQS, FIQS (SL), ARMIT.**

**Tony Preena Miskin** is the eldest son of the late Mohammed Jaylan Thassim Miskin and Mrs Sareena Miskin of Horetuduwa Moratuwa.

Tony's father MJT Miskin, was an Inspector of Police who retired as a lecturer of the Police Training School- Kalutara in 1966. He was born in 1910 and died in 1971.

Tony's mother Sareena is the eldest daughter of Ahamadon Saed Baharan – Police Bandsman and Sithy Kathija..

Tony married Jacqueline Fathima Lye ( ANZ Bank -Brisbane ), daughter of Al Haj BMR Lye (Manager Habib Bank Zurich) and Mrs Daneen Lye (nee Jumat) of Nawala in 1975.

Jacqueline died in 1996 in Brisbane, Qld, Australia when she was just 41 years, and was buried at the Mt Gravatt Cemetery. Tony's only son Imran is an Information Technology graduate of Griffith University in Qld. He is studying for a Masters degree in Commerce, specializing in Professional Accounting at the University of Queensland.

Tony is a Cambrian and a product of Prince of Wales college – Moratuwa and the University of Moratuwa (formerly Inst: of Practical Technology) He is also a Colombo Plan scholar. In 1967 he proceeded on a 6 year scholarship to Melbourne Australia, where he successfully qualified as a Quantity Surveyor at the RMIT University in Melbourne in 5 years. In his final year he undertook further studies in Project Management & Building Economics at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Quantity Surveyors, and an Associate of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. He is also a former Associate of the Australian Institute of Arbitrators and the Institute of Construction Surveyors London

In Sri Lanka, Tony worked at the Buildings Department Colombo (former PWD) and later joined Design Consortium Ltd a leading firm of Architects as a Director. He was also Managing Director of Miskin & Partners -a firm of Arbitrators & Quantity Surveyors and also Director of Project Management Services Ltd, before migrating to Australia in 1991 with his family. He is the only Sri Lankan to be an active Director of Architectural, Project Management & Quantity Surveying Companies, in Colombo.

One of his biggest achievements in the construction industry was the Contract administration & Cost Management of the 5 star Trans Asia Hotel – Colombo which cost Rs 1.5 Billion in 1984. In the final year of this prestigious project, he took over the Project Managers role to finalize the accounts of the 81 separate contracts and resolve major disputes between the Client and contractors. He delivered the goods to the clients satisfaction.

Tony was also a practising Arbitrator, and was also involved in joint Arbitrations with Supreme court Judges, Justice AC Alles and Justice J Seneviratne.

Tony was a prominent member in Sri Lanka's construction industry from 1973 to 1991.

He is also a former Senior Lecturer of the University of Moratuwa where he lectured Architectural, Quantity Surveying & Engineering students for 14 years.

Tony was also a visiting lecturer at the Open University, Institute of Architects, Institute of Administrative studies Colombo 7, Technical Training Institute Ratmalana and at ICTAD- (Institute for construction, training & development) - Colombo 7.

He is also the author of several Technical papers published in Australia, United Kingdom, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Four of these papers were lectures delivered to Professional bodies One in an International Seminar organised by CASLE of London and held at the BMICH.

One paper titled - " A glimpse into the History of Sri Lanka ", edited by Professor Nandasena Mudiyanse of the Kelaniya University and published in the Malay Journal- Terang, is perhaps the only attempt by a Malay to tackle such a subject.

Tony is a pioneer in Quantity Surveying in Sri Lanka and was the General Secretary and President of the Sri Lankan Institute of Quantity Surveyors for several years

Tony played a major role in the establishment of the QS course at the University of Moratuwa and developed the curricula for the course jointly with Professor Siri Caldera , Mr. HD Chandrasena.- Chief QS of the S.E.C. and two English/U.N consultants.

He also took an active part in Malay Community matters and is the author of the Malay Directory published by the Sri Lanka Malay Association in 1990. He was also the General Secretary of the SLMA and the Vice President of the Malay Club – Padang, Colombo 2. He is a life member of both the SLMA Colombo, and the Sri Lankan Malay Association of Sydney.- Australia.

Amidst the heavy workload, Tony surprisingly found time to be a social worker too, and was a Mental Health social worker at the Mental hospital Angoda, and a member of the Sarvodaya movement for a brief period. In Australia he is a Life Governor of the Royal childrens hospital Melbourne and presently the Overseas Director for the Samanala Childrens Home Balapitiya- Sri Lanka. (a home for orphans)

A fact not known to many is that Tony was also a good all-round sportsman . He captained Tennis, Badminton, & Soccer teams in the PWD/Buildings Dept during his younger days and was also Vice captain of the Cricket team in the various Government Services tournaments. He was a member of Queens club ( Tennis ) and is a Life member of Otters Aquatic club- Colombo 7.

He was also a semi finalist in the All Island Badminton tourney for Novices held at the YMCA.-Colombo in the early 1960's . In Australia , he represented the Sri Lanka Club of Victoria in Cricket, and was the Club's Badminton champion for 5 consecutive years..

In Brisbane, Tony is the Managing Director of the property development company; Peak Property Group Pty Ltd. and Managing Partner of Miskin & Henny Partnership – a building firm. Miskin & Henny has Quality Assurance certification AS/NZS ISO- 9002:1994.

Peak Property Group is involved in joint venture construction projects with Neolido Pty Ltd another property development company in Qld, Australia, in which Tony is a shareholder. Having given up Quantity Surveying since migration to Brisbane, he is now involved in the more challenging professions of Project Management and Property Development.. His son Imran is also a Director of Peak Property Group.

Tony is contemplating semi-retirement, to embark on another favourite subject close to his heart- to write a Book on " The history of the Miskin Family" to some extent a sequel to the international Book titled- " The World book of Miskins "

6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2003 Brisbane, Qld. Australia.

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## **ZAHEER MOHAMED**

It is hard to believe that my cousin Zaheer Mohamed is no more. In a way I am glad I was not around when he recently crossed the Great Divide. I want to remember him as alive and well. I will not grieve his death, but rather celebrate the good life he lived.

Zaheer and I were the children of two sisters. As Zaheer's father was based in Dickoya, it was only natural that he stayed with us in Colombo when he entered Royal College.

My first memories of Zaheer were of a little boy with a passion for cars. Whenever my mother made "pol roti", he would take a circular roti and hold it like a make-believe steering wheel and make sounds like a car purring along. When my mother told him to get on with his dinner, he would eat the roti, wipe his plate clean and then use the plate as a steering wheel as he continued his car-driving fantasy.

Another memory etched in my mind is of attending the Royal Primary School sports meet and being taken by my parents to see Zaheer participating in the obstacle race. He was about nine years, and he was a plump kid. One of the obstacles on the course was to crawl through a barrel. Plump Zaheer got stuck inside the barrel. Our uncle, the late B. J. H. Bahar (Junior), vice-principal of Zahira College, Colombo, was present as a special guest. He gave the little boy a sharp push to his bottom and Zaheer emerged from the barrel. The sight caused much amusement among the spectators.

When Zaheer moved on from Royal Primary to Royal College, he was boarded at the hostel. He was still mad about cars. At 13 years he could drive a car. He was a competent driver and would drive his father's car whenever his Dad came to Colombo.

In later years the two of us were joined by two other first cousins, Haji Rasseedeen and Bolly Johar, and we formed a close foursome. More than being cousins, we were great friends. We joined the Colombo Malay Cricket Club. We were in our 20s and we became party animals. Not a week would go by without some get-together.

It was at this time that Zaheer met Kerima. They married and had three wonderful children – Aasha, Anusha and Shiran. The girls went to Holy Family Convent, and the son followed his father by joining Royal College.

As the years rolled on, we started to go our separate ways. Zaheer went to the UK and then to Australia on different stints, and not long after Haji and I went overseas to better our prospects.

On my return to Sri Lanka, I got together with Zaheer and we did a few business deals – importing cars. Better things were in store for Zaheer when he teamed up with old Trinitian and former Havelocks and Sri Lanka rugby player, Gamini Fernando, the late Lakshman Jayawardena, former Thomian cricketer Kumar Boralessa and R. Nadarajah to

form a company, Ceylon Tea Marketing Ltd. Zaheer offered me a part of his stake in the company, which I accepted and for which I am grateful.

Zaheer's eldest daughter Aasha married early, and is a devoted wife and mother of three children. His second daughter Anusha created history when she joined SriLankan Airlines as the airline's first local female pilot. A few weeks before Zaheer's untimely death, she was promoted to the rank of captain, marking another first in the country's aviation history.

Zaheer's son Shiran has also joined SriLankan Airlines, and is now a First Officer. Zaheer was a gem of a person- so good, so rare, so precious. He lived wonderfully well. In his final weeks, Zaheer's mind was clouded by his illness. That cloud has now lifted. He is himself again - more himself than at any time on this earth. As his last journey took him beyond the sunset, I like to think - in the words of John Bunyan - that "all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side".

Farewell,  
May Allah grant you the bliss of Jennathul Firdous.

dear

Zaheer!

**Branu Rahim** Died: 18-Nov-1970

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## **Maththicham SALEEM LEBBE MUHAMMAD THAMBY Vidane (1819-1884)**

### **of Negombo**

He succeeded his father as the Vidane (A Headman ranked below an Arachchi and possessed minor Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction. They could levy small fines and inflict corporal punishment) for a part of Negombo (assumed to be for Udayar Toppuwa area) somewhere around mid 1800AD but neither the date of appointment nor the area in Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

Maththicham Saleem Lebbe Muhammed Thamby (subsequently known as Maththicham Muhammed Vidane) with the help of his father bought a land on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1841 along Mirigama Road Negombo and in 1846 built a Masjidh (Mosque) by the name of Udayar Thoppuwa Mosque. As per his wish, his son Samsudeen Vithane Arachchi alias Dheen Arachchiar succeeded him as the sole Trustee of this Mosque, in fulfillment of the express wish and desire of the said Muhammed Vidane that the Trustee of the said Udayar Toppuwa Mosque should be from the direct male heirs according to seniority and that they should have precedence and preference to that of the male children by the female heirs of Dheen Arachchiar. The Masjidh is maintained by the income derived from its properties as well as contributions made by family members. The entire land of the Masjidh Contains an extent of One Acre One Rood Ten Decimal Seven Five Purchases (A1 - R1 - P10.75). The land behind the Masjidh is used as the family burial ground.

On the initiative of Mr Zakir Mihlar the following eleven family Members namely Mr. Vasuk, Mr. Caesar Reyan, Mr. Nazmi Hameed, Mr. Irshard Marzook, Mr. Shams Anver, Mr. Silmy Farook, Mr. Vamik Vasuk (at the time of organizing he brought in the idea of creating a Welfare Fund so that it could be used to help the family members in case of an emergency) Mr. Shahin Reyan, Mr. Sajeek Vasuk, Mr. Lareef Reyan and Mr. Anver Mufthy



Muneer who met on 10th January 2003 decided to organize the first family get-together on 26th of April 2003 at Hotel Elephant Bath in Kandy.

Subsequently on 16th of February 2003 four senior family members made a request from the initiators to have the first family get-together in Negombo as it is the Birth place of Dheen Arachchiar and as most of the senior family members are residing in Negombo are not physically strong enough to make the long journey to Kandy.

Hence the venue was shifted from Kandy to Negombo (along with the data, feedback from members etc collected by the initiators) and had the first family get-together at Mrs. Fareeda Raheeman's Residence on 17th May 2003. Negombo, Colombo & Kandy (Kandy, Kurunegala, Warakapola) branches take turns in organizing the get-together. Now this has become an event which is held every other year.

Negombo is predominantly a Catholic area hence known as "Little Rome"  
The family is known as the "Muslim Royal Family" by the people of Negombo

### **Muhammed Thamby Samsudheen Vithane-Arachchi alias Dheen Arachchiar (1860 - 1915) of Negombo.**

After completing his studies (Cambridge Senior) he got involved in the family business. He was appointed as the Vithane-Arachchi (Head of Arachchies. Arachchi was a Headman ranked between a Muhandiram and a Vidane and possessed Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction) for Negombo in 1896 and hence was popularly known as Dheen Arachchiar. He held this post until his death at the age of 55 on the 11th of December 1915.

He built his two-storied house known as "Yathreeb" (which was one of the landmark buildings in Negombo until it was demolished in 1992 due to the high cost of maintenance) near his ancestral home (in the Eastern border of Negombo) along Mirigama Road (facing St Lazarus Road and bordering Jayaratne Road). As he was highly respected by all the communities and that the descendents of Maththicham Muhammed Vidane owned almost all the properties in this area this place came to be known as "Dheen Junction" as a mark of respect to him.

### **Yoosoof Lebbe Vidane – of Negombo**

He was appointed as the Vidane for a part of Negombo but neither the date of appointment nor the area of Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

### **Omardeen Police Vidane d 1921 of Negombo**

He was appointed as the Police Vidane but neither the date of appointment nor the area of Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

### **Proctor Ismail Dheen JP (1894 – 1968) of Negombo.**

He was the first Muslim to qualify as a Lawyer in Negombo and was also the first person to be appointed as the Quazi for Negombo. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace by

the British Government. He was one of the founder members of the Board of Trustees of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home

### **Proctor Samsudeen Abdul Raheeman JPUM (1896-1965) of Negombo.**

He was the only Muslim to be the Chairman of the then Negombo Urban Council He was a Crown Counsel, justice of the Peace and Unofficial Magistrate. Raheemanabad at Periyamulla Negombo is named after him as a mark of respect to him. He was one of the founder members of the Board of Trustees of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home

### **Al Haj M. Ali. M. A. Hassen JP (1903-1997) of Weweldeniya.**

He donated his land to build Babul Hassen Central College of Warakapola. He has also donated three shops each to Warakapola Grand Jumma Mosque, Town Mosque and two shops to Ganithapura Jumma Mosque in Warakapola. In addition to this in 1993 he donated four acres of land in Ganithapura, Warakapola to needy Muslims and this area is now known as Hassenpura. He played a leading role in promoting the improvements to the Warakapola town. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the whole Island by the British Government.

He was one of the founder members and president of the Muslim Ladies Arabic College of Kal-Eliya from the inception till his demise. He was also one of the founder members of the Board of Trustees of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home

As per his wish his children (Mrs Hafeela Cassim and Mr Abdul Raheeman Hassen JP) donated the property of Dharul Hassenath Academy of Warakapola under a deed of Trust (Waqf) in 2001

### **Marikar Abdul Razak Vidane of Negombo**

He was appointed as the Vidane for a part of Negombo but neither the date of appointment nor the area of Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

### **Yoosoof Lebbe Mubarak Vidane of Negombo**

He succeeded his father as the Vidane for a part of Negombo but neither the date of appointment nor the area of Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

### **Omardeen Abdul Wahab Vidane of Negombo**

He succeeded his father as the Vidane for a part of Negombo but neither the date of appointment nor the area of Negombo that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced.

### **Mrs Safa Abdulla Ismail (1914 - 2007) of Puttalam**

She was the first Muslim girl to get enrolled at Newstead College Negombo.

**Proctor H. S. Ismail (1901-1974) of Puttalam .**

He was a member of the Puttalam Urban Council from 1928-1947 and was its chairman from 1942-1947. He was the only uncontested member in the first Parliament, the Deputy minister of Food (1947-48) the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (parliament) and subsequently was appointed as the Speaker in 1956 and held this post till 1959 and thereby became the first Muslim to be the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

As the founder President of the Ceylon Baithulmal fund, he served it until his death He was one of the founder members of the Board of Trustees of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home. He was also a president of Ceylon Muslim Scholarship Fund. He was also instrumental in setting up the Puttalam Zahira College.

He was offered the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 1949 but he refused to accept it

The Sri Lankan Government issued a Stamp in honour of him on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2003

**Mr. Anis Sheriff JP (1922 - 2003) of Negombo.**

He was the first Muslim to be the Deputy Mayor of Negombo Municipal Council and was also a member of the Western Provincial Council. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace. His brother Aamir Sheriff was the City Coroner in Colombo and also an MMC in Mutuwal.

**Dr. M. Thassim Abdulla (1926) of Negombo.**

He completed the MBBS Examination at the Colombo medical faculty in 1952 and thereby became first Muslim to qualify as a Doctor in Negombo.

**Advocate Kaleel Raheeman (1933- 1998) of Negombo.**

He served as the Quazi for Negombo.

**Mrs. Fareeda Abdul Cader Raheeman (1939) of Negombo.**

Her land was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government to start up the Technical College of Warakapola

**Proctor Mahroof JPUM (1919-1990) of Negombo.**

He was a member of the Negombo Municipal Council, a Crown Counsel, a Justice of Peace and unofficial Magistrate

**Dr. Rifdhy Dheen (1942) of USA**

He is a Cardiologist by profession and migrated to United States of America. He donated a plot of land along Colombo-Chillaw Road in Negombo to the Negombo Grand Mosque in 2001 to build a Mosque. The Mosque has been named as Al Masjidhul Dheen

**Mr. Abdul Raheem. M. Rafeek JP (1927-1989) of Warakapola,**

Like his father (Muhammed Lebbe Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala) he too contributed to the development of his community by playing a leading role in promoting the improvements to the hospital, places of religious worship, schools, co-operatives in Warakapola and the road leading to the Warakapola Grand Jumma Mosque. He was also responsible in getting the road leading to the Warakapola Grand Jumma Mosque named as Masjid Mawatha in 1982.

He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the whole Island in 1983.

**Mr. Saleem Marikar (1925) of Negombo**

The attributes of preparing the family tree and the family album of the Dheen Arachchiar's family goes to him. It was he who took the pains to collect and compile details during his leisure time.

**Mr. Ismaildeen Marikar (1941) of Mount Lavinia**

He was a Founder member and the Managing Director of Amana Investment Limited (First Bank to operate under Sharia Law in Sri Lanka).

**Mr. S. M. Sabry FCA (1940-2008) of Ratmalana.**

He was the first Muslim to be appointed as the Auditor General (1993 – 2000) of Sri Lanka.

**Mr. S. L. M. Farook (1937- 1996) of Mawanella.**

He was a Member of the Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council at the time of his death.

**Dr. M. Shareef M. Mihlar JP (1946) of Warakapola.**

He was the founder President of the Horagolla Mosque which is now known as Masjid Al Hudha in Horagolla, Warakapola. In 1975 when he was putting up his house in Horagolla Warakapola he had the intention of building a mosque as there wasn't a mosque in that area. In order to accomplish his desire, with the generous contribution of the community a small plot of land was purchased in 1977 and the mosque was built in 1979.

Together with his brother he donated the property of Al-Madhrasathus-Shareefiyah of Warakapola to the Warakapola Grand Jumma Mosque in December 1999 (21st Ramadhan 1420)

He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the Judicial District of Kegalle in 1983.

**Mr. M. A. Caesar Reyan (1947) of Katugastota.**

He obtained the highest number of preferential votes for the Pathadumbara Electorate during the local government elections held in 1991 and thereby became the first Muslim to be the Vice Chairman of the Pathadumbara Pradeshiya Sabava.

### **Mr. Ajward Cassim (1955-1995) of Belgrade.**

He migrated to Yugoslavia and was appointed as the Honorary Counsel General of Sri Lanka for Yugoslavia and held this post until his death.

#### Abbreviations

JPUM Justice of Peace and Unofficial Magistrate.

JP Justice of the Peace.

Dr Doctor.

C. Eng Chartered Engineer.

FCA Fellow Chartered Accountant.

FCMA Fellow Chartered Management Accountant

ACA Associate Chartered Accountant.

ACMA Associate Chartered Management Accountant

d. Died.

Div Divorced

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## **MUNNA HASSAN NAINA LEBBE**

### **The Ancestors of Abdul Cader Sheikh Muhammad Ajward of Matara**

The ancient and historical town of Matara, on the banks of the Nilwala Ganga (river) was a very famous location significant to the Ceylon Moors of Sri Lanka. The Moors, have been living here for many centuries. During the Portuguese Colonial era the Matara Disvani (District) extended from Badulla to Aligoa (Alutgama). The Disave (Chief) during the Portuguese period was a Moor (vide Paul Peiris translation of "Portuguese Era"). At the same time there were persecutions of the Moors by the Portuguese. AC Sheikh Muhammad Ajward, remembers as a child, when he went for picnics with his parents that they used to halt their cart on the way to Meddawatte near the east end of the town. They recited the opening verse from the Qur'an and invoked Allah's Blessings on those Muslim Martyrs who were executed by the Portuguese on the banks of the river Nilwala Ganga. There used to a small wall that signified the location of this massacre but it is no more to be found. It is said that the Portuguese gathered all the males and killed them. The women and children were sent to Colombo. They could possibly form a part of the nucleus of the Colombo Chetty's.

However, the Moors thrived in other parts of the town. During the Dutch period, in order to build the ramparts, the Moors who were residing near the Fort Gate were asked to vacate their abodes and subsequently they made Kadayaweediya and other similar locations their places of residence. One always finds in the history of the Matara Moors that they generally inter-married with Moors from Alutgama, Weligama, Galle, and Beruwela.

So it happened, a very handsome young man from Beruwela called Ahmed Lebbe, who was Sheikh Ajwards paternal grandfather, paid a visit to Matara to meet his uncle Usoof

Lebbe, who was already married and settled in Matara. They belonged to the famous Hasana Lebbe clan of Aluthgama. While in Matara, Ajwards grandfather, Ahmed Lebbe visited a young relative of his named Aliyar Marikar Lebbe, son of Aliyar Marikar. While chatting with him, at his home, he was served with sweets and coffee. Ultimately, he was so taken up with the taste of the coffee that was served to him that he requested for the hand of the maiden, who had made the coffee, in marriage. This lady was Aliyar Marikar Lebbe's sister who lived in the same house with him. The proposal was accepted and the couple were happily married to one another.

Sheikh Ajward's grandfather, Ahmed Lebbe, periodically visited India. He was a cloth and rice merchant. Some years later, when he was on a business visit in India, Sheikh Ajwards grandmother, who was pregnant then and in Ceylon, had been told that this time, after having borne 3 or 4 daughters, she could seek Allah's Blessings, by His Will, for a son. When Ahmed Lebbe returned home after completing his business he was most overjoyed to hear that he was blessed with a son. When the infant son was presented to him, he was taken aback by the dark color of the baby's skin complexion and immediately retorted, "This can never be my offspring...". The fact was that the infant that was presented to him was not his own son but another baby from a neighboring house. It was simply a practical joke played on the man. When his own son was presented to him he was so pleased and happy. This infant son went on to become Sheikh Ajwards father, Muhammad Abdul Cader.

Sheikh Ajward's grandfather had left a prayer book in which he had written a part of his genealogy identifying all his ascendants all the way up to the first Caliph of Islam AbuBakr Sideeq (radiAllahu anhu). The family tree states that a descendant of the Caliph AbuBakr (radi) had visited Ceylon and married a lady from Aluthgama. His name was Munna Hassen Naina Lebbe.

His paternal grandfather had five sons. The youngest, was a personal friend of Lord Elphinstone, and who worked as Manager at the sugar factory established at Paraduwa by him. Lord Elphinstone bade farewell to Ceylon on the death of his dear friend who was managing his factory. Another son was the father of Mohideen Bawa of Galle, who was the first Muslim Municipal Councillor at Galle and a supplier of provisions to the P&O Shipping Lines boats that berthed at Galle harbor. Mohideen Bawa was considered to be a replica of Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan, the then ruling monarch of Turkey, because of his mighty and generous deeds for his community. Mohideen bawa had two daughters. The older, Khadeeja, had two sons, Segu Mohideen and Muhammad Haniffa, and a daughter Ayesha who was married to MAC Ismail. The youngest daughter, Mariam Umma, had a son named Zubair Cassim.

Aliyar Marikar's and Mohideen Bawa's grandfather, the father of the five sons mentioned earlier, was the first to construct a two storeyed house in the District of Matara. It is said that villagers of the area brought pingo's full of gifts and paid homage to this good man. This house, with a few alterations, is still existent at No 188, Main Street, Matara (1969). This had, originally, been a house of reputed families. Ultimately it came to the possession of his ancestors and it is the same abode where Sheikh Ajward was born 63 years ago.

Sheikh Ajward's maternal grandfather, Aliyar Marikar whom he was not fortunate enough to see, whose sister was married to his paternal grandfather, Ahmed Lebbe, was a well-known personality in Matara. He was the agent of his cousin Mohideen Bawa and was residing in Calcutta. It is reported that Aliyar Marikar used to travel in a coach drawn by four horses.

Aliyar Marikar carried on a lucrative trade by sending rice and provisions to Galle. He usually booked more space than what was required on the ships that used to sail to Galle. Hence when Borah and Chetty merchants required cargo space to export their goods they were informed by the shipping agents that Aliyar Marikar had already booked all the available cargo space on board the vessels. Thus, these merchants were forced to approach Aliyar Marikar who then resold the space to them at a premium making a profit in the process.

Whilst in Calcutta, Aliyar Marikar had constructed a Mosque named "Sholiya Masjid" with the assistance of three other merchants from Kayalpatnam, Keelakarai, and Madras. He also functioned as the first Trustee of this Mosque. Ceylon Moors were thus given a pride of place to perform their prayers at this Mosque with a special room assigned especially for them whenever the Mosque was filled to capacity. A Muslim burial ground attached to this Mosque also afforded facilities for the burial of Muslims from Ceylon.

Back in Ceylon, Aliyar Marikar functioned as a Trustee of all the Mosques in Matara. An interesting incident occurred, once, when the Katheeb of the Mosque was delivering his Friday sermon from the pulpit. Aliyar Marikar, unconcerned for the dignity and respect of the Mosque, demanded the Katheeb to surrender his turban and the book from which he was narrating his sermon and climb down from the pulpit and conclude his talk. This conduct of Aliyar Marikar was supposed to have been due to the fact that this Khatheeb had solemnized the marriage of his own daughter to a man without due consideration to his family and status in society. Things took a turn for the worse and the congregation was divided into two groups. However, Aliyar Marikar succeeded in replacing the officiating Katheeb and putting an end to the confusion.

Aliyar Marikar married a very beautiful lady, the granddaughter of Bawa Sarap (Shroff). Incidentally, many of the Shroffs (Cashiers) in Government Kachcheri's (Departments), at that time, were Muslims, and it is said that one was deported to Malacca for alleged malpractices. Aliyar Marikar's wife, Sheikh Ajward's grandmother, survived her parents and lived to the ripe old age of 90. She was generally referred to as "Nona", meaning "Lady".

Though arrogant at times, Aliyar Marikar was also a man of great dignity and principles. It is said that when his oldest daughter, Sheikh Ajward's mother, attained puberty he had resolved to offer a grand feast on one of the ensuing nights. During this time while Aliyar Marikar was involved in a chat with some of his friends he had noticed a respectable lady carrying a frying pan and walking out into the night. On inquiry by his friends, from her, as to where she was going she had responded that she was taking the frying pan to be sold in order to buy a gift for Aliyar Marikar's daughter, without having known that Aliyar Marikar was also present within the group of men. On hearing this, Aliyar Marikar was very much perturbed and promptly ordered an announcement through his family members that no gifts will be accepted for his daughter on the occasion. When this daughter was subsequently proposed to his nephew, Sheikh Ajward's father, Aliyar Marikar objected and refused to have anything to do with him as he belonged to the newly formed order of the Shadhuliya Sect which he did not accept as a valid Islamic group. However, Allah's Will prevailed and this and Muhammad Abdul Cader, who happened to be the Naquib (Captain or Leader) of the Shadhuliya Order and also a very successful textile merchant, married the young lady and they went to become the proud parents of fourteen children of whom Sheikh Ajward was the thirteenth.

One of Aliyar Marikar's nephews, ILM Ibrahim, was reputed to be the Citronella King of Matara. He was the father of Surveyor Marikar.

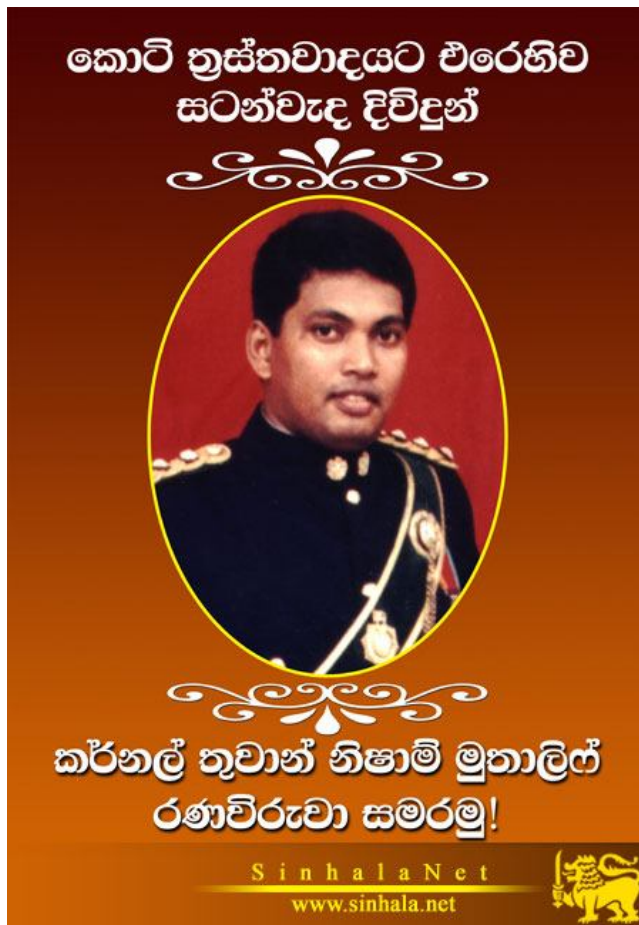
Aliyar Marikar's youngest brother, who was married in Galle, was the father of MA Rahim, founder of Messers Ismail A Raheem, the famous diamond merchants in Singapore. After his demise in 1928 the business which had survived for over seventy years was closed down.

One of Sheikh Ajward's paternal aunts, a niece of Aliyar Marikar, married in Beruwela. This person from Beruwela, after his marriage, paid numerous visits to Matara and acquainted himself with Western habits. Thus the elderly folks of Beruwela relate that this man who came to wear modern style shoes created an interest and wonder and was referred to as the "Matara Mapilla" (Matara Bridegroom). It is said that children flocked to see him when he walked, wearing his shoes.

In his retirement, Aliyar Marikar became a vaccinator and was generally referred to as "Ali Doctor", a position then held in high esteem.

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## Colonel MUTHALIF



A tribute to Colonel Muthaliff



Nishantha Sri Warnasinghe DN Wed May 31, 2006

**PERSONALITY:** Colonel Thuwan Nisham Muthaliff who fought the Tiger terrorists gallantly to preserve the unitary status and territorial integrity of the motherland, took leave of us as a patriotic war hero on May 31, 2005 at 7.50 a.m, exactly a year ago.

He was a Malay Muslim whose unlimited love for the country prompted him to fight against the separatism of Tiger terrorists. He performed the decisive task of finding the correct target to attack the strategic points of Tiger terrorists acting like the eye of the armed forces of Sri Lanka.

At the time of his demise he was the Commanding Officer of the Armed Intelligence Unit of the Sri Lanka Army and the Director of the Colombo Cell of the Armed Intelligence Unit. He was a real challenge to the LTTE leadership. He was a perennial alarm of death and a source of terror to the LTTE leaders.

Thuwan Nisham Muthaliff, born at Kalubowila Hospital on July 12, 1966, received his education at D. S. Senanayake Vidyalaya, Colombo and was outstanding in studies and in extra curricular activities and won the love and respect of school mates.

Soon after completing his school career, he joined the Sri Lanka Army as a Regular Cadet Officer on June 02, 1986, in order to shoulder the national responsibility of saving the country from Tiger terrorism.

He underwent training in the Army Academy of Diyatalawa and subsequently followed the Cadet Officers' Training Course in Pakistan. Then he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 4th Gemunu Regiment of the Sri Lanka Army. He was promoted as a Lieutenant on June 02, 1987. Thereafter he was continuously attached to the Intelligence Unit. He became a Captain on July 02, 1992 and promoted to the rank of a Major on July 02, 1995.

For his gallantry he won many medals. Ranawickrama Medal, Swarnajayanthi Medal, Armed Services Long Term Medal, North East Battle Medal, Poornabhoomi Medal, Operation Wadamarachchi Medal, Operation Riviresa Medal and 50th Independence Commemorative Medal were among the medals he won as a reward to his gallant performance in the course of his Army career.

In the course of his Army career he successfully completed a number of courses in the Defence Intelligence Service in India, Bangladesh, Hawaii and USA.

Many Operations launched under the leadership of Major Muthaliff brought about the downfall of a number of LTTE leaders and ended the life span of some of them. His name was among the top names of LTTE hit list. Many major LTTE attacks in Colombo were foiled as a result of his intelligence service. Colonel Thuwan Nisham Muthaliff, a product of Muslim-Malay origin loved his motherland immensely.

His dedication to save its unity and integrity will remain in our minds as an everlasting memorial to an immortal war hero whose illustrious career is worthy of emulation as we remember his first death anniversary today.

(The writer is Media Secretary, JHU.)

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## **NAGRIYA**

The earliest known forebearers of the Nagriya family in Ceylon was one Fakeer Mohammed, who had four sons, Abdul Latif, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Karim, and Haji Kassim.

Abdul Rahman is said to have been an itinerant trader in the up country who would resort to the vast tea plantations established by European Planters and sell textiles to the estate workers of South Indian origin who had been brought by the Colonial British Raj to provide cheap labor for the booming tea plantation industry. Ceylon Tea had by then become a household name in Europe and the demand for it kept increasing over the years. This meant more indentured labor and of course more business for those like Abdul Rahman who met the Indian Communities demand for the basic necessities of life, like cloth. He eventually settled in the picturesque upcountry town of Matale, prompted perhaps by the convenience of having a Railway Station close to him which greatly facilitated his trading activities. He established a textile business here in the name of Regal Drapery Stores, in 1943, and was helped in the business by his sons, one of whom Iqbal, was born in Matale in 1948.

In the late 1960's word spread that considerable quantities of Sapphires had been discovered in Elahara in the Matale District and Iqbal was not slow in joining the great Sapphire rush of that time. He soon formed his own gem trading company called Regal Gems, which traded in rough uncut stones and was on his way to making it big, particularly, when he decided to venture into Tanzania, where he would purchase precious and semi precious stones before bringing them to Sri Lanka, processing them and exporting them to overseas markets. He was also the first local gem trader to resort to Ilakaka in Madagascar, where considerable hordes of precious stones had been found. That was in 1998. He was helped by his son Althaf in this lucrative operation, which involved the mining of gem stones in rather difficult terrain, before sending these to Sri Lanka for cutting and polishing, after which they would be exported.

Althaf, who involved himself in his fathers business in 1990 is today a promising gem merchant in his office at Macan Markar Arcade near Galle Face Green. The company regularly takes part in the FACETS Gem show as well as in Exhibitions in HingKong and USA, promoting gem stones in a big way.

Althaf's younger brother, Asmath, obtained his MA Degree in Economics from the University of Aberdeen in 2004 and is presently an investment advisor at John Keells & Company Ltd., one of the largest business conglomerates in the island.

Iqbal's younger brother established his family textile business in Colombo 1983 and was joined by his sons to assist him. His oldest son Shakir joined the business at the young age of 17.

The Nagriya family is renowned for its devotion to various religious causes. Iqbal Abdul Rahman Nagriya built the Fathima Mosque in Matale Town naming it after his beloved mother, Fathima. Ghaffar Abdul Rahman was responsible for building the Chatham Street Mosque in Colombo Fort.

Haji Omar Nagriya, son of Abdul Latiff, like most Memons of his time was a textile merchant and the proprietor of Diplomat Textiles in Third Cross Street in The Pettah. A religious man, he helped build the Rahumaniya Mosque and Madarasa in Grandpass. His son, Abdul Latiff, also ministers to the religious needs of the Community and is the present Mutawalli of the Memon Hanafi Mosque. His tenure as Mutawalli has seen substantial improvement to the Mosque, particularly in its interior which was subjected to some splendid renovation work lately. Among his other contributions are the setting up and maintenance of a Madarasa at Princess Gate Panchikawatte known as Madarasathul Madinah where over a 100 students benefit from daily Quranic classes. He also built Faizan-e-Madinah, a Madarasah for girls in Kattankudy, where over a 100 girls are taking Hifz and Alima courses.

Abdul Latiff Haji Omar Nagriya, is also an industrialist involved in the manufacture of garments for exports. His first venture was Red Heart Garment Industries, located in Mabole, which was set up in 1985. In 1993 he started Red Heart Apparels (pvt) Ltd. in Bibile under the 200 garment factory program launched by President Premadasa. In 1998 he embarked on Red Heart Fashions (pvt) Ltd, in Weeraketiya, under President Chandrika Kumaratunge's 50 garment factory program and his latest venture is another factory of Red Heart Fashions under President Mahinda Rajapakse's 300 factory program. He was also one time Snooker Champion who beat Pakistan 3-0 in the Sri Lanka-Pakistan test series held in 1989.

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### **Al-Alim NAINA-MARIKAR Khaleefathul Khadiriy**

Yehiya Muhammad Naina-Marikar (known as YM Naina-Marikar and more affectionately as "YM") was born on November 18, 1883. He was the third issue of Muhammad Yehiya, son of Alim Naina-Marikar Khaleefathul Khadiri, whose lineage is traced back to the early Arab settlers at Beruwela. He died on April 9, 1952.

Alim Naina-Marikar Khaleefathul Khadiriy was a well known Alim who was highly respected for his Islamic knowledge and deep devotion. He held the exalted position of Chief of the Khadiriya Order in Ceylon up to his death.

Y.M. Naina-Marikar married Muhsina Abdul Majeed, the second daughter of A.R. Abdul Majeed who was the eldest son of the Hon. M.C. Abdul Rahman, Member of the Legislative Council, the first Muslim to be appointed a Legislative Councillor for the entire Muslims of Ceylon. He held this position until his death.

Muhsina was an aristocratic lady of noble parentage. A great-grand daughter of Qutub As-Sheikh Yahya Moulana Al-Yemani Al-Abasi Nasab Wa Siddiqui Hasab of Matara. Her motherly love for her children and others was par excellence. Her deep devotion to her husband often kept her sedately occupied with her pots and pans in order to turn out an unctuous and palate-soothing dish that would satiate his tired nerves. Devoid of any vanity she was frugal and possessed a fullness of heart to serve others. She did not mess up her home with China ornaments and female frivolities. She maintained a reasonably decent abode with its bare necessities only and abhorred a vainglorious life, being a righteous and pious lady. She spared her husband all those vexatious cares which exhaust a mans mind. In her company he found the cosy spot where body and soul are relaxed, where criticism becomes praise, and blame a caress. Her untimely demise, at the early age of 48, in 1944 caused a deep gap in his life. He missed her much when he needed her the most. Yet, he bore the calamity as expected of a true believer and

adapted himself admirably to the changed circumstance, to live a further 8 years and 13 days. Many were the proposals that were offered to him for a second marriage, yet, he opted to remain single until his end. When he was ailing seriously he used to call out her name in the hope that she may hear him and respond to his overtures but had to resign to the fact that she was not there anymore knowing that she was gone.

During the early years of their life, Y.M. Naina-Marikar and his brother, Yousoof, lost their father and came under the care and guidance of a close relative named Minna Marikar Lebbe Marikar who had no issue. They were defrauded, in their young years, of the sweet food of academic education and had to be content with whatever they could achieve within the circumstances that they were faced with. Thus, they were absorbed into the business of Minna Marikar who traded in laces and embroidery of local make. When Minna Marikar became ill and decrepit the two brothers became the custodian of the small business and after his death they ventured out into a business of their own which later became one of the most famous of Moor businesses titled **Zitan Stores**. It was established at No. 228, Main Street, Pettah.

Yousoof suffered a road accident, being knocked down by a cyclist, and suffered a leg injury which incapacitated and restricted the free use of his right leg. He retired from active business and handed over the entire management of Zitan Stores to his brother Y.M. Naina-Marikar. The business thrived and elevated YM to a very high social status amongst the Muslim community in Ceylon. Profiteering of an unscrupulous nature or taking advantage of a dearth of utility articles and goods in the market was not his way of life. He toiled from 8 am until 10 pm on a daily basis in carrying out his business successfully and fruitfully. He was a very strict disciplinarian and set a valuable example to his colleagues and employees. He was looked upon as a fair and just businessman and the popular name of Zitan Stores reached new heights amongst the communities in Ceylon.

He purchased premises 251, 253 at Main Street, Colombo in the Pettah and expanded his business importing a large variety of goods. His uncanny sense of sizing the market demands was unprecedented and un-paralleled. The ruling rates for his merchandise remained and advertisement throughout his business career. His was, indeed, a service purely motivated to serve the nation, primarily, and through this honorable objective he succeeded in earning the plaudits and praise of every customer he dealt with. He was, primarily, a Wholesaler and secondarily an accredited retailer.

YM was a very philanthropic and kind gentleman who spared no pains in alleviating the hardship and suffering of his community enjoying distinction and honor amongst the people. He was the only Muslim to be marked out for recognition on the occasion of the Coronation of King George VI, for his philanthropy and public spiritedness, as a Justice of Peace, Western Province.

The General Secretary of the Central YMCA, referring to Mr Naina Marikar's investiture, said,

*"your appointment has given satisfaction to all those who know you, as you have proved yourself as one of the leading public-spirited citizens of Colombo. All those, like you, who prize the interest of the public above their own, are surely the salt of this earth."*

The first Muslim Civil Servant in Ceylon, Mr AMA Azeez, commented,

*"His career is an inspiration and a warning, particularly to those young Muslims who think that by virtue of the years they have spent in a secondary English School and by virtue of the little and imperfect English education they have acquired, a business career does not suit their dignity or their achievements. We should be proud of Mr Naina Marikar, especially at this time when the Muslim community is gradually losing its pre-eminent place in the commercial and trading world of Ceylon. His career reminds one that the days of business giants are not over for the Muslims of Ceylon."*

*"Our lives are not worth living if we do not make it worthwhile for others to live, were the watchwords of Mr Naina Marikar's life. Succinctly summed as a 'simple, sincere man, unspoiled by riches', by the first elected Mayor of Colombo, the late Sir Ratnajothi Saravanamuttu, he will ever be an example and inspiration not only to his community but also to the general public, who know too well the many acts of charity he has bestowed."*

Ceylon in Coronation Year May 1937, has this to say:

*"As a philanthropist, Mr Naina Marikar has won pride of place among people of all classes in this country. He has the rare knack of being generous, and, by setting an excellent example, inducing the same generous impulses in others. And, with this bountiful benevolence towards noble and deserving causes, he combines a personal thoughtfulness, wholly unknown nowadays, which sheds, like his own ingratiating smile, a light on those around. When the earnest efforts of those selfless people to promote the welfare of our less fortunate brethren fall into historic perspective, his name will be enshrined in the lasting gratitude of generations to come. We are, perhaps, too near the canvas to assess correctly his many spontaneous acts of splendid self-sacrifice, but with the passage of time there is no doubt that he will receive full justice and ample appreciation at the hands of posterity. "*

*"His benefactions knew no limits of caste or creed. His purse strings remained opened for the amelioration of the poor and needy, and the cause of educational and social movements. His benevolence fell as the gentle rains from Heaven, profiting man, society and association. He was strongly of opinion that, 'no man is great in the eye of God'. 'Be happy and contented' was his motto, and the keynote of his success was due to his powers of initiative, breadth of vision, sporting instincts, and practical mindedness, combined with magnitude of conception. His gentlemanly personality, innate nobility of character, understanding ways, simplicity, and kindly simplicity have won him the esteem, regard, affection and confidence, not only of his community, but everyone in the island. "*

Being an ardent supporter of the Moors' Sports Club, he furnished the entire building and provided all the sports goods needed for the opening of the new pavilion by His Excellency Sir Edward Stubbs. Subsequently, he ceiled the entire roof too. The Hon Gen Secy, commending his lively interest in sports in general, observed:

*"If the other Moorish merchants would follow the example he has set, the level of efficiency of the community would be considerably raised. There is hardly any institution needing help that has not benefitted by Mr Naina Marikar's generosity, and, he can justly claim to be one of the leading intelligent philanthropists in the country."*

He built a palatial home at No. 76, Rosmead Place, Colombo 7, using only imported Burmese Teak wood for the entire woodwork. He lived there with his wife, Muhsina until their death.

extracted from an article written by NMM Bishrul Hafi in the MICH Souvenir IV of 1977-1982 (20.2.1979)

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## **M I M NALEEM HAJIAR**

MIC                      Newsline                      27                      September                      2005  
**Naleem Hajjar of Beruwela**

Innalillahi Wainna Ilahi Raajioon [Qur'an].

[FROM HIM DO WE COME AND UNTO HIM DO WE RETURN!]

The great Muslim philanthropist Alhaj MIM Naleem passed away today Tuesday the 27th of September 2005 at 4.30 pm At Apollo Hospital Colomoboat at the age of 73. The janaza prayer will be conducted at Chinafort jumma Mosque at 2.30.P.M and the burial will be taking place at JamiaH Naleemiah Campus following the prayers.

Alhaj Naleem, son of late Mohamed Ismail and Fathima Shereefa Ismail was in born 4th April 1933 and expired leaving his wife Mrs. Rafeeka Naleem, four sons Ilyas, Kamil, Mubaraq, Yakooth and a daughter Silmiya Imran behind him.

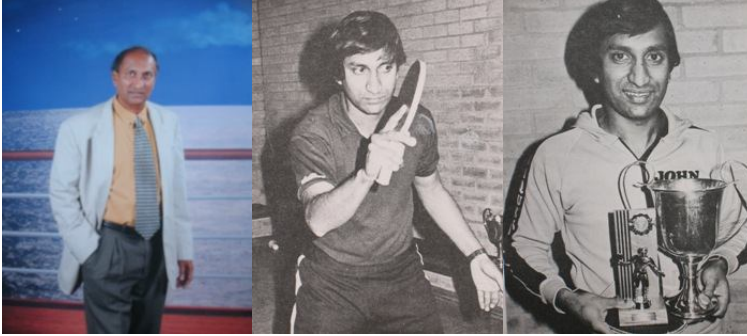
Better known as Naleem Hajjar, he was born in the western coastal town of Beruwala where he spent most of his life. He started his life as a local gem trader, and through his honesty and erseverance, soon became one of the leading and internationally renowned gem businessmen of Sri Lanka.

Naleem Hajjar had a mission to uplift the Muslim community through education. He founded the Renaissance Movement through which he gave a new impetus to education of Muslim youth, supporting them with extra classes and educational activities.

His apex achievement was the founding of the renowned Islamic University the Jamiah Naleemiah in 1973, combining traditional academic education with Islamic education of international standards. To date this university has produced graduates who are in leading positions of every sphere of life, making enormous contributions to the Muslim community and to the development of Sri Lanka in general. He was loved and respected by people of allcommunities throughout Sri Lanka.

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## FIROZ NILAM



Firoz Nilam, son of Abdul Rahim Mohammed Nilam, spent his secondary education at Royal College in Colombo where he excelled in Table Tennis and Cricket. He was the first Muslim Table Tennis Champion of Ceylon. In addition, he was also one of the very rare schoolboys who held National titles in any sport. Firoz won the National TT Championships in 1966 and 1967 including the triple crown (Mens Singles, Mens Doubles and Mixed Doubles in one of the 2 years) after which he left for higher studies to the UK.

He was also the runner-up in the Peking Invitational Consolation TT Singles in 1965 and reached the pre-quarter finals (top 16 players) of the Asian Championships in 1966. As a Junior, Barney Reid and Firoz Nilam won the All India Boys Double Title in Bombay in 1962 and in addition they also won the Silver Medal in the Boys Team TT Championships.

Firoz was voted number 4 in the Sports Star of the Year Competition in Ceylon in 1966 and the All Sports magazine named him the "Prince of the Green Table". In England, Firoz won the Bedfordshire and Hertfortshire County Mens TT Singles and TT Doubles Open titles several times and also played for Middlesex County. He also reached many finals in several tournaments in England.

Apart from Table Tennis, Firoz also played 2nd XI Cricket for Royal College, Colombo, with a few 1st XI games, won all Royal Carrom tournaments from under 14 to under 19, ran the 100, 200 and Relay for his College in several track meets.

His father, Abdul Rahim Mohammed Nilam was Wrestling Champion of Ceylon in Featherweight and Bantam weights and was later the Secretary of the Ceylon Wrestling Association.

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## **O'DEANE**

### **Banishment of the first Ceylonese family to Australia**

**by M. D. (TONY) SALDIN - Sunday Island Jan 12 2003**

Drum Major O'Deane, a Malay Non commissioned officer of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, who deserted to the Kandyan in 1803, was absorbed into the service of the Kandyan Monarch and provided with a Sinhalese girl as his wife. When the Kandyan Kingdom was captured by the British in 1815, O'Deane was arrested for treason, court-martialed and sentenced to be shot. However, O'Deane's sentence was later commuted by Governor Robert Brownrigg to "transportation to the Penal settlement of New South Wales in Australia because of the uniform good conduct of the Malay Regiment."

After ousting the Hollanders in 1796, the British were able to gain a foothold in the maritime provinces of Ceylon. Despite this victory, they were now eyeing the Kandyan Kingdom to consolidate their position as masters of the whole island.

When General Hay MacDowall attacked Kandy in 1803 on the orders of Governor Fredrick North, King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe retreated, after a brief resistance, to the mountains of Hanguranketa, carrying with him the Sacred Tooth Relic, albeit after checking the auspicious time from the court astrologer. The sight which greeted British red-coats when entering the city was an ornately carved horse drawn carriage in flames, a gift from Governor North to the Kandyan Monarch, set on fire by the retreating court. The British then installed their puppet Prince Muttuswamy, half brother of King Sri Wickrama as the new Ruler, but he was largely ignored by the people. Moreover, Muttuswamy was dependent on the British for his protection. Ironically, Major Adam Davie, a Scotsman, was entrusted the command of the British garrison in Kandy which he accepted with much reluctance.

Within a few months King Sri Wickrama was able to rally his militia and levies to expel the British. On 24 June, 1803, the Kandyan King's Malay mercenaries referred to as the 'Padikkara Peruwa' led by Sangunglo, their agile captain, commenced the attack on the British garrison. After a short resistance Major Davie, raised the white flag and negotiated terms with Adigar Pilima Talawa for a withdrawal. This arrangement was agreed upon. Davie abandoned 149 of his sick and wounded men in Kandy.

After spiking their cannon and throwing their excess powder and shot into nearby waterways, the beleaguered garrison comprising of 30-Europeans, 300-Malays, 12-Bengali gun lascars and 30-Indian pioneers with the drummers beating a staccato beat were making their forced march to Fort Ostenburg in Trincomalee together with Prince Muttuswamy, when they were trapped at the Watapuluwa ferry near the village of Mawilmada, on account of the flooded conditions of the Mahaveli river.

Some bamboo rafts were made by the troops, but the river was not navigable. Attempts to secure ropes across the river were also thwarted when the Kandyans severed the ropes on the far bank.

On the following day the King's officials arrived with a request to surrender Muttuswamy, which was rejected by the British. Reluctantly, Davie surrendered Muttuswamy, only when the Kandyans threatened to take him away by force. Muttuswamy with three of his relations were then led about a mile away to the presence of the Kandyan monarch and after a summary trial, were condemned to death and beheaded.



Major Davie thereafter decided to return to Kandy, but found that they were surrounded by about 20,000 of the king's forces. Several soldiers then began deserting to the Kandyan. Major Davie then gave a strange order, that all troops ground their arms. The British troops were then surrounded and the Asian soldiers were separated from the Europeans, and the officers from the men. They were then given the option of either entering the Kandyan king's service or face death. Those who refused were immediately beheaded. However most of the European officers chose to shoot themselves with their pistols rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. The first war of 1803 proved a disaster to the British.

The rest is history. Kandy, the last bastion of the Kings of Lanka, fell to the British in 1815 due to the insidious plotting, planning and betrayal by the Kandyan nobles who, one by one, turned against their King Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe. For the first time on 5th March 1815, the Union Jack was hoisted in Senkadagala, and British cannon heralded that Sri Wickrema Rajasinghe had been replaced by George the Third of Great Britain.

Our narrative now takes a different turn. Drum Major O'Deane, a Malay non-commissioned officer of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, who deserted to the Kandyan in 1803, was absorbed into the service of the Kandyan Monarch and provided with a Sinhalese girl as his wife. When the Kandyan Kingdom was captured by the British in 1815, O'Deane was arrested for treason, court-martialed and sentenced to be shot. However O'Deane's sentence was subsequently commuted by Governor Robert Brownrigg to 'transportation to the Penal settlement of New South Wales in Australia' because of the fact that the Governor was impressed with the 'uniform good conduct' of the 1st Ceylon (Malay) Regiment. O'Deane also had much information on his former Commanding Officer, Major Davie, whilst he was a captive of the Kandyan monarch.

On 17 February, 1816, the attention of the residents of Sydney, Australia, were drawn to the following article, about the arrival of a family of five from Ceylon, appearing on page-1 of the Sydney Gazette:

"The HM Brig 'Kangaroo' has brought hither from Colombo several convicts, some of whom are prisoners who had escaped from this Colony. One of the prisoners brought by the 'Kangaroo' is a Malayan, who was a Drum Major of the 1st Ceylon Regiment in the memorable Kandyan war in 1802-1803; and having gone over to the enemy, was upon the late capture of the Kandyan country taken prisoner, and condemned to be shot; which sentence was commuted to transportation for life to this territory; whither he is accompanied by his wife and three fine children. The man, who appears to be intelligent, gives an account of the death of several officers who were made prisoners by the Kandyan Monarch; among whose unfortunate number were Major Davey, of the 1st Ceylon, and Captain Romley, of the 73rd Regiment."

"He is dark complexioned, approaching to a black, and is about 5 feet 10 inches in height. His wife who is a Sinhalese, being a true descendant of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island, is of a small stature, handsomely formed, of a dark olive complexion, and agreeable features, as are also her three children, of whom the two youngest are boys. The appearance of this little family is truly interesting; and the more so, when the feeling mind considers that misfortune has brought them to a part of the world in which it is scarcely conceivable they can find any means of contributing to their

own support. Their native country abounds in fruits, and all the natural luxuries of the East, which are attainable almost without the necessity of human exertion."

The Drum Major was O'Deane. In December 1818, O'Deane, who had taken the first name of William, was assigned as Watchman in HM Dockyards in Sydney, and, in 1825, changed his employment to that of Constable of the Govt. Domain. In May 1827, William O'Deane received a job which he was more familiar with; that of Malay Interpreter for the Australian government.

William O'Deane, accompanied by one of his sons, reported for duty to the Commandant at Fort Wellington, Raffles Bay on the Coburg Peninsula in July 1827. O'Deane was required to act as liaison with Macassarese fishermen from Indonesia who used the coastal areas of the Northern Territories to dry their harvest of trepang (sea cucumber) before export to China. For some reason the British considered it advantageous to establish ties with these fishermen and hence O'Deane's role as Malay interpreter. The Macassarese and Malay fishermen in their armed Prahus docked into Raffles Bay from time to time for stocks of water, and it was a familiar sight to see O'Deane accompanied by the Fort Commandant or his Deputy, boarding these vessels to talk to the fishermen. The fishing vessels would fire their guns whilst leaving the Bay, and the cannon in the Fort were fired in return, acknowledging the salute. O'Deane was given a salary of 70 pounds per year plus a residence for his services. From time to time, O'Deane's son also acted as interpreter in his father's absence.

His wife, Eve O'Deane, whom he had left behind in Sydney, and who joined him later at Raffles Bay, was a practical housewife. Records at Fort Wellington shows that she brought with her a table and 4-chairs, beds and bedding, box of clothing, a cross cut saw and other tools, a gun, a basket of soap, 2-boxes of 'Delph' and glass, a box of pipes, some kitchen and laundry utensils, a bag of 'grasstree gum' and a goat and fodder. O'Deane returned to Sydney in 1829 to his previous employment as a watchman at HM Dockyards. He continued as interpreter for the government when required until 1842. O'Deane was probably the first Malay interpreter employed by the Australian govt. William and Eve O'Deane had six children: three were born in Ceylon and three in Australia.

Mrs. Eve O'Deane died in 1839 aged 50 years at the home of her eldest daughter, Sarah Harriet Evans, and was buried at Devonshire St. Burial grounds. William O'Deane, who was also known as John, died on 23 May, 1860, after being resident for 44-years in the colony.

His death notice in the Sydney Morning Herald read 'On the 23rd instant, at 111 Woolloomooloo Street, at the advanced age of 87, Mr. John O'Deane, the beloved father of Mrs. T. Purcill and of Mrs. J. Brady of Woolloomooloo, an old and respected colonist, and many years Government Interpreter in this city. He leaves a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn their loss'.

The O'Deanes have left behind many descendants in Australia. Mrs. Glennys Ferguson, a great, great, great, great grand-daughter of William and Eve O'Deane, did a remarkable amount of research on her ancestors. She has traced the life of O'Deane from the time of his arrival in New South Wales in 1816 until his death in 1860. She has tracked down most of his descendants currently spread all over Australia. She is also in the process of writing a book on O'Deane. The reason for her to research her ancestors arose when her family could not figure out how they had black hair and brownish eyes.

Many questions still remain unanswered on the Sri Lankan side regarding the origins of O'Deane and his wife Eve.

In the past the average Australian was reluctant to reveal his or her ancestral lineage to convicts, but in the present scenario, they take pride in revealing their heritage as descendants of the original settlers of Australia.

References: (1) The Kandyan Wars - The British Army in Ceylon by Col. Geoffrey Powell (2) Tri Sinhala - by Sir Paul. E. Peiris (3) The First Ceylonese Family in Australia — by Glennys Ferguson in the 'Ceylankan' Feb. 2002 issue published by the Ceylon Society of Australia.

(The writer is a past President of the Mabo Malay Association) .

Sunday Observer, June 29 2003

## **Anecdotal account of the 1st Ceylonese soldier migrant to Australia:**

### **Pioneer, not convict**

The word 'convict' is not appropriate to many who were banished to Australia in the early days of its colonisation. During this period even a slight misdemeanour was sufficient for the British imperial forces to label them as convicts and banish them to harsh, inhospitable lands like Australia.

*by F. S. R. Jayamanne*

The first recorded arrival of Ceylonese to the continent of Australia took place in February 1816, when the SS Kangaroo brought to these shores Drum Major O'Deen, and his wife and three children who were banished to the Penal Colony of Australia by the British Governor, of Ceylon Robert Brownrigg.

The Malayan Drum Major O'Deen, later to be known as O'Dean a Non Commission Officer of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, who switched allegiance to the Kandyans in 1803, was absorbed into the service of the Kandyan Monarch. As a reward he was given a beautiful Kandyan girl in marriage.

When the Kandyan kingdom was captured by the British in 1815, Odeen was arrested for treason, court martialled and sentenced to be shot. However, Odeen's sentence was commuted by Governor Brownrigg to "Banishment to the Penal Settlement in New South Wales, Australia". Some speculate the sudden change of heart of the Governor was for two reasons.

One to subsequent good conduct and fighting spirit of the Malay Regiment. Secondly, Odeen provided the Governor with invaluable information regarding the fate of Major. Davie of the 1st Ceylon Regiment and Captain Romley, of the 73rd Regiment. Major Davy's Company on their way to Kandy were outnumbered and surrounded by about 20,000 of the king's forces. The prisoners were given the option of either entering into the king's service or facing death. Obviously Major Davy and some officers refused. Those who refused were immediately beheaded. The first war proved a disaster to the British. The eye witness account of the massacre by Odeen conveyed to the Governor probably saved Odeen from the firing squad.

## **Banishment**

The article in the Sydney Gazette of 17 February 1816 (page 1) reports: The "Kangaroo" has brought hither from Colombo several convicts. One of the prisoners is a Malayan who was a Drum Major of 1st Ceylon Regiment. He is accompanied by his wife and three children, of whom the two youngest are boys.

The feeling mind could not fathom how this small family could contribute to their own support, given the harsh, unforgiving land to which they were banished. In comparison their native land with salubrious climes abound in fruit and all natural luxuries of the East.

Odeen's name changed through different census. From 1818 he was known as William O'Dean/Odeen. From 1822 to 1825 the family name is recorded as Hooden and in the 1828 the census the name is Wooden. By 1840's the 1st name had changed from William to John.

## **The family**

This remarkable family, having survived the Kandyan wars, was later to survive in the harshest of environments on far Northern coast of the Colony, now known as the Northern Territory. Documents regarding O'Dean's activities, records have not provided such an accurate record of all the children. It is assumed that three children were born in Ceylon and another two were born in Australia.

Mrs. O'Dean (The Sinhalese woman) known as Eve died in 1839 aged 50, at the home of the eldest daughter, Sarah Harriett. Incidentally, painstaking research into the O'Dean family tree was compiled by Glennys Ferguson, three times great grand daughter of Sarah Harriett O'Dean, the eldest child of William and Eve O'Dean. Sarah Harriett should be the first child born in Ceylon. Ref: Glennys Ferguson. "Ceylankan" Feb. 2002.

Our hero John O'Dean (Odeen) died 23rd May 1860. The death notice in Sydney morning Herald read, "On the 23rd instant, at 111, Woolloomooloo St. At the advanced age of eighty seven, Mr. John O'Dean, the beloved father of Mrs. T. Purcill and of Mrs. J. Brady, of Woolloomooloo, an old and respected colonist, and many years Government Interpreter in this city. He leaves a large circle of relatives and friends to mourn their loss."

By December 1818, O'Dean managed to secure a plum job as a Watchman at HM Dockyard. This is quite an achievement for a convict. At this point I should mention that the word "convict", is not appropriate. During this period, even a slight misdemeanor, was sufficient for the British Imperial force to label them as convicts, and banish them to harsh, inhospitable lands like Australia, to fend for themselves. Added to their misery, it is on record that they were harshly and brutally treated.

However, it should be mentioned that the British in their wisdom, have selected the right material to tame a wild inhospitable country like Australia.

These unfortunate so-called convicts were tough, resilient, courageous, innovative, and adventurous lot.

They built this vast untamed, inhospitable continent, into a vibrant, country we now call "the lucky country."

Today we enjoy the fruits of their labour. All Australians should be grateful for their pioneering spirit. So we shall call them pioneers and not convicts.

Our O'Dean fall into this category. Coming back to our hero, O'Dean was promoted as a Constable of the Government Domain, and was appointed as a Malay Interpreter in 1827. William O'Dean presumably the first officially appointed Interpreter, between Australia and South East Asia, arrived with his son in Raffles Bay. The name of the son is not recorded. It is assumed that he was one of the two boys born in Ceylon.

Thus ends the saga of the Drum Major of 1st Ceylon Regiment and his comely Sinhalese wife. At the end of their tether they were completely westernized, having joined the rich genetic cocktail that is Australia. Today John and Eve should have thousands, if not millions of their descendants, spread right across Australia and beyond.

These episodes of John and Eve prove that we should not create racial stereotypes, and form ethnic ghettos.

We belong to one gene pool, which is the human race, and that we should consider ourselves as citizens of the world. Today most of John and Eve's descendants will have blond hair and blue eyes, as a result of numerous intermarriages. The original dark skin and brown eyes of O'Dean and Eve (the Sinhalese woman), would have been churned out long time ago. You may come across a brunette, blond or a red head anywhere. You could assume that some of them may be genetically connected to our John and Eve.

Finally I dedicate this article to our human family, with joy and appreciation of the Ceylonese family, John and Eve O'Dean, who made good in Australia - The Lucky Country. My grateful thanks to Victor Melder, our Melbourne custodian of Sri Lankan history, culture and other related subjects. I appreciate his support in giving access to his home library, which is a veritable treasure trove.

## References

1. The Kandyan Wars - by Col. Geoffrey Powell
2. Tri Sinhala - by Sir Paul E. Peiris
3. The first Ceylonese Family in Australia - Glennys Ferguson. In the "Ceylankan" Feb 2002 issue published by the Ceylon Society of Australia.

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## ODUMA LEBBE MARIKAR

### Haji Sir Muhammad Macan-Markar Effendi

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen097.html>

**Oduma Lebbe Marikar** of Galle had three sons - **Naina Marikar**, **Macan Markar** and **Haji Ahmad**. Naina Marikar had many sons, the eldest of whom was Muhammad Ismail. He

established a Gem & Jewellery business in his name, **N.M.Ismail**. On his death, his three sons - **Mahmood Ali, Muhammad Jameel** and **Muhammad Kassim** (better known for his services as Honorary Secretary to the Ceylon Cricket Association for nearly a decade), changed the name of the business to M.Ali & Bros. and carried on a lucrative trade in the Victoria Arcade. They also assumed the ownership and management of Watawala Tea Estate, near Hatton, in the Central Province. **Haji Ahmed** had an only son, Cabeer who passed away at a relatively young age while performing the Jumma Prayers at the Galle Fort Mosque.

**Oduma Lebbe Marikar Macan Markar**, the second son, established, in 1860, a jewellery business at Point de Galle. The business flourished and was moved to Colombo when the port of call for ships was moved from Galle harbour to Colombo harbour. His establishment in Colombo commenced at No. 1, Grand Oriental Hotel Arcade, Fort, Colombo. With the increase of patronage he moved to a more prominent location of the Grand Oriental Hotel in 1905. He had, among his clients, several members of the British Royalty comprising, His Majesty King Edward VII (1875) as Prince of Wales and His Majesty King George V (1901) as the Duke of Cornwall and York. Amongst the British nobility, some of his customers were, the Duke of Manchester, the Duke of Sutherland, Earl of Aylesford, Earl of Ellesmore, and Lord Abercomby.

In 1901, His Majesty King George V, as the Duke of Cornwall and York and the Duke of Roxbury, visited the exhibition of gems specially displayed at the King's Pavillion in Kandy and made purchases from **Macan Markar** and complimented the firm for their excellent collection of gems. The firm regularly exported precious stones to the London and Paris markets. The world famous Cat's Eye, weighing 105 Carats, called the Blue Giant of the Orient, a Blue Sapphire weighing 225 carats and the Wonder Star of Asia, a Star Sapphire weighing 225 carats are in the possession of the firm. They also possess a rare collection of antique jewellery worn by Moor brides of the past.

**O.L.M.Macan Markar** passed away on July 4, 1901.

The members of the firm who succeeded the founder were his four sons - **Muhammad Macan Markar, Samsudeen Macan Markar**, the most resourceful of them all in business, **Abdul Vadood Macan Markar**, steady and cautious in all his underatknings, and **Muhammad Saleh Macan Markar**, who passed away early in life in the year 1928 leaving behind a bequest of Rs. 50,000 for the establishment of the **Saleh Macan Markar** Muslim Educational Trust for the welfare of Muslim students.

The firm had, prior to 1942, branch offices at Shepherd's Hotel, Continental Savoy, and Semiramis at Cairo and King David Hotel in Jerusalem.

**Muhammad Macan Markar**, fifth in a family of thirteen, was born at No. 47, Church Street, Fort, Galle on September 7, 1877. He was educated at Wesley College, Colombo (Pettah) and represented the College Cricket XI under the name of **M.M.Muhammad**, as he was then known at school. His contemporaries were, C.E.Pereira, who was the captain of the Cricket XI at Wesley, and S.P.Foenander, the worlds official cricket record keeper.

**Muhammad** made an unsuccessful attempt at passing the pre-medical examination before turning to business.

He was the Vice Consul for Turkey at Galle and later Consul for Turkey at Colombo during the period 1903 to 1915. He was also a member of the Galle Municipal Council, for twenty five years, during the period 1906 to 1931. later he was a member of the Colombo Municipal Council from 1940 to 1943. he also sat as a member of the Fez Committee and was the founder President of the All Ceylon Moor's Association for and held that position for a number of years. He, subsequently, held the position of President of the All Ceylon Muslim League in 1945. He represented the Consulta eof Turkey in Ceylon. First Muslim Member for the All Island Seat at the Legislative Council. Senator 1947-1952. In addition, **Muhammad** was a registered member of the congregation of the Maradana Mosque. He was Knighted in 1938.

Ibrahimiya Arabic College at Galle was founded by his mother, **Mrs. O.L.M.Macan Markar**, who left endowments for its maintenance. The institution is now being maintained by the firm.

**Haji Muhammad Macan Markar, Effendi**, as he was known then, married **Noor Neima Naina-Marikar**, the eldest daughter of **S.L.Naina Marikar** Hajjar, on July 2, 1910, at "**Muirburn**", Turret Road, Colombo.

When the Hijaz Railway connecting Makkah and Madinah was commenced in 1907, Ceylon Muslims presented, at the Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, an address of thanks to the Turkish Consul, **Muhammad Macan Markar**, for submission to the Sultan of Turkey. A photograph of those who attended this function is still available.

**Muhammad Macan Markar** performed the Hajj piligrimage, in 1906, together with his mother, **Aamina Umma**, daughter of **Aboobucker Mudaliyar**, his grandmother Pathumuthu, daughter of **Mudaliyar Cassim Lebbe Marikar** (Cassile Blanc), his maternal uncle, **Avoo Lebbe Marikar** and the two ikhwans. **S.L.M.H.Abdul Wahab** and **H.S.M. Izzadeen**. They encountered a number of interesting adventures on their journey, including an encounter with a Bedouin tribe while crossing the Arabian desert on camel back, in a caravan.

As Turkish Consul, he visited Istanbul together with his brother Abdul Vadood and thereafter Rome, Paris and London on business, in 1909. While in London, he was presented to His Majesty King Edward VII, at St. James's Palace by Lord Crewe.

**Muhammad Macan Markar** took a keen interest in the promotion of Muslim education and subscribed Rs. 1,000 towards the construction of houses, alongside the New Olympia Theatre at Darley Road, in a project that was estimated to cost Rs. 12,750. He, along with **M.T.Akbar** and several others, founded the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society Ltd., which established and managed the Hussainiya Boy's School and Fathima Girl's School. He realised the disability he suffered from insufficient education and endeavoured to provide his sons the best possible education available.

It was in his lavish bungalow, "**Villa Stamboul**", Galle Road, Colpetty, that the Muslim Ladies of Ceylon, gave an "**Arabian Night**" reception and presented an address paper to Lady Manning, wife of Governor, Sir Henry Manning, on October 5, 1921. The members of the reception committee were:-

**Mrs. S.L.Naina Marikar, Mrs. E.G.Adamaly, Mrs. C.M.Meera Lebbe Marikar, Mrs. M.A.C.Muhammad, Mrs. W.M.Abdul Rahman, Mrs. S.L.Mahmood, Mrs. A.A.M.Saleem, Mrs. M.R.Akbar, Mrs. Ghouse Mohideen, Mrs. H.N.H.Jalaludeen and Mrs. H.M.Macan Markar.**

**Muhammad Macan Markar** was elected the first Mohammedan Member for the all island seat in the Legislative Council in 1924. He was subsequently elected member for the Batticaloa South electorate in the State Council from 1931 to 1936 defeating E.R. Thambimuthu, and thereby gave the Muslims of the Eastern Province a political consciousness. he was elected the Minister of Communication and Works and it was his deciding vote in the Board of Ministers that introduced Income Tax to Ceylon. He was Knighted in 1938. At a grand public reception given to him in his home town, Galle, he was the first Muslim to openly espouse the establishment of a Sinhala Government, provided that justice and fairplay amongst all te communities in the country was ensured. As a matter of fact, the pro-Sinhala attitude of the All Ceylon Moor's Association, of which **Sir Muhammad** was the President, broke the back-bone of the pro-fifty-fifty group. Sir Muhammad's successor in office, **Sir Razik Fareed**, carried on this policy with great gusto until the fifty-fifty cry was silenced.

**Sir Muhammad** was appointed a Senator in the first Parliament of Ceylon in 1947 and continued to remain so until his death, after a short illness, on May 10, 1952 (15 Sha'aban 1371H). His wife pre-deceased him. He confided that he had two sincere loyal friends who were true to him right up to the end. They were, **Hon. W.M.Abdul Rahman** and **H.N.H. Jalaludeen Hajjar**.

**Sir Muhammad** made a bequest of Rs. 50,000 towards the construction of a Mosque in the University of Ceylon campus at Peradeniya. He also made substantial endowments towards Muslim female aducation and for post graduate studies for Muslim students.

His sons are, **Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar**, BA (Cantab), Bar-at-Law, MMC (former MP for Batticaloa); **Alavi Ibrahim Macan Markar**, MA (Cantab), FCA, Chartered Accountant and Dr. **Muhammad Ajward Macan Markar**, MD (London), MRCP (england), Professor of Medicine, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.

His daughters are, **Noorul Kareema** (wife of Ahamed Samsudeen Muhammad), **Hibshir Hanem** (wife of A.M.Aboobucker), **Fathima Shoiba** (wife of S.A.C.Ismail), **Noorul Ameena** (wife of Muhammad Alavi Macan Markar).

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### **Alim ODUMA LEBBE MARIKAR AHMED LEBBE MARIKAR (Millionaire)**

**Oduma Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Alim** (OLMALM Alim) was one of the wealthy amongst the Ceylon Moors in Colombo. He did extensive hardware business and was possessed of several immovable properties. He had several sons who managed each department of his businesses. He passed away in 1917 and his estate was valued at approximately two million rupees. When his last will was submitted to court some of his heirs contested it. The will was not proved and the Court declared that he had died intestate. The Supreme Court rejected the appeal and preparations were being made by the heirs to appela to the Privy Council. Some of the elders in the community advised them to stop legal proceedings and allocate the properties to the heirs. The parties concerned agreed to the selection of **S.L.Naina-Marikar Hajjar** as the arbitrator and his award was accepted as final.

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Present: **Bertram C.J. and De Sampayo J.**

**THE ALIM WILL CASE.**

124 and 125-D. C. Colombo, 6,175.

*Burden of proof-Power of Court to call evidence after case is closed- Last will-Probate-Suspicion.*

In a contest arising out of an application for probate a single issue was framed, viz., " Was the will duly executed by the deceased? " The party seeking probate contented himself with proof of the execution. The respondent called evidence to prove that the signature was obtained by fraud.

**Held**, that the party beginning had a right to call evidence in rebuttal on the question of substitution.

Under section 163 of the Civil Procedure Code it is not necessary that the right to call evidence by way of rebuttal should be expressly reserved by the party beginning.

The Court has a discretion at any period in a case to allow further evidence to be called for its own satisfaction, even though it is doubtful whether it is admissible, on the request of the party desiring it as of right.

A respondent who wishes to support a petitioner for probate should call his evidence at the conclusion of the petitioner's case. He is not entitled to wait until the opposing respondents disclose their whole case, and then to start a fresh case for the purpose of upholding the will in reply to the evidence of the opposing respondents.

Where a suspicion attaches to a will, the Court must be vigilant and jealous in examining the evidence in support of the instrument, in favour of which it ought not to pronounce unless the suspicion is removed, and it is judicially satisfied that the paper propounded does express the true will of the deceased.

**THE** facts appear from the judgment.

Bawa, K. C (with him A. Drieberg), for the petitioner, appellant.  
A. St. V. Jayawardene, for second and third respondents.  
Elliott and B. F. de Silva, for fifth respondent.  
Hayley (with him F. H. B. Koch and Keuneman), for first, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, eleventh and twelfth respondents.  
Schneider (with him Rutnam), for fourth respondent.  
Samarawickrama, for tenth respondent.

February 26, 1919. **BERTRAM C.J.-**

**The Appeal was dismissed with costs by the learned Judges**

[http://webtest.cisworld.net/lawnet/docs/case\\_law/nlr/common/html/NLR20V481.htm](http://webtest.cisworld.net/lawnet/docs/case_law/nlr/common/html/NLR20V481.htm)

## PATEL

The **Patel's**, a grouping of Memon families having a common family name but perhaps distinct ancestries, are fairly numerous in Sri Lanka. The term Patel means "a headman" among the rural communities of North India and it is possible that many such Patel Families originated from ancestors who were village Chiefs.

Among the prominent Patel families who have chosen to make Sri Lanka their home, are those descended from Haji Ayoob AliMohammed Patel, who was born in Feb 19, 1919 and received his early education at Zahira College in Colombo. Having married Rabia Bhai, in 1936, when he was only seventeen, he had a son **Iqbal** born in India in 1946. With the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, Haji Ayoob, along with his wife and son, arrived in Ceylon for permanent domicile in the island. Having worked as a broker (textile commission agent) from the early fifties to the mid sixties, he decided to venture on his own starting a handloom industry in 1965 and later a dyeing industry in 1968.

**Mohammed Iqbal**, son of Haji Ayoob, also took to the textile trade transacting a considerable business in hosiery textiles, locally woven fabric, and confectionary. He later took to the dyeing business, applying traditional know-how in dyeing for the local handloom industry and also enjoyed a considerable business in the supply to dye material to local industry.

Iqbal's son, **Ehsan** born in 1972, has the distinction of being the first Hafiz of the Memon Community, having completed his Hifz-e-Quran in Darul Uloom Amjadiya in Karachi, Pakistan. He later went on to become a Moulavi with assistance and guidance of his mentor Maulana Noorul Hassan Noori, Principal of Madarasa Faiz-e-Raza. Hafiz Ehsan plays an important role in the religious life of the community and conducts the Taraweeh Prayers at the Memon Hanafi Mosque and the Eid Prayers at the Galle Face Green.

**Haji Ismail Patel**, born in 1913, was the son of **Abdul Ghany**, son of **Ahamed Patel**, the son of **Omar Gadit Patel**. Like most Memons of his day he served in various Memon firms of the Pettah, among others H A H Ali Mohammed at Keyzer Street at Keyzer Street, Habeeb Taiyab & Company in Main Street, and Haji Yoosuf & Company in Second Cross Street.

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## RADEN SINGHA NOORI

### Genealogy of Malays exposed

**Raden Singha Noori** of Kampong Baru, Batavia, (Indonesia) + Puthri Chandra Devi (d/o Rajah Johanna Pandam Paulana), State Exiles released by the Dutch from the Dutch East Indies, between Oct-15-1789 and Nov-1790.

His son, **Raden Matchjam Boorah AbuCassim**, (of Batavia, Chief Mudaliyar Nagampattu, Salt Mudaliyar Oct-1-1832, Ratemahatmaya, Miangar of Mannar) was married to a Dutch lady named **Petronella** (1st Marriage, Dutch Wife). Their son, **Tuan Kitchil AbuCassim Burah** (Java Muhandiram, eloped with one Mrs Farrell, wife of British Surgeon in Ceylon, and travelled to Nagapatnam in India and returned a few years later with a detachment). The Burah family, within the Malay community in Ceylon is descended

from this union.

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**BURAH** - TUAN ARIFEEN Licensed Surveyor, Valuer and Court Commissioner. Beloved husband of Gene Elsei Manel Burah, son of late Mr and Mrs T K C Burah, son-in-law of late Proctor and Mrs A V Perera, loving father of Roshan (Australia), Shehan (UAE), Dinesh (New Zealand) and Sohnali (Canada), father-in-law of Sharifa, Fazwena, Coralie and Aritha De Livera, darling grandfather of Shimali, Sahani, Aashan, Farah, Serena, Avishka and Celeb, brother-in-law of Carmen and Gamini Jayasinghe, Rani and Ananda Hettige (Australia), Sharmini and Edward De Zylva. Janaza took place on 9th July in Wellington. **12E, Trafalgar Street, Johnsonville, Wellington 6004, New Zealand. SO July 22 2007**

**BURAH UMMU JAMEELA (nee Ismail)**. Wife of late Kuraish, mother of Sonna, late Safar, Fareena, Girlie, Raja (USA), Jenny, Boney (Metropolitan), Yvonne, Bintha (MMBL), mother-in-law of Nazeera, Kuraish Marso, Juwitha, Hafeela, Riffan and Toni Kitchilan, sister of Johar Ismail, expired. Janaza leaving residence today, 467D, Marthinu Guru Mw, Enderamulla at 10 a.m. for burial at Akbar Town Muslim Burial Ground. [DN Jun 20 2003]

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***Saga of the exiled Royal  
Javanese unearthed***  
**Author: Tuan Arfin Burah**  
**An author publication**  
**Available at Vijitha Yapa**  
**Bookshops, Colombo**  
**151 pp. Price Rs. 250**

Review: T. Aniff Ahamed - DN Fri May 11 2007

**HISTORY:** The Malays in Sri Lanka are the descendants of the kings, queens, princes and princesses, noblemen, dignitaries, artists, craftsmen, commanders and their retinue, who were part and parcel of the sovereign, exiled by the Dutch.

A hereto unknown factor, perhaps buried in the sands of time, has been unravelled by the author on the above. T. Arfin Burah a senior professional in Land Surveying and Land Economics has delved in unearthing from old records at the Archives and from several locations on ground, presenting them in a manner a glimpse of the functioning of Colonial rule, particularly in Java and Sri Lanka.

The book covers the occupation of the Dutch in Ceylon extending from A.D. 1640 to 1796, a period of 156 years. This book has been made possible with the correct interpretation after a great level of painstaking research and passion due entirely, as with divine providence by a Dutch Professor Vanden Belt of the Lieder University of Holland who played a major role in having given his valuable time and expertise to the translation to English from the Romanised Dutch records, and also the Assistant Archivist Mrs. Dias who had in many ways has helped the author.

This aspect of it has been the missing link that has prevented the narration of this epic story by other historians. The saga unfolds when for the first time one gets more than a glimpse of the exiled Javanese Prince Amankoeratte of Batavia and the royal retinue in Sri Lanka. The great role and responsibilities of the exiled royal party are detailed.

Developing and expanding the base of spices and commodity trade between Sri Lanka and Batavia has been his direct responsibility. Entrustment of these duties to him by the Dutch rulers highlights the capacity and the respect given to the royal party.

The book goes further to expand the role of the forefathers of the author and their contribution to many aspects of commerce and life in the wider community in Sri Lanka. Much emphasis has been confined in his research of the Prince Amankoeatte the 3rd of whom he asserts that his great grandfather has been a descendant.

In trying to establish the genealogy of the Javanese (now termed Malays) in Sri Lanka to their ancestors he has not only obtained information from archival records but has also visited many Malays in obtaining valuable data which had been passed down to them by their great grandfathers.

With the invasion of the British to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) communication between the Dutch in Java and the exiles comes to an abrupt end when the change of names took place to conceal their royal identity when taking the "Oath of Allegiance" to serve under the British when Ceylon ceded to the British. Most of the Javanese names therefore were anglicized for easy pronunciation by them.

With great delight I recommend this book to all Sri Lankans who should know the origin and the contribution made by the Javanese a must for the discernable historians and the general reader alike.

The author avers that with globalization an individual will be identified by a numeral and a name no longer relevant and hopes that his research will be used in preserving one's identity.

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## **RAHILA**

The family named **Rahila** is evidently of Arab origin. It means Exodus or one who travels which aptly describes this family inspired by the strong urge to travel, known by the German term "Wanderlust", who have migrated far and wide. Haji Yoosuf Eshak Rahila, first arrived in Ceylon in 1938 and worked at H H Essa & Company, where he was later made a partner.

**Jan Mohammed**, eldest son of **Yoosuf Rahila** & **Zulaikha**, chose Accountancy as his profession and worked at S T R Salay Mohammed & Company as an Accountant, from 1948. The pioneer spirit of his ancestors, however, beckoned him to embark on a bigger adventure and a decade later, in 1958, he started Rahila & Company, a textile firm in Prince Street Pettah.

**Mustafa**, the younger son of Yoosuf Rahila, had his early education at Zahira College and in 1955, joined S T R Salay Mohammed as a Salesman before moving on to Rahila & Company to work under his brother. In 1961, he married **Ibrahim Bawa Fatani's** daughter, **JebuBhai**, and the following year was blessed with a son whom he named **Yoosuf**, and in 1969 another named **Yaseen**. **Yoosuf** went on to marry **Zaida**, a girl from the **Chana** family, while **Yaseen** married a girl from the **Silat** family. Both brothers are into garment manufacturing for the local market.

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## **RANGILA**

**Moulana Hafiz Mohammed Ashraf Razak Rangila**, son of Razak Rangila, and grandson of Ibrahim Shakoor Rangila was born in 1976. In 1988, he entered Darul Amjadiyah in Karachi to do his Hifz and in 1991, entered Madinatul Ilm Arabic College of the Grand Mosque in Colombo to revise his Hifz, completing it 40 times. He was also able to recite the entire Qur'an in just one single day. He completed his Alim Course at Colombo Grand Mosque in 2000 and became a Calipha of the Ashrafi Sufi Order. He married in 2002 and passed away the following year. Much loved character, he was an inspiration to many, particularly to his brother Hafiz Mohammed Shakeel Abdul Razak Rangila Ashrafi who became a Hafiz Al Qur'an in 2002 having begun his Hifz training in Hadramaut in Yemen and completing it at the Colombo Grand Mosque.

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## **GULAMHUSSEIN H REIMOO**

Born:06-Oct-1912 in Porbandar, India.

Educated at Sind University of Bombay, India.

Appointed MP 1950-1952, 1970-1977, and 1989-1990.

Awarded Meritorious Award for struggle against racial discrimination.

President Democratic Workers Congress. Associated Jawaharlal Nehru, Jaya Prakash Narayan, & Yusuf Mehrali. Took a leading role in the Bombay Students Movement and Students Conference. Returned to Ceylon in 1935.

Secretary, Ceylon-Indian Congress Labor Union, 1939.

Formed CWC in 1940. President CWC in 1943.

Jailed by the British for sedition in 1943.

Led Ceylon-Indian Congress delegation before the Soulbury Commission in 1944. Formed Democratic Workers Congress (DWC) in 1945.

Died:29-Apr-1990

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## **MEERA LEBBE MUHAMMAD REYAL**

Meera Lebbe Muhammad Rey al was the oldest son of Meera Lebbe Marikar, one of the most charming personalities amongst the Ceylon Moors and the embodiment of refinement.

MLM Rey al wrote his autobiography was follows:-

I was born in 1894 at No 4, Old Moor Street, Colombo (01100), the house situated next to the Wesleyan Methodist Mission and Pettah Branch of Wesley College, Colombo. I learned my Quran studies at Hameediyah School, attached to the Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, Colombo (01100). I had my early education at Central College and Wesley College and thereafter won the Harward Scholarship and came to Royal College. I passed my Cambridge Senior in December 1914 with exemption from the London matriculation. While at Royal College, during the Principalship of Mr C Hartley, I won the College Championship in Athletics in 1914. I was first in High Jump, Long Jump and the Quarter Mile, and second in the 220 Yards Hurdles. Hector Gunasekera (later Dr. CH Gunasekera) won the Championship in 1913 and previous to that Mr AE Christoffelsz was the Champion. I was to proceed to England to qualify myself as an Electrical Engineer at Faraday House. The first World War broke out and my proceeding to England had to be abandoned.

I then took up to trade and joined as an apprentice to Messrs WG Balls & Co. I later represented this firm, both in Ceylon and India. As time went in I became the sole representative for two firms in Switzerland and three British Firms. I was veery successful in procuring business and the Firms too were well satisfied with my handling of their agencies.

About this time there was the agitation of the Khilafat Movement and the arrival, in Ceylon, of Moulana Shaukat Ali and Dr Kitchlew made me take a prominent part in Politics. The cooperation and backing I received from the late Mr TB Jayah and Kumar cassim – who at that time was the President of the Ceylon Muslim Associtaion – located at Kuruwe Street and thereafter shifted to New Moor Street, Colombo – opposite Bulgarians shop. The Association rendered useful services and supported the war effort. The Turkish Red Crescent Society abroad recognized the services if this institution. The live wires of the Association were the two afore mentioned persons, Razeen Abdul cader and myself. The Islam Mittiran paper was owned, published and edited by M Uthman, a carping critic who would not tolerate any innovations. He dubbed us “London Qunjees”. His abuse and vituperations elderly people dreaded most and some of his statements were even believed to be true. S a result, at a later stage, Messrs NHM Abdul cader and NDH Abdul Ghaffoor, dealt a death blow to the rising generations of Muslim youths by ejecting from the premises the members of the Muslim Association, and throwing out all their furniture, books, and belongings. The young men were unable to find alternate accommodation for the activities of the Ceylon Muslim Association, resulting in its eארly demise. The surviving members (at the time of writing this autobiography) who are in a position to throw more light on this unhappy episode are, AM Fuard, Proctor SL Muhammad JP,, “Pachal” Hussain JP., MAS Marikar Proctor of Kandy, and Mathany Ismail JP, since deceased.

Moulana Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali’s Khilafat Movement had a tremendous impact on me. Whenever I was in contact with AE Goonesinghe, Victor Corea, ET de Silva and BF de Silva, we used to discuss, very often, the unfortunate plight of our country under the British Colonial Government and the abject conditions of exploitation under which the workers, particularly in Colombo, both in the public and private sectors, suffered.

We found the only way to solve these problems was to form a Union of Workers. Hence AE Goonesinghe took upon himself the task of doing so and summoned the Harbor Workers. He was compelled to hold secret meetings. There was very strong opposition from the European capitalists who were controlling the trade in the island. The port, at that time, was managed by the Wharfage Company Ltd The head of this was a Parsee gentleman by the name of Mehta – a typical tyrant who treated the workers as slaves. These men revolted and appealed to Mr. Goonesinghe for redress. By now, I was in the thick of the movement and went, even so far as to allow their secret meetings to be held at my office in Al Hambra Building, Front Street, Pettah in Colombo.

The first trouble started from the capitalist firm of Wellawatte Spinning & Weaving Mills Ltd. Some of the workmen were our members and they brought their grievances to the notice of Goonesinghe, who at once reorganized the Working Committee into a Labor Union, known as the Ceylon Labor Union. Mr Goonesinghe unanimously elected as President and I was elected as the Vice President, and fifteen others from different Firms as Committee Members. We now started to work constitutionally and took steps to solve the problems of the downtrodden workers in general, irrespective of the fact of whether they were members or not of the Union. When the Managing Director, Mr Captain, of the

Weaving Mills became aware of our activities he started to harass the workers even more. Our just demands were turned down and our Union was refused recognition.

We were driven to desperation and, finding no alternative, launched a strike. All laborers of the Mills – members and non members – stood as one man. Since the strike was getting prolonged, Goonesinghe made endeavors to effect a compromise, but Mr Captain remained adamant and refused to negotiate. At this stage, Mr Goonesinghe gave me a mandate to bring the strike to a reasonable settlement. The chief reason to select me for this task was due to the large number of Muslims employed in this Firm who were very loyal to the Union. I took up the responsibility with enthusiasm. I had many setbacks and disappointments. I did not give in and the strike continued on for a month. At last we brought this matter up to the notice of the Mill owners in Bombay who instructed Mr captain to go into the grievances of the workers and concede their just demands. Consequently, the workers received double wages, overtime pay, better houses, and other amenities to live as human beings. This was a great initial achievement for Mr Goonesinghe and the Labor Party.

Now, the laborers of the other sections began to realize the value of united action by the workers in their dealings with the employer. They found that the only solution to improve their working conditions was to join the Union. Workmen of the Government Factory and Railway joined the Union. E, as members of the Committee, studied and analyzed their grievances and took steps, constitutionally, to save them from their miserable plight. I addressed many a meeting at Price Park which was our venue. The demands of the Government Factory men were many. We held a number of secret conferences with the workers in the Government Service. Goonesinghe, after very careful study of their demands, brought their grievances to the notice of the Heads of the respective Departments. He patiently and tactfully pursued the matter to get their just grievances redressed. The Chief Engineer of the Government Factory and the General Manager of the Railway did not pay any heed. The desperate workers had no alternative but to strike. The Labor Union selected Mr Goonesinghe as the leader of the Strike Movement and I was set as his deputy. I was assigned to keep the strikers in peace and cheerful, while Mr Goonesinghe carried on negotiations with the departmental heads. It was a very responsible task for me to keep the strikers in peace and to maintain their morale. In this, I was greatly assisted by Cassim Master of Galle, a man with a highly developed sense of humor. I was very often abused and even threatened with bodily harm by strikers for not giving them the chance to resort to violence. However, I was tactful and patient and bore up all the threats of the impatient strikers for about twenty days, while the President carried on the negotiations. At last, the higher authorities had to give in to the just cause of the workers.

While addressing the workers at meetings, I referred to them as “Kam Karuwo” and Mr Goonesinghe as Labor Leader. Before this a laborer was known as “Cooly”. This change of designation gave a sense of dignity to the working people. Today, the Cooly of yesterday is a “Kam Karuwa”. I do feel proud that I was the first man to change the word Cooly to “Kam Karuwa”. This strike too was practically settled and we continued to pursue the other demands by negotiation in a constitutional manner.

Now, the Government recognized the Labor Union. Encouraged by this, the laborers formed themselves into Unions and demanded their rights and Mr Goonesinghe took up their matters. Here too, I was assigned as a Deputy to Mr Goonesinghe.



At this time, some of the enemies of Mr Goonesinghe harassed him with an order of the District Court. This did obstruct the free movement of our President.

I was put into full saddle to keep the men together in a cheerful mood and to await results, patiently. It was an uphill task. At that time port work was carried being out by sub-contractors. viz; The Ceylon Wharfage Company Limited. The head of this firm, at the time, was Lord Inchcape, and it was manned by twelve Englishmen as executives, well trained from overseas, and, highly paid. They were getting the most work out of these suffering, silent men and doling out a miserable pittance as wages. There were a number of Muslim workers, most of who were "Serangs" Tindals, who were poorly paid. We organized them and demanded their rights to a living wage. In fact, a Muslim laborer was paid 87 Cents a day for 8 hours and Rs 1.75 for night work. When this was brought to my notice, I urged Mr Goonesinghe to work for their emancipation and to fight for a living wage. We approached the Sub-Contractor, Stephen Corera, and demanded that he should pay better wages to his workers. He blankly refused to increase the wages even by one Cent. Our only alternative was to strike. This brought the Harbor to a standstill and continued for about three weeks. Thereafter a better understanding prevailed and the matter was settled. In this instance, I would like to mention that the Muslim Public who were lukewarm towards the Labor Movement began to feel that by supporting the Labor Movement they were contributing towards the progress of the Muslims. At this time Moulana Shaukat Ali, Dr Kitchlew and Dr Mahmoud, visited Ceylon. During their stay, they addressed several meetings on the Khilafat. The organizers of the Labor Movement held the biggest Mass Meeting at Price Park, welcoming the Muslim Heroes, and the Khilafat movement. I had to play a very important part in interpreting their speeches both in Sinhalese and Tamil. Moulana Muhammad Ali evinced great interest in my interpretation and took me wherever he went. I took this as an opportunity to gain the goodwill of all Muslims throughout the island. Slowly, but steadily, the Muslim Community began to recognize me as a Junuior Muslim Leader. Although I was a zealous and ardent worker in the Labor Movement, I always safeguarded the interest of the Muslims in General and Labor in particular. We also agitated for a change in the Government from the Colonial regime to a liberal and enlightened one. The British Government, realizing that the Ceylonese were qualified to undertake some measure of responsibility in affairs of state, sent a Royal Commission, consisting of five members of the British Parliament, to study and report on the political situation in the country and to suggest constitutional reform. The Ceylon National Congress, giving evidence before the Commission, led by Lord Donoughmore, urged for the establishment of a legislature elected by the people; but the suffrage or voting rights should be confined to persons with minimum educational or property qualification. By way of contrast, the Labor Union demanded self Government with adult suffrage. Every institution, including the Ceylon National Congress, which was led by Sir Baron Jayatilleke, opposed adult suffrage. I was the only Muslim who strongly stood by him in support of this demand. Generally, the Muslims were panicky on this issue of universal franchise. They feared that if the Labor Union's demands were conceded the Muslims would fail to obtain any representation in the new legislature. Even Mr TB Jayah and Hon WM Abdul Rahman stood against the demand for universal franchise of the Labor Union. I stood by the Labor Union in the interest of a united Ceylon. I suffered insults and humiliation at the hands of the more affluent members of the Muslim Community. In fact, some of the conservative Muslims boycotted me. Mr Jayah was even sent to England, after the Donoughmore Commission's Report to influence the Colonial Office to amend the constitution for the retention of at least three communal seats in the State Council through election by Muslims only. In spite of all these maneuvers the demands of the Labor Union was recommended by the Donoughmore Commissioners. Universal adult franchise and non-

communal elected seats in the Legislature became accomplished facts. This is one of the great victories that, by Allah's Grace, crowned my efforts in the face of strong opposition.

Today, we have no special communal Seats in our Parliament, yet we have twelve elected Muslim Members in the House of Representatives and three Muslim Senators in the Senate. We have had in our Parliament, Muslims as Ministers of State, Speakers, Parliamentary Secretaries, besides several other Muslims in important segments of life. These fruits are in some small measure the result of my efforts to weld the Muslims, along with their sister communities, into a United Ceylon. I would not have achieved these objects had it not been for the overwhelming support I received from members of the Muslim community belonging to the proletariat.

After the unfortunate riots of 1915, between the Sinhalese and the Muslims due to some misunderstanding, some Sinhalese youths under Victor Corea associated with ET De Silva, Advocate CAP Wijeratne, AE Goonesinghe, and others organized the day of Remembrance. This day was known as the "Day of Mourning" to avenge the acts of cruelty committed by the Punjabi soldiers brought by the British Colonial Government during the Dark Days of 1915. This day was being commemorated for four consecutive years.

In October 1919, the Annual Commemoration was held under the presidency of Victor Corea, not merely to commemorate the Day but to move a Resolution to boycott all Muslims by the Sinhalese on the ground that the Muslims were the cause for their sufferings during the Marshall Law period.

This resolution was moved by Mr Victor Corea, himself, and the meeting was attended by more than twenty thousand people. The area surrounding the Tower Hall was a sea of heads all the way up to the Maradana Railway Station.

I was also present at the Meeting, seated in a corner of the platform, listening to the slander and accusations made against the Muslims by different speakers. My blood began to boil. I could not bear it any longer. I darted towards the President's Chair and requested him to give me an opportunity of speaking a few minutes to refute all the unkind, unjust charges made against the Muslims by the different speakers.

Mr Victor Corea, who was a fair minded man, acceded to my request and introduced me to the audience, and requested that no one should disturb me while addressing; but to patiently listen to my speech. When silence prevailed, I addressed them in Sinhalese, and refuted all the charges and actually told them of their aggressive attitude during the days of the riots. I went on to emphasize that the cause of the riots was a misunderstanding. I even went so far as to prove to them that most of the Moors in Ceylon have Sinhalese blood and always lived peacefully within Sinhalese environments. The Sinhalese loved the Muslims as their own countrymen and the Muslims respected them as brothers and sisters. Thus, we have lived for centuries and can still continue to live with the same feeling of fellowship. In the course of my speech I drew out a sharp knife and cut my left hand, allowing the blood to drip on the floor, and challenged anyone to test my blood and prove that I had no Sinhalese blood flowing in my veins. This dramatic appeal brought cheers among the audience. There were shouts of "Sadu, Sadu", "Muslims are our brothers", etc. This small incident is, in my humble opinion, an important factor that made the Sinhalese to reduce their bitterness towards the Moors

and heralded the dawn of a new era of mutual confidence and fellowship between the Sinhalese and Moors of Ceylon.

The meeting that was held to pass the Resolution to boycott the Muslims terminated in apologizing to the Muslims and in ushering peace, harmony, goodwill and fellowship between the two communities.

All the people assembled at the Tower Hall and the surrounding areas formed themselves into a procession numbering over fifteen thousand. They then marched, carrying wreaths and flowers in the direction of Dewatagaha Mosque to manifest, in a tangible form, their sincere regrets over the unhappy incidents of 1915. On reaching the Dewatagaha Mosque, the leader, Mr Victor Corea with twelve stalwarts, entered the shrine room and laid the wreaths and flowers at the foot of the shrine, making obeisance.

When they came out, they again addressed the large gathering which came in procession, and exhorted both Muslims and Sinhalese to forget their past differences over the incidents of 1915, once and for all and to unite and work for the freedom and the greater glory of their common motherland, Lanka. Henceforth the two communities were to join hands and work for the emancipation of Mother Lanka and its peoples, the fruits of which the present generation are enjoying.

It would be no exaggeration to state that it was this sudden impulse of mine, born of determination and courage, that led to success in bringing about a reconciliation between the major community and the Ceylon Moors.

Mr Goonesinghe, Labor Leader, was invited by the British Labor Party to a Labor Conference that was held in London. He represented the Labor Union and the Working class of Ceylon in this country. During his sojourn in England, I was appointed to act for the President. This was a time of confusion. The Capitalists were against the program of the Labor Movement. They, with the encouragement of the Colonial Government, were acting in a despotic manner against the wage earners. Taking advantage of the absence of Mr Goonesinghe from the Island, Messrs Hoare & Company Limited, first class British Engineering Firm engaging the services of a large number of workmen, began to harass the members of the Labor Union in their factory. I, as the acting President, tried all peaceful means but failed. The Labor Union Committee, after careful deliberations, decided to strike. Although I was not personally in favor of such action, I had to abide by the majority decision of the Labor Union Workers. The strike was declared. Days passed without any settlement.

The European Engineers of the Firm were adamant. We carried on for two weeks without any finance to help the strikers. We had to depend only on our Comrade Workers and some of the well-wishers from the general public. Dr S Muttiah, CHZ Fernando, Proctor Marshall Perera and others helped me substantially during the days of the strike. On their advice I communicated with Mr Shipton, the Managing Director of Messrs Hoare & Company Limited – a fine gentleman, and arranged a conference between Labor representatives and his firm. He readily agreed to the conference which was held at the Hall of the Chamber of Commerce in Fort.

Representatives of the Labor Union were on one side. Mr Shipton, associated with Mr John Tarbat (now Sir) and Mr Whittaker, Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, on the other side.

After discussion of the divergent views of the respective parties, the conference ended in successful negotiation for the Labor Union and the workers joyfully returned to their jobs. It was on this occasion that the capitalists formed themselves into an Employer's Federation and recognized the Labor Union and the Trade Union Movement. This was a great victory for the Trade Union Movement in Ceylon. It was about this time that Mr Goonesinghe returned from England and I handed back the leadership to him with dignity and honor to the labor movement. Days went by; the small group of members of the Labor Union regularly met and discussed the various grievances of the workmen. We had members from the Government Factory, Port, which was then under the Wharfage Company and the Colombo Municipality.

Our responsibility was to improve the working and living conditions of the workers and their families. They were, in fact, very poorly paid. Housing was an acute problem as they lived in overcrowded slums without minimum amenities; sanitation was deplorable. There was insufficient accommodation in schools to educate their children. There was no old age pensions or provident fund schemes on retirement. In fact, the workman was a slave. He was treated worse than a master's dog. Mr Goonesinghe and his colleagues had to fight, from time to time, for the welfare of the poor man. At about that time, the Colombo Tramways Limited, whose agents were Messrs Boustead Brothers, challenged the Trade Union Movement in Colombo and took the aggressive and militant attitude towards the Members of the Labor Union. Mr Goonesinghe and his associates endeavoured their very best to get some sort of relief for the voiceless workers in the Tramways. Drivers and Conductors were paid low wages and they were treated as daily paid workers and they had no other benefits to which a normal laborer was entitled in other parts of the world. These men begged for fair play and justice.

However, the British born bureaucrats paid no heed to their reasonable minimum demands, but instead, victimized some of them who openly and constitutionally demanded their birthright. All the patient doggedness of the workers did not bring about the desired increase in their wages and improvements in working conditions.

In desperation, the workers in the Tramway struck. The traveling public was inconvenienced but they bore the hardship cheerfully. The members of the Chauffeur's Union, of which I was the President at the time, readily helped us with their hiring cars to transport the office workers. The strike went on, the excitement grew at Maradana Road near the Police Station Headquarters. Mr Goonesinghe visited the spot to console the people who supported the Red Shirts. Police Constables on beat took the upper hand and assaulted the Red Shirts. Mr Goonesinghe protested, vehemently, at the violent behaviour of the Police. The crowd became excited and got out of control and ultimately wreaked their vengeance by attempting to invade the Police Headquarters at Maradana. Mr Goonesinghe, with great presence of mind and extreme patience, appealed to the crowd to keep calm and not resort to violence. He thereafter returned to the Labor Union Headquarters at Fort where I was in charge. We considered the next move that should be taken for a peaceful settlement of the Tramway strike.

The Legislative Council was in session at the time Mr CHZ Fernando, a great supporter of the Labor Movement, with Messrs EAP Wijeratne and Arunachalam Mahadeva, raised the issue at the Council Meeting. The Government contemplated declaring Marshall Law for the Colombo District. Mr CHZ Fernando and Mahadeva pointed out that there was no necessity for such a declaration and that the matter could be settled peacefully. We held a meeting opposite the Consistory Building, Pettah, at which, Mr Goonesinghe and myself advised the gathering to be peaceful and not resort to violence. Messrs Fernando

and Mahadeva, after the conclusion of the State Council Meeting, attended this meeting and took both of us to our respective homes. They informed the meeting that Marshall Law was about to be declared and that Mr Goonesinghe and myself may be arrested.. The Police at Maradana were out to shoot both of us. The crowd was, again, collecting and tended to be aggressive. A Police Sergeant, by the name of Adam, was surreptitiously instructed to shoot the two of us at sight. This officer, coming out of the Maradana Police Station, seeing among the crowd near Symonds Road a person resembling Mr Goonesinghe, shot him and the poor man fell dead on the spot. This young man was Mr LP Goonewardene, a newly passed out Proctor, who was an enthusiastic worker in the Labour Movement. He came to see the Tamasha and met with his death. The shooting did not end here. The bloodthirsty Police Sergeant, spying a young Muslim wearing a fez cap among the crowd, shot him dead mistaking the young man, Samad, for myself. They were threatening to burn down the Maradana Police Station and take vengeance for these cold-blooded murders. In the morning the newspapers flashed headline news that Messrs Goonesinghe and Muhammad Reyal were shot dead by the Police. This news upset the working classes. The Government Factory workers and Port Workers reinforced the already agitated crowds determined to retaliate.

The Police retreated to their barracks. Thereupon our Red Shirts, under Wickremasinghe, took charge of Maradana and performed the duties so tactfully and efficiently that there were no further incidents, disturbances or crime in the Maradana area for three days. In fact, it was the first time in the history of Colombo that no case was filed before any magistrate's Court for criminal offences and the like. These were the days of Peace and Security. The enraged people who were anxious to see whether we were, in fact, safe and sound had to be satisfied; as most of them did not know what had befallen us. Mr Murphy, the Assistant Colonial Secretary of the time, personally called on me and took me round to the disturbed areas around Maradana so that the people may know that no harm had befallen me. Mr FG Tyrell, the Colonial Secretary, likewise, took Mr Goonesinghe around. He made a short speech assuring the crowd that the Tramway dispute will be successfully settled and requested them to disperse. Thereafter, all the strikers returned to work and law and order was restored.

The Committee of the Labour Union sat for days and successfully negotiated with the employers for a just settlement of the workers' grievances. This was, indeed, a great and hard won victory for the Labor Party in the struggle of the workmen to emancipate themselves from the tyrannical treatment of their master. I have, always, personally given them my unstinted support to achieve their human rights. I must confess that in my close association with the Labor Movement, I was greatly assisted by my Muslim brothers who always felt that the Laborer is worthy of sympathy. I also honestly feel that my humble services in this direction would never have borne fruit had it not been for the wholehearted support and encouragement that I received from the Muslims, particularly the proletariat.

My initial ventures into active politics was when I unsuccessfully contested the three-member all-Island Mohammedan Seat in the Ceylon Legislative Council in September 1924. I finished fourth of the four members who contested the seat polling only 3,629 votes, about 1,600 votes below the third candidate. I was the youngest of the four and my progressive outlook in politics as Vice President of the Ceylon Labor Union did not find support among the more diehard conservatives among Muslims. The election was fought on a restricted franchise based on educational and income qualifications.

However, I was undaunted by this setback and in December 1926 made a successful entry into the Colombo Municipal Politics, being elected on a Labor ticket for the San Sebastian Ward in a predominantly working class district. I repeated the electoral success and continued to serve as a Member of the Colombo Municipal Council from January 1927 to December 1943, for an unbroken period of seventeen years.

As my colleague and leader, Mr AE Goonesinghe successfully contested the Colombo Central seat in the State Council and this would have been the only seat which I could have contested with some prospects of success, no opportunity came my way of venturing into Central Government politics.

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## **S H M RISHAN**

S H M Rishan spent six years working on a Greek ship before he started his import business in Sri Lanka by bringing down machinery for the maritime industry. It was during his many travels to the far east that he stumbled upon the idea of initiating a Computer Hardware and Supplies business. PC House was established in 1997 and now has 34 branches across the country. They represent many international brands of Computer Hardware, Communication and other accessories. Their own branded PC named "panora" is a very competitive item in the local and international markets.

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## **FAHIMA SAHABDEEN**

### **A perceptive script-writer - Sunday Observer Dec 30 2007**

Speaking about her writing, she mentioned that she has to be emotionally-pregnant to commence writing. For Fahima, writing has always been a pleasure and passion. However, she wrote the script for 'Yahaluwo' based on the experience she had with her own children, recording their behaviour and utterances. She believes that children have a kind of wisdom which adults do not possess.

Speaking about her writing, she mentioned that she has to be emotionally-pregnant to commence writing.

For Fahima, writing has always been a pleasure and passion.

However, she wrote the script for 'Yahaluwo' based on the experience she had with her own children, recording their behaviour and utterances. She believes that children have a kind of wisdom which adults do not possess. When she expanded the script on the advice of Sumitra Peries, Fahima thought that film must represent all the ethnic groups.

Fahima stressed the fact that unlike in her childhood, today's children lack the rich culture of learning in a multi-racial and multi-religious class. As she studied in the English medium she did not even bother to find out who was Sinhalese or Tamil among her friends at Bishop's College. Naturally the children enjoyed all the national and religious festivals.

The script for 'Yahaluwo' was started as a short story titled 'Thotayyah'. It was over an incident. That gardener did not even have dentures. However, in the film, servants are handsome which is rare as they could not afford to be so in real life.

In the original script the gardener does not have teeth and one of the jokes the other servants played on him was to hide his dentures. Throughout the film Thotayyah hates Nuri and hid her bottle of hair die.

According to Fahima, Yahaluwo was written as a short story. The story was narrated from the boy's point of view. It was written in interior monologue and when the film was made, Fahima had to change the interior monologue into dialogues. So certain information which cannot be expressed otherwise through interior monologue, have been omitted to suit the film.

A scene where the Army checked the Thotayyah's wounded hand has been removed from the film as it does not reflect on army. Another scene that was cut was a fight between two boys posing as king Elara and Dutugemunu. Younger boy Gamini as Dutugemunu and elder one acting as Elara. It was in this scene that the younger brother fell ill and discovered that he was very sick. However, that scene had to be cut off.

Fahima is happy about converting the poem by Rabindranath Thagore which is used at the end of the film in the form of a song sung by Pundit W. D. Amaradeva. In fact, Sumithra Peries has made a remarkable creation out of the script, surpassing the very script that the film is made out of.

Fahima came in touch with Dr. Lester James Peries through a film script titled 'Cassim is Dead'. It is a story of a Muslim woman who had to come to terms with the death of her husband. The story was set against the backdrop of the old Muslim community where girls had to marry early. Most of them were housewives and had no occupation other than leading a life with their husbands.

When the husband died, the widow spends a period of mourning Idda. Though its professed purpose is to mourn for the dead husband, it has been introduced to protect the widows as widows will get a depression from which they could not get out of.

This, to a certain extent, happened to Fahima's grandmother. She was immobile after the Idda. However, Fahima's grand mother came to terms with her husband's death much later. Inspired to write after the incident, Fahima wrote a story of how a woman really mourned the death of her husband following the sudden death of a Basa (mason). It was a twenty minutes script. Sumithra was the judge.

Though one may best write about one's own experience and immediate neighbourhood, it is also possible to write out of imagination. For instance, Fahima wrote a story about Afghanistan and Taliban after listening to radio. However, she admits that those types of stories are difficult to construct.

As she is close to nature, especially to animals, nature and animals are part and parcel of her creations. She believes the maximum of Patric Malidusome that 'the civilized world is the wilderness'.

Speaking about her documentary (Mockery of a documentary), Fahima stated that it contained a series of interviews with animals about the disaster man had created and advice man about how he should run the world. Different animals are interviewed on diverse themes ranging from environment to philosophy. For instance, a crow is interviewed on the state of urban environment.

The Mocumentary commences with Fahima going to an imaginary professor and presenting her idea of interviewing animals. She reasons out with the Professor of the benefits of interviewing animals as they can read human minds. In the mocumentary animals sarcastically praised man contrary to her expectations.

When she returns to the professor, the Professor asked her whether she had observed animal's tail movements. To make it funny, she has interviewed a dog at Earls Court Tube Station near her house. It sat near a heap of magazines on diverse subjects. The little dog at the end of the Mocumentary gives a lecture on what is really wrong with man.

Fahima admitted that she had never had a formal education, with a bad school which record. She was noted for her rebellious behaviour at school culminated in her becoming a fundamentalist. As Fahima maintained contacts with very few in the Muslim community, she lost a lot as she was completely shut off from the world.

This aspect has been boldly highlighted by Ameena Husain in her literary work, especially in her novel 'Fifteen'. However, she earned a BA from the Open University.

Following the degree, she did a Course in Script-writing with a group 'Scriptnet' at the British Council. One of the course leaders encouraged her to read for Master in Script Writing. 'Thotayyah' was born out of that course.

Fahima thanked her husband for persuading her to follow a Master Degree in Script Writing at the Bournemouth University in UK despite the high cost. Currently she follows a Film course. Her love for animal is greater than anything in life.

Fahima Sahabdeen, the script-writer of Sumitra Peries's Yahaluwo (Best Friends), is a multi-faceted personality whose life is greatly influenced by her rebellious spirit and the animal lover in her.

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## **BABA OUNOOS SALDIN 1830-1906**

Born: 1830.

Editor Publisher, Alamat Lankapuri 1869-1878 and Wajah Selong 1895.

Died: 1908

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## **MASHMOON SALDIN (LYE)**



## 'Mother of the Malays' - DN Fri Jun 18 2004



She was born on June 18th, 1908 and passed away peacefully at the age of 86 on her birthday, June 18th at her majestic residence "Taprobane". She was a kindly, simple and soft spoken lady known as "Aunty Eva" to her relations, "Mashmoon" to her friends and "Mrs. Lye" to the general public.

Mashmoon Lye was a daughter of Marhoom M. K. Saldin, well known businessman during his day and member of the State Council and wife of Marhoom Baba Zahiery Lye, distinguished Malay leader and Member of Parliament. She was educated at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo. 7.

The Sri Lanka Malay Association Rupee Fund (S.L.M.A. Rupee Fund) with 50 years of unbroken dedicated services to the less fortunate and deserving, was born out of an idea of Mashmoon Lye.

In her rounds in Colombo as a Red Cross worker she had seen for herself the pitiful plight of most families in sore need of assistance by way of food and clothing.

She gave serious thought and got an idea - "If each member of the community who were better-off were to collect a "Rupee - a day" we would be able in due course to render assistance to our less fortunate brothers and sisters." Many said, "On the face of it the idea seemed almost too simple and even child is to be practicable."

Yet with many other giving her encouragement she decided to establish a fund to be known as the All Ceylon Malay Association Rupee Fund. The fund was inaugurated in May 1953 by late Al Haj Dr. M. C. M. Kaleel at the former pavilion of the Malay Cricket Club at Rifle Green, Colombo with over one hundred persons present, which included many eminent men of the Malay community.

She was determined to move forward as she best understood the suffering of the less fortunate and her capability to make her idea a reality.

The result of three years of hard work was the recognition of the Rupee Fund as a Government Approved Charity. Further recognition came by way of a request by the then Governor General Sir Oliver Goonetilleke to hold a meeting of the General Committee at Queen's House (now President's House), a rare honour indeed.

With continued hard work with many fund raising campaigns commended by Heads of Government and ambassadors of foreign countries, the fund was able to provide more assistance to the less fortunate.

Besides donations from members of the Malay community, contributions were also received from well wishers.

The initial years of any institution are the most difficult. She said on the tenth anniversary: "It was no doubt an uphill task but was a Labour of Love. All the hard work and sacrifices made have been worthwhile for they have helped to bring happiness and sunshine to so many under privileged families."

By 1964 the Rupee Fund had its own building. One of her first projects - to find employment for the unemployed girls. A textile weaving centre was set up with the assistance of the Dept. of Cottage Industries. She also arranged for a milk feeding centre where over 300 undernourished children gathered every morning for their glass of milk.

Her thoughts spread to the talented students who could not proceed to higher studies due to financial reasons. She established a Higher Educational Scholarship Scheme in 1959 to provide scholarships for such students. The community should be ever grateful and remember her for helping these students.

Every award was a commitment to ensure that the students received their monthly assistance until he/she completed their five year course of study at the university - no easy task when fund raising was extremely difficult in those days.

While many have passed out and are serving the country as doctors, engineers, architects, agriculturists etc - the scholarship scheme continues - a great contribution to the progress of the community.

She also organised the annual Sadaka distribution of fitr and cash during the month of Ramazan to the poor and needy. Many more consistent services have been provided to the needy.

Ms. Lye was one of the first among Muslim women in Sri Lanka and certainly the first Malay woman to emerge from the traditional role of housewife to face up the challenges of modern times by involving and dedicating herself in the welfare of the community.

Mashmoon Lye was the first woman member of the All Ceylon Malay Association, first woman member of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club, first Woman Vice President of the All Ceylon Malay Association, First Woman President of the All Ceylon Malay Association Rupee Fund and First Malay Woman to enter the well known Working Mosque in Surrey, England.

She moved with the highest in society in Sri Lanka and maintained a close friendship with wives of leaders of Malaysia. Like her husband, she too devoted over four decades of her life to the progress and upliftment of the community.

The Rupee Fund holds a treat for poor children on June 18 every year to commemorate her birth and death anniversary. Besides the members of the committee, a few living members since the inauguration of the fund in 1953 grace the occasion with their presence.

It is very rare for people to die on their birthdays - Mashmoon Lye is no more - but the Rupee Fund, her brainchild, will certainly grow to new heights.

**Dalrena Burah, Hony Secretary, S.L.M.A. Rupee Fund.**

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**M.S.M. SALEEM**

winner of the KALABOOSHAN Award 2000 by Shelton Peries

It was in the mid 40s - the war years - that the writer, as a senior student, met MSM Saleem, in a makeshift Cadjan class room, one of the many erected, around that sprawling mansion - Kittiyakara, that formed the main school. - Wesley's temporary abode. There was a woeful dearth of teachers. As a large number was manning the Civil defence desks. A handful of Senior students were invited to conduct classes. At that point of time, I cannot recall anything very significant that flashes into my mind regarding the subject of this piece.

However, as the term succeeded term, and the school was stabilizing itself with activities, many challenges surfaced. Many of the students at Wesley, then, came from other schools, yet not organized. The buildings at Karlshue and its grounds were yet under the command of the Military. There was just a handful of 'Original' Wesleyites forming a rare nucleus. Saleem found his feet very early. He helped us in the library. Staying in after school, this little man, assisted in 're-shelving' and attending to the Lending registers.

He could be trusted to do a good job. I recall then at Wesley there was a very core of many activities, liaising and linking with like groups of students, and displaying a superlative degree of bon homie My memory focuses on a few of them, like Saleem - Haleem Ishak, Sadique, Mahroof Ismail (Prof. Emeritus), diminutive Ghouse (Whose father- a very gracious gentleman, contracted with Rev. James Cartman in constructing the upper floors of the main building. Jehan Cassim, Mohamed Ahmed, Sanoon, M K Packeer, Jaufer, Meeran, and other fine students. Saleem was a driving force of his group, lending a rich timbre to the very spirit of the school with his perpetual smile and his Aye Aye Sir attitude embellishing whatever undertaking he figured in.

It was MSM who was instrumental in forming the first ever Wesley College Tamil Literary Union. I may interpose here to mention, that our own Haleem Ishak was a luminary of the Sinhala Literary Union, surpassing over his Sinhala colleagues! One recalls that when the great Englishman - Rev. James Cartman was scraping the bottom of the barrel for the upper floor extensions, that young showman Saleem, on many an occasion, stepped into augment the meager College Building Fund. I am sure, to recollect correct, that it was Saleem who put on Stage at Wesley, the First ever Tamil drama.

The Chief Guest was the then Mr Oliver Gunatilleke. Saleem on his own invited that famous artiste, of Tower hall fame, Luxmi Bhai, who graced the stage and held the audience spellbound, with her renderings of Sinhala, Tamil, and Hindi hits. Saleem propelled himself to success - he had no mentor - though Saleem sought the advice and was grateful to his father. It certainly was his sheer grit and perseverance that braced him. Showman Saleem was a big hit in town and the suburbs and even out of our shores.

Another of his big hits to energize College fund was his-'Stars on Parade' a hall overflowing variety show, which was followed a few months later with his scintillating 'Dances of India' liting to his Oriental Orchestra of Strings and Drums. Saleem's talents were not prescribed to the stage alone, for he was a regular feature program mist of a variety of topics - Music, art, culture and his series of absorbing talks Interspersing all this he appeared with his very popular group-Cuban Combo- a much in demand group by all ages with its variety of tempos.. Brother Saleem's not too big physique was blessed with stamina and also unbounding energy, which stood this talented artist in good stead.

His varied skills, and his multifaceted interests had other ranges loo. The combination of his imagination and deep knowledge of men and matters had no fences, for they traversed the wide open spaces of opportunity and service. He yet remains the

untarnished social worker, unbounded by Caste, Creed or Race, Like Abu Ben Adam, a great patriarch, whose virtues were extolled by the Poets. He remains the Common man's sterling, as he labours behind the limelight shunning the full glare of publicity, unlike some we hear, strutting in dwarf tempo, found everywhere blasting their trumpets, but this giant with absolutely no need of Fife or Drum, remains in the hearts and minds of those he so unobtrusively serve, and who are so appreciative of such service.

Our hero has done Yeoman service to that area of Dehiwela, through the Dehiwela Welfare Association. His service is legendary. We of Wesley are proud to share the great Joy of the State's recognition and appreciation and the honour conferred on him. We also share the pride, of this award, when our modest Hero blushed in receiving the KALABOOSHAN AWARD 2000. Well done thou good and faithful servant, MOHAMED SALIH MOHAMED SALEEM. WE SALUTE YOU.

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### **SALIE (Australian)**



**MUM Salie 1869-1963**

<http://www.lankagems.com/>

### **Family history related by Yssuf Salie (grandson of MUM Salie)**

Greetings from Sri Lanka and welcome to the LankaGems website. The Salie Family has been in the gem and jewelry business since the late 1700's. Our business was started in the late 1700's on the tiny island of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon at the time of the British occupation). Sri Lanka is situated in the Indian Ocean at the southern most tip of India.

The town of Galle is situated in the southern province and is otherwise known as the Dutch city. The first two generations of our family concentrated in the buying and selling of rough stones as well as the cutting and polishing of them. This process resulted in beautiful precious stones known as sapphires, rubies and many other varieties of semi precious and precious stones (aquamarines, tourmalines, garnets etc). Galle is a seaport. It was the most impressive of natural harbors in the world at that time and still may remain so today. Many merchant ships passed through Galle to obtain provisions, spices and of course, gemstones. Our Great Grandparents were gem merchants. As Galle was the main gem cutting center as well as the hub of the gem trade in Sri Lanka, we presume that most precious gemstones found at that time (1700-1800) originated from this tiny port city of Galle. Today many of these original stones are in the possession of individual collectors or are showcased in museums in Asia, Europe, Great Britain well as in the

United States of America.

My grandfather was the third generation of Salie's born in 1869. It was in 1898 that young M U M Salie (my grandfather) decided to leave his home country and explore the world at the age of thirty. From his early childhood days in school he had learned and heard quite a bit about two great continents, Australia and North America. He was particularly interested in the information he had gathered concerning the Opal mines in Australia. Without informing his parents, he left home and set sail to Australia on a merchant vessel. After arriving in Melbourne he spent most of his time buying rough Opals and other gemstones that he had planned to cut and refinish in Sri Lanka. Due to the fact that the gem cutters in Sri Lanka were reputed for their knowledge of precision cutting, M U M Salie decided to open his own Opal cutting center in his home country.

M U M Salie married an Australian lady in 1899. After spending a couple of years in Melbourne he and his wife Elsie returned to Sri Lanka with barrels full of rough opals. His dream had come true. He was able to cut these large quantities of opals by expert cutters at a low cost. He spent approximately six years processing the opals and turning them into fine gemstones. In the meantime, he had made many more trips to Australia. He sold his newly finished opals and in turn, bought more rough stones. In 1906, with his wife Elsie beside him, he took part in the exposition in Hanly Park New Zealand, winning praise and awards for displaying the finest of gemstones. As he became more traveled, he had the opportunity to learn about Shanghai, Burma, Tokyo, New York, California, Chicago and Miami. It was due to the climatic similarities between Sri Lanka and Miami that he became particularly fond of Miami.

Sri Lanka has always being a busy port and a central point for commerce and travel. Many businessmen and tourists passed through the Island staying in the large ships while they were docked for loading and unloading in the port cities. My grandfather had been invited to show his rare gem collection to the passengers in these grand ships. Although this proved to be a viable business, this didn't satisfy his quest of obtaining a fair share of the world market for these beautiful and rare gemstones.

As the years passed, his opal cutting center had grown tremendously and many family members and friends were employed there. Approximately 300 people including relatives depended on this business. As his family obligations increased, he decided to test his good fortune in the vast Indian market for fine gemstones. During this period, India had many Noble Maharajahs & Maharanis who were interested in adding fine gemstones to their collections. They had been particularly interested in diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The Indian Nobles only bought the very best for their collections, furthermore, they believed deeply in the mystic powers of precious gemstones.

When M U M Salie returned home, the people of the village had grown to love him for his generous contributions and for taking care of them. At this time, there were many with the last name 'Salie' working at the factory - and the people of the town wanted to give him a different and distinct name to honor his contribution to the community. As M U M Salie often shared stories of his visits with Princes and Princess's around the world, they decided to honor him with the name and title ' Prince M U M Salie'. That is what he became referred to from that time onwards.

In 1915 he traveled to America with his wife Elsie and their daughter Ruby. In San Francisco he participated in the Pan Pacific International Exposition and won a Grand Prize for his contribution of fine exhibits of precious and semi precious stones.

In 1916 he took part in the exposition in San Diego California at Balboa Park making many new friends and inroads into the US market. Over the next decade, he spent much of his time traveling around the world while somehow keeping a close eye on his teenage children. He had high hopes for his children; like his father, he also wanted all his children to follow him in the gemstone business (and they did!).

In 1926 he took part in the Sesquicentennial Exposition in Philadelphia where he won great praise and honors for his fine collectable gemstones. He then moved on to Miami Beach, where he bought two homes next to each other. One was for his living and the other for entertaining his customers and friends. He entertained many of America's elite society by throwing lavish dinners parties and entertaining them with stories and mysteries from the Orient.

Between 1933 and 1934 he participated in the Exposition for the Century of Progress in Chicago. My father, his siblings and his cousins assisted Prince M U M Salie at this fair. It was here that he also won many praise awards, including the grand prize for his exhibits of fine gem material stones. In 1934, when the exposition ended, he donated the finest of his collection of gemstones to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago which still can be viewed to date.

In 1935, he made the move to New York City. It was between 1935-1936 that he participated in another successful show known as the San Diego Exposition in Balboa Park. It was during that same year that he commissioned my father, his siblings and a couple of his cousins to travel throughout the orient to explore the possibility of buying and selling gemstones in that region. They did so by going to Burma Magok where they established a buying as well as a retail outlet. They proceeded to Hong Kong, China and Japan in hopes of selling these precious stones. My father identified successful business opportunities in all of these ports in the Orient. He spent all of his adult life in Ceylon and in the Orient until his sudden death in 1945 at the age of 42.

My grandfather now at the age of 76. With the loss of both his wife Elise and his son (my father) Usuff, he began to slow down his business. In 1947 he made another trip to America. Being home sick and alone, he returned to Sri Lanka in 1948 only to make another trip to the US in 1952 to finalize his business affairs. He returned to Sri Lanka that same year. He spent the following years of his life in Bombay Castle in Galle, which was built with all the ideas and experiences of his traveled life.

In 1963 at the age of 94, during an interview with the Ceylon Observer (newspaper) he expressed his desire to visit the country he loved so dearly -the United States one more time. While making travel arrangements to visit the US with his grandson, M U M Salie was killed in a tragic traffic accident in May of 1963.

Many of his children and grandchildren have followed in his footsteps and have dedicated their lives to the gem industry in Sri Lanka. They have also traveled and explored business opportunities in gem industries all over the world. Today, I am working with the sixth generation of the Salie family -namely my children to better service our customers in the new world of the Internet. My son Afkham Salie graduated from Chapman College with a degree in business. He then went on to becoming a certified gem cutter and gemologist from the Gemological Institute of America in California. He is now operating a gem cutting and fashioning studio in Sri Lanka. My eldest daughter Rahma Salie, graduated from Wellesley College with a degree in International Relations

and Japanese Studies. She is currently working in the technology industry in Cambridge, MA. My youngest daughter is still in college and hopes to graduate in the year 2000. I, Ysuff M. Salie, the fifth generation in the gemstone business, along with my wife Haleema who has successfully completed courses in diamond grading and evaluation at the Gemological Institute of America will remain as a patron and advisor to our children in this business. We have decided to bring together our rich background and six generations of experience in order to showcase and provide you with a high quality collection of gemstones and jewelry. We will also pay particular attention in servicing your custom jewelry needs through this Internet site. We now introduce you to our gemstone and jewelry collection as well as to our culture and origins.

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## **Brigadier T S B SALLY CSR**

Brigadier Tuan Samayraan Buhary Sally, was born in Kandy on 18 March 1924. The eldest, of four sons and four daughters in the family of Tuan Buhary Sally and Boodie Doole.

As a teenager, when WWII broke out in 1939, he was fascinated and impressed by the discipline and orderliness; the efficiency and courage displayed when relatives who had joined the forces visited his parental home in Haputale (a township close to the Soldier's Training Camp at Diyatalawala). He wanted to become a soldier.

In 1942, at the age of 18, his ambition was realized. He joined the Army. From that day onwards began a career that was always on a forward march. Here is his serviced record that no Sri Lankan Malay has been able to achieve within the ranks of the Sri Lanka Army, to date.

**Nov 1942** - 2nd Lieutenant - 5th Battalion Ceylon Light Infantry

**May 1946** - Released from Army service on termination of WWII as a Lieutenant. During his wartime career as a Platoon Commander specializing in 3" mortars after qualifying at Saugor and Dehra Dun in India.

**Aug 1947** - Joined Corps of RMP (Ceylon). Performed duties in Singapore and Malaya.

**Feb 4 1948** - Independence Day - Promoted to Captain.

**July 1950** - Commissioned into the First Battalion CLI as Lieutenant in the regular Army of Ceylon.

**July 1951** - Trained at British School of Infantry at Netheravon; on his return promoted to Captain.

**Oct 1956** - Adjutant to Ceylon Sinha Regiment. Promoted to Major and commanded a Company of troops.

**Mar 1967** - Appointed Lieutenant Colonel in Command of a Battalion.

**May 1968** - Commander Sinha Regiment. Received training in Indianapolis, USA. Subsequently took up appointment at Army HQ.

**Jan 1974** - Promoted to Colonel.

**Dec 1, 1977** - Promoted to Brigadier. Appointed Chief of Staff till retirement on Mar 18, 1979. On two occasions Brig Sally was acting Commander of the Army when the Commander was overseas on assignments.

Today (Feb 2007), Brig Sally lives in peaceful retirement looking into the affairs of the SLMA, CMCC, and SLAMAC (Sri Lanka Malay Confederation). He was also a former General Secretary of SLAMAC.

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## MUHAMMAD SAMEER

### Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi



**Muhammad Sameer**, congregation membership # 292, held the prestigious position of Managing Trustee of the Maradana Mosque, Colombo for two year periods on three separate occasions, viz; 6.6.1941 to 1943, 1945 to 1947 and 1949 to 1951. As early as 1908, at the tender age of 19, he associated himself as a Junior Member of the congregation. He was the Secretary of the Mosque Board that framed the regulations in 1913 which were incorporated in 1924. He was, later, a member of the Board, member of the Executive Committee, Treasurer and finally Managing Trustee.

His name appears at No. 56, under Section C of the First Schedule of the Maradana Mosque Inauguration Ordinance No. 22 of 1924 (28.8.1924) He also held membership # S-7 of 24.9.1945, was a member of the Board of Directors as indicated in the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH) (Incorporation) Ordinance No. 46 of 1946.

He was awarded a Gold Medal & Citation on Friday, November 1, 1965 (25 Rajab 1385H) by His Excellency, **El-Seyed Abdul Qadir Al-Gailanee** (Ambassador for Iraq in Pakistan & Ceylon), who was a direct lineal descendant of Ghus-i-A'zam Muhiyadeen Abdul Qader-ul-Gailanee, at a ceremony attended by many of his family ad community members at the MICH, Bristol Street, Fort..

**Muhammad Sameer** was educated at St. Thomas' College and entered the Colombo Municipal Council clerical service in 1910. He was employed as Chief Clerk under an Englishman named Orr and won acclaim and affection from Civil Servants such as, H.E. Newnham, H.P. Kaufmann, and W.L. Murphy. He married **Raliya Umma**, daughter of **A.C.Noordeen**. They had four sons and six daughters. The oldest son, **Muhammad Thahir (1914-1989)**, a surveyor by profession, who held the position of Superintendent in the Municipal Engineer's Department at the Colombo Municipal Council. He passed away at the ripe age of 75 in 1989. Two of the other sons of Muhammad Sameer, **Muhammad Ismail (1919-1993)** and **Ahmed Farooq** also took up the surveying profession. **Muhammad Sadiq**, the youngest son, a bachelor, decided to seek his pastures in the United Kingdom,

spent a considerable portion of his life in England, and has since returned to settle down in Sri Lanka.

### **HE WAS A PROUD MAN TILL THE LAST - An Appreciation Muhammad Sameer by M C A Hassan (Journalist)**

"I am carrying all the knowledge about the life of the Moors in my head. I wish I could get them off my chest in some form", so confided Mr Muhammad Sameer to a young friend. This statement, more or less, sums up the life of a frail old patriot, scholar, and research student of history and religion.

Educated at City and St Thomas' College, he entered the Municipal Clerical Service in 1910. It did not take him long to win the affection and esteem of eminent civil servants like HE Newnham, H P Kauffman, and W I Murphy.

His deep insight into the available information of the city of Colombo found his as the head of the Information Bureau. For a perfect valuation of immovable properties in the Assessors Department it was necessary to have as much information as possible. As a magnanimous head he received the admiration and respect of his employers. Both superiors and subordinates cooperated well with him. He rose to the rank of "Special Class"

After his retirement from the Municipality he was appointed Head Clerk in the Civil Defence Commissioner's sub Department and in the Government Valuation Department "Claims Section". In all these offices he conducted himself in honor and dignity. His loyalty brought great credit to the community to which he belonged.

A passionate supporter of the Pan Islamic Movement, Mufti's in different parts of the globe counted as his personal friends. His thirst was for the study of comparative religions.

As early as 1908, at the age of 19 he associated himself as a junior member of the congregation with the management of the Maradana Mosque in Colombo 10. He was Secretary of the Mosque Board that framed regulations in 1913 and which were incorporated in 1924. He was, later, a member of the Board, member of the Executive Committee, Treasurer, and finally Managing Trustee in 1941, being elected alternatively every two years. He was mainly responsible for "cleansing the Augean Stables", as he put it, of the Mosque Administration and also safeguarding the finances of the Mosque. Its income has been on the increase ever since.

A member of the Alaviya Qadiriya Order, he was a keen supporter of the Islamic Missionary Movements, both orthodox and unorthodox, following closely on the heels of men like A M Sheriff, M C Siddi Lebbe, and I L M Abdul Azeez. His patronage of all sects in Ceylon brought about fraternal understanding amongst all Thareeqa'a in Islam.

During his lifetime, his genial qualities of head and heart won the appreciation of many fellow Muslims. The Congregation of the Maradana Mosque and the tenants of the Mosque properties respected him.

Sameer was a passionate champion of the Moorish cause. Whilst extending a hand of friendship to the Islamic fraternity, he believed that the Moors, as pioneer settlers of Arab descent in Ceylon, should gain Government recognition similar to those granted to the Sinhalese and Tamils. On this issue he addressed several memoranda to successive

Governments, the last of which was to the Hon Prime Minister, wherein he set out the need for recognition as a sepaate entity.

In recognition to the services he rendered to the Moors, b his tedious and meticulous research into the history, origins, lifestyles, genealogy and culture if the Ceyln Moors, the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home presented him with a Citation and Gold Medallion on Nov 19, 1965, at their new headquarters at Bristol Street in the Fort of Colombo. The Iraqi envoy and a host of other leaders graced the occasion. The outcome of the function was the publication of a souvenir on the Moors of Ceylon which contained many articles from his fountain of Islamic knowledge. Anyone who bestrode to seek information from Sameer never returned disappointed; every little piece of information sought was forthcoming.

His contributions to the World Muslim Magazines were well received. His articles on religious and mundane subjects were published in booklets. "Jewels of Islam", "Life of I L M Abdul Azeez", and "History of the Maradana Mosque" and "How I served the Maradana Mosque" are a few that stand as a perpetual monument to his unflagging interest in Islamic life. The worth of an indivisual is never recognized during his lifetime. With his passing goes out a storehouse of information on Islamic Affairs. The service he rendered is singular. Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Rajioon. May Allah Grant him Paradise!

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#### **Appreciation**

**Ceylon Observer – 5.Dec.1972**

#### **MOHAMED SAMEER BIN HAJI ISMAIL EFFENDI**

I knew Mohamed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi, who died recently at the ripe old age of 82 only in the last few months of his life. But those few hours I spent with this Ceylon Moor historian and scholar were fruitful, for the knowledgeable Sameer revelled in discussion and discourse though medically advised not to talk much.

For his painstaking research work on his community Sameer was presented with a gold medal and a citation by the Moors Islamic Cultural Home in a special ceremony. He traced history diligently from archives, museum publications and from ancient inscriptions.

Sameer was one of the the first batch of students admitted to Hameediah School, Colombo, in 1900. Later he studied at City College and at St. Thomas' College (then in Mutwal). He showed literary promise at an early age and while only 19 edited a Tamil monthly "The True Messenger".

Until his death Sameer was one of the few surviving Muslims to have met the famous Arabi Pasha, the day before Arabi left Ceylon (on September 10, 1901) and to have attended the historic Fez Question mass meeting on the Maradana Mosque grounds on December 31, 1905.

In 1915 he was a pioneer member of the All-Ceylon Muslim League (founded by C.M. Meera Lebbe Marikar, who was also its Secretary) and of the Moors Union, whose President, Mr. N.H.M. Abdul Cader ceremonially released Sameer's publication on the life

history of I.L.M. Abdul Azeez on November 25, 1915. He was also a member of the Board of Trustees of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home.

Sameer wrote prolifically to local and foreign newspapers the time he was free from his duties as Chief Clerk of the Colombo Municipal Council, which he served for 30 years, and was in constant correspondence with Muslim organisations and personalities all over the world from China to Finland and the United States.

He helped to reorganise the affairs of the Maradana Mosque, Colombo for 30 years variously as Secretary, Treasurer and Managing Trustee.

Always a religious man, Mr. Sameer had this verse hung by his bedside:

"I am not fit for Heaven"  
"I am too weak for Hell"  
"Forgive me!"  
"O Forgiver of sins"

**M.M.T. [M.M. Thawfeek]  
MUHAMMAD TAHIR SAMEER**



**AN APPRECIATION: M T SAMEER**

It has been said that there are three things a man should do before he dies: plant a tree, father a son, and write a book. When Muhammad Thahir Sameer was called by the Lord to his eternal rest at 1:30 am on Friday, November 3, 1989, he had already accomplished these obligations in addition to many others. He was 75-years old.

M.T.Sameer, son of the Ceylon Moor historian, the late Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi, was born on Monday, October 5, 1914. The second-eldest in a family of ten children, he was one of the great-grandsons of the renowned tycoon, OLMALM Alim.

Those who will miss him most will be his grandchildren, Nisthar Ali, Melina, Nadia and Nabila, on whom he doted. Also, his octogenarian friend, Mr LM Nicolle, the Hultsdorp- icon Auctioneer & Broker, will certainly miss his presence.

During his lifetime, his altruistic and selfless nature towards his friends and relatives were exemplified in the quality and volume of the varied assistance he promptly extended to those in need. He led a pious life, stressing mainly on simplicity in almost every activity, with a philosophy that one should, at all times, compare oneself with those less affluent than oneself.

Mr Sameer was an avid reader and a fine conversationalist and raconteur, especially on religion and on the history of WWII. During his lifetime, he made many contributions which were published by the Fourth Estate. He had also typed out a full-length novel and five short stories which, at present, remain unpublished. Apart from writing prose, his knack for composing verse was remarkable. Significant were those which he composed on the death of his 9-year old sister, Honey, and of his uncle, the late WM Hassim, JP>

Photography was his onetime hobby-forte, and he once won a prize from the Ceylon Social Service League for contributing a Flag-Day slogan, "Please spare a fraction; For those out of action!" He was a lover of music, mainly English and Hindi, and used to sing some of those Ole-Time sentimental favorites of yore.

Mr Sameer joined Royal College in January 1925, when the eminent Major HL Reed was Principal. He was appointed as a Prefect in 1934 during the principalship of Mr LHW Sampson. The group-photograph of Prefects with the appended signatures which hangs in his Office Room, indicates his colleagues – Messrs HW Jayawardene, PCB Kueneman, JP Obeysekera, ATS Paul, FEW Porritt, AW Henricus, EDW Jayawardene, G Muttucumaroe, DM Perera, WL Mendis and DK Wilson. In the Cadet Battalion Mr Sameer was a Corporal, and served as a supernumerary sergeant. Incidentally, the late Mr CE Belleth established a record in having taught Mr Sameer, two of his three younger brothers, Ismail and Farooq, (the third Sadiq left for UK in 1960), and his two sons, Fazli (1959-Group) and Firoze (1961-Group).

Apart from passing all his examinations at the first attempt, it was amazing to note that he passed the examination for the Surveyor-General's licence in Surveying in November 1934, at the age of 20, thus becoming "the youngest Surveyor on the roll," as reported in the English dailies of January 31, 1934. The Times and Ceylon Observer also reported that the licence authorizing him to practice as a Surveyor was to be issued when he attained his 21<sup>st</sup> year! In addition to coming under the tutelage of Capt EG Eastman, FSI, from whom he studied practical valuation, Mr Sameer was an overseas student of the College of Estate Management, London, from where he took a course in the Valuation Section to sit for the Chartered Surveyors' Institute examinations. He also embarked on a course in Law at the Ceylon Law College in August, 1935.

Mr Sameer retired from Government Service in June, 1954, after a distinguished career as a Superintendent in the Colombo Municipal Engineers' Department. The retired Colombo Municipal Engineer, Mr Stanley Fernando, observed that he was "adaptable in all different branches of the Engineering Services of the Department," and that, "his mastery of the Ordinances and their application is commendable."

Immediately after his retirement, Mr Sameer unsuccessfully contested the Pettah Ward in the local government elections as an independent candidate, conceding to the UNP candidate, Mr Jabir A Cader. Later, he served for short periods in various senior management positions at Abbas Freighters Ltd., Ceylon Carriers Ltd., and at Taylor & Mackay Ltd. In the evening of his life, he was a senior consultant to the Leedons Group of Companies headed by Dr AMM Shahabdeen, ex-CCS.

During WWII, Mr Sameer was appointed by the Civil Defence Department as a Group Leader and acting Staff Officer in the Air Raid Patrol (ARP) Rescue Service. The Ceylon Government nominated him to follow a Specialist School in Bombay in June/July, 1943. On this assignment, he carried a letter dated June 19, 1943, personally signed by the Civil Defence Commissioner, Mr OE Goonetilleke (later Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, GCMG, KCVO, KBE, KStJ, and Governor General of Ceylon), which urged all assistance be given to him on his venture. Mr Sameer successfully completed his training, and was classified as a Specialist Instructor (Rescue Service) (Distinguished) with an award of a certificate from the Indian Government. Mr Sameer was very fluent in Urdu.

In the 1942-blitz of the Japanese Air Raid which hit Colombo, Mr Sameer was reported in the press as follows: "On the occasion of the April Raid ... he was the leader of the first rescue party to report at Bankshall Street within a few minutes of the attack, and was very highly complimented for the prompt and efficient manner in which he carried out his duties."

After his retirement, Mr Sameer – affectionately called "MT", by his friends – continued to practice his profession of Surveying and Levelling in Hultsdorp. Once, he reached the psalmist span of three score and ten years, he based himself at his residence at Bambalapitiya, continually assisting and advising a host of clients on matters relating to his profession of which he was considered an "institution". He belonged to the "Over-70-Group" of Old Royalists, which included former President JR Jayawardene, which held its annual get-togethers, significant of which was the one celebrated at President's House.

Mr Sameer was a member of the congregation of the Maradana Mosque, to which his father rendered yeoman service as Managing Trustee. Mr Sameer punctually performed his daily 'Salah' prayers, and on Fridays, he used to visit the Dehiwela Jumma Mosque, in which precincts he was laid to rest before the commencement of the Friday Jumua Congregational Prayer.

May Allah shower His Light and Love on him, and grant him "Jennathul Firdous" heavenly bliss. "Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Rajioon" – From Him do we come and unto Him is the return!

Colombo 8, Monday Nov 20, 1989 –  
**Muhammad Rizvi Zaheed**, (nephew)  
20/66, Fairfield Gardens, Colombo 8

**Muhammad Thahir** has two sons, **Muhammad Fazli Hussain Sameer** and **Ahmed Firoze Sameer**. The former is successfully pursuing the Computer profession in the Middle East while the latter, after having served a short stint in the Middle East, is a professional in Accounting & Finance, presently holding the position of Deputy General Manager at The State Trading Corporation (General) in Sri Lanka. **Muhammad Fazli** is married to **Fathima Shirani Naleefa Ibrahim**, daughter of **Husain Jiffry Ibrahim**, ex Customs Appraiser, and

**Hibshi Mazaya Saleem** (d/o W.M. Saleem) and has two daughters, **Fathima Melina Sameer and Fathima Nadia Sameer**. **Melina** is married to **Ahmed Yousry Sheriff**, in 1993, son of **Amir Arslan Sheriff**, Attorney-at-Law, of Mutuwal and **Sithy Zehra Dastakeer** of Matara. They have a daughter, **Maria Admira Sheriff**, born in Toronto Canada, on September 22, 1994 and a son **Abdullah Yousry Sheriff**, born in Riyadh, on March 25, 1997. **Nadia** is married to **Abdul Qadir Hussain**, in 1999, son of **Ashroff Hussain** (Batcha & Co) and **Mariya Qubutiya Haniffa**. **Ahmed Firoze Sameer** is married to **Qureisha Nizar**, daughter of **M.Y.M.Nizar**, JP, Attorney-at-Law, of Wattala. They have a daughter, **Nabila Safra Sameer** and a son **Ahmed Yazdhan Sameer**

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## **SANGANI**

The origins of the Sangani family could be traced to one Abdul Rahman Sangani who married Hoorbai, daughter of Osman Bhoja. Their son Mohammed was educated at Aligarh University in Ahmedabad in India and migrated to Sri Lanka and joined his maternal uncle Omar Bhoja to start Haji Omar & Company before setting about his own firm M Haroon & Sons in which he was very successful. Mohammed also served as Memon Quazi and involved himself in the activities of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka, serving in many capacities, before he passed away in 1984.

Mohammed's grandson, Shabbir, took keenly to sports and represented his school and winning colors in Rugby for which he was particularly fond of. Faced with a major decision in his life at the young age of 19 when he had to decide between a University education in the USA or starting a business in Sri Lanka. He made the right decision by choosing the latter and started his first business, named Quest Clothing (pvt) Ltd. in 1984 with 30 sewing machines and a workforce of 50, subcontracting work from exporters. In 1988, the Company, now under the new name of Lanka Garment Industries (pvt) Ltd., increased its capacity to 200 machines. In 1992, he set up PTK Enterprises, yet another garment manufacturing concern, and in 1995 launched Growth Lanka, as an apparel trading company.

In 1998, lingerie was added to the product range to the new Company, Comfort Wear (pvt) Ltd. The same year, a holding company under the name of Lanka Equities (pvt) Ltd., was constituted. The Group soon diversified into high-end jewelry cutting and polishing of diamonds and hydro power. Its total work force was composed of over 6,200 employees. Shabbir was ably helped in his business by his two brothers, Shahid and Riaz, who joined him in what was to soon be a family affair. An adventurer at heart, Shabbir took risks and plenty of it. It was his view that risks must be taken "Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing". Despite all this he never lost that human touch for which he was loved. He was compassionate, down to earth, open to criticism and readily accessible to his employees, for as he would say, "they want to see me because they have a problem". In fact he regarded his employees more as an extended family. This he demonstrated not only with words but also in deed such as when he founded a special "Athwela" Fund for his employees which enabled them to do many things they couldn't have even dreamt of before, such as sending their children for higher studies. Such was Shabbir who left this world at the young age of just 39. If the phrase, "the good die young" be true his untimely demise proves it beyond doubt. It was at this juncture that his wife, Roshini, who had simply been a caring housewife and the doting mother of his two kids, was thrust forward to take over Shabbir's place as Chairperson of the Group, which she has done with the skill and vigor he would have been extremely proud of. Roshini Fernando, who hails from

a prominent Sinhalese family, has much to say of her Memon in Laws whom she regards as her own family and the community in general. In fact, she, who embraced Islam upon marrying Shabbir way back in 1988, regards herself as a Memon and finds time, despite her busy schedule, to socialize with the community wherever possible. Roshini is also an avid sportswoman and has excelled in Golf. She has been a member of the Royal Colombo Golf Club, ever since her teens and has won a few tournaments including the Ridgeway Cup, Hayleys Trophy and the Sandy Maisy, all of which are well known board events.

Shahid Sangani, Shabbir's brother, is an Attorney at Law, by profession, and a Director of the family owned network of Companies, including Lanka Equities (pvt) Ltd. He is also involved in the activities of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka and has served it as General Secretary.

Riaz, the youngest of the Sangani brothers, holds a BBA Degree in Business Administration from the University of Colombo and serves on the Board of several companies in the Lanka Equities Group. He is a Director of the holding company Lanka Equities (pvt) Ltd., Diamond Cutters Ltd., and Alankara (pvt) Ltd., as well as MD of Vidullanka Ltd.

## **SHABIR SANGANI**

SUNDAY ISLAND July 6 2003

### **Shabbir Sangani - A tribute**

Shabbir is dead. A friend, who lived his life to the fullest. Stretched to the limits, both in pursuit of excellence in his businesses and to the fullest of physical endurance in adventure. A rare combination indeed!!

Traversing across the island to the east coast, Shabbir met his tragic end, off the coast of Batticaloa. It was in pursuit of adventure. Strangely, whether it was rafting down the rivers of Sri Lanka, or cycling down its mountainous slopes, it may have been to him his chosen way to exit, taking risk and enjoying its rewards. To his family and friends, it is a void that can never be filled. Shabbir would have wanted it handled with courage and fortitude. Just as he handled all his matters.

Shabbir was generous in his giving, as he was demanding in his pursuit of excellence in his businesses. A moment in time of my life, when I was out of employment, he gave me a job. It was not simply employment, it was a task to fulfill as Chief Operating Officer of one of his group diversifications. He demanded and expected results. He pushed me to my limits. We never had a contract or exchange of letters. It was an agreement amongst two friends. The assignment was over and I exited. Shabbir had fulfilled his agreement to the fullest. I can only hope that I had worked to his expectations.

In my perception, in the group, Shabbir called the shots, but gave leadership to a team of equally driven and committed individuals. Their collective spirit was however foremost in his mind.

One incident, which is proof of this, was an employee training session organized by, and for, the CEO's of his group and the more senior staff. The instructor insisted that



everybody be at their seats precisely on time and that all mobile phones and even watch alarms be switched off. The session was in progress and a mobile phone went off. It was in Shabbir's pocket! The session was stopped. There was to be a forfeit as the rest of the group required. It was put to the house and the verdict was that the Chairman should stand on his head.

For a moment Shabbir was caught off guard. He turned red!! After that brief moment he came up and announced he couldn't do it himself and he had never before stood on his head. Help was forthcoming and everyone rushed up to turn their Chairman upside down! In a few moments Shabbir was back on his feet, this time much redder than at first! There was a standing ovation. A while later there was a break. I spoke to Shabbir and asked him how he felt. His remark was "without the support I had, I could never have been upside down, that's what you call team spirit!!!"

In my own way, as a tribute and a prayer, I humbly bow my head and shut my eyes. To his widow and his family, may they have the courage to move on, as Shabbir would have wanted them to.

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## **SEGU PILLAI MARIKAR**

### **Al Haj M.A.M.A.Hassen JP (1903-1997) of Hassen Villa Weveldeniya**

Donated his land to build Babul Hassen Central College of Warakapola. Also donated three shops each to Warakapola Grand Jumma Mosque, Town Mosque and two shops to Ganithapura Jumma Mosque in Warakapola.

In addition to this in 1993 he donated four acres of land in Ganithapura, Warakapola to needy Muslims and this area is now known as Hassenpura.

One of the founder members and president of the Muslim Ladies Arabic College of Kal-Eliya from the inception till his demise.

He played a leading role in promoting the improvements to the Warakapola town.

His children (Mrs Hafeela Cassim and Mr Abdul Raheeman Hassen JP) as per his wishes donated the property of Dharul Hassenath Academy of Warakapola under a deed of Trust (Wagf) in 2001

One of the founder members of the Board of Trustees of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home

Appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the whole Island by the British Government.

### **Mr. M.L.Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala**

He together with Usman Ralahamy, Mr. Usuf Lebbe Abdul Hameed and Mr Zubair of Dippitiya started an Institute close to Usman Ralahamy's parents home in 1932, at the location where Al-Madhrasathush-Shareefiyah of Warakapola stands today, to educate the children of the area. In 1944 this institute was shifted to Horagolla Warakapola to the

land donated by Al Haj M.A.M.A. Hassan (JP) of Hassan Villa Kandy Road Wewaldeniya and presently it is known as Babul Hassan Central College.

**Abbreviations:**

JPUM	-	Justice of Peace and Unofficial Magistrate.
JP	-	Justice of the Peace.
Dr	-	Doctor.
C. Eng	-	Chartered Engineer.
FCMA	-	Fellow Chartered Management Accountant
ACA	-	Associate Chartered Accountant.
d.	-	Died.

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## SHAMSI LEBBE MARIKAR

**Shamsi (Samsudeen) Lebbe Marikar Hameed Lebbe Marikar** was the son of Hameed Lebbe Marikar from the Ahmed Lebbe Marikar family. His sons were Aliya Marikar and (Shothi) Ahmed Lebbe Marikar, who was referred to as "Shothian" on account of a physical deficiency he suffered in one of his hands.

Aliya Marikar had one daughter who was married to Aboobucker, whose son was A M Hasheem (aka Pokiri Hasheem). Hasheem's children were Nasoordeen, Kubra, Sithy Fathima, and MHM Dhahlan, JP, who served the MICH, diligently, until his demise.

Shothi Ahmed Lebe Marikar was married to Ponni Ummah Aasiyah Umma and also Ummu Kulthum Muhammad Raya and had eleven children by them. His first marriage produced three daughters while the second yielded six sons and two daughters. One of his daughters from the second bed, Amsa Umma was married to M I Muhammad Ali, the first Muslim JP and also Consul for Persia. Two of Amsa Umma's grand daughters were married to A M A Azeez and Jabir A Cader, MP (UNP) respectively.

Shamsi Lebbe Marikar's only daughter was married to Ibrahim Lebbe Marikar and they had four children of their own.

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## SHEIKH MOHIDEEN

### Hussain S.M.M.

*Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1916. Founder of The Colombo Picture Palace, he was a well known Industrialist, Educationist and Philanthropist. He married Hajiani **Jeenath Ummah**, daughter of **Unani Dr. Abdul Cader** of Galle in the year 1943 and the couple were blessed with a large family of twelve children; four sons, **Nazeer, Dhahlan, Zameek and Rizvi** and eight daughters, **Zulfathul, Nawaziya, Laleeza, Nazlima, Fazeena, Nuwaiza, Raziya and Shannaz**. Alhaj Hussain passed away on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1991 at the family residence of forty years, **522 Galle Road, Colombo 3**. After his death the family business was taken over by his sons, and it continues to be a leading business establishment today.*

"Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain did not come to this world with the proverbial silver spoon in the mouth. He met the trials and tribulations of life like any other. He learnt the trade from his elder brother while attending a night school. In the year 1942 he started his own business of picture framing and sheet glass in a stall at Armour Street, Colombo. From then his

business expanded to become one of the leading Glass Merchants and Printers in the country presently functioning from Prince Street, Pettah.

He also had a vision to start an industry, so he did by purchasing and developing four acres of marshy land in Grandpass, Colombo and setting up a Fully Automatic Mirror Manufacturing Industry, with full selfconfidence, practical wisdom and above all, common sense. It is not surprising to find such men are self made and selftaught. They learn in the school of life and end up as pioneers and path finders.

Neither a steady student or nor an advanced scholar, he realized the boon of education and the dearth of Muslim students in the pursuit of study, mainly because of financial difficulties among the underprivileged. Therefore he created the Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain Charitable Trust, bequeathing to it a four storeyed building on 13 perches in the heart of Pettah. This is an approved charity administered by the MICH to provide scholarships to deserving Muslim students.

As a Vice President of the MICH he closely associated with its activities. His assistance to complete the MICH Technical Training Centre at Demetagoda was so substantial that the Board of Trustees decided to name the reception hall in the building as the 'Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain Hall'. The Technical Training Centre provides the much needed technical skills to the youth of all communities.

'Poverty is my Pride' said the Holy Prophet (Sal).

Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain regarded his wealth as a trust to be utilized for the well being of the underprivileged section of the community. He made contributions to many charities. He built a Madrasa in Namuwawa, a mosque in Puwakpitiya, built shops to provide income to the mosques of Nanu Oya and Watawala. Other beneficiaries include several mosques, schools, orphanages, too numerous to mention.

Here then is a profile of a person – neither an intellectual nor a professional – the humanist who slowly but surely had risen up the ladder, built up an Enterprise that provides employment to several, and thus became a national asset to his country and community. He lived a multi faceted and eventful life.

Alhaj Hussain passed away peacefully on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1991. His wife Hajjani Jeenath Ummah subsequently passed away on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1995. They leave behind a larger family of four sons and eight daughters, all of whom are married and well settled down in life.

The late A. I. L Marikar, Hony Secretary of the MICH, wrote on the passing away of Alhaj Hussain thus: "*Rare indeed are men of his calibre. A Merchant Prince of Prince Street is no more, May the Liqa of Almighty Allah be with him*". "

(Source : Pamphlet published by MICH on the Unveiling of the Portrait of Alhaj S. M. M. Hussain, at the MICH Auditorium. 13<sup>th</sup> August 1996)

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## **SHEIKH MARIKAR**

### **Wapu Marikar Hassim**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen040.html>

**Wapu Marikar Hassim**, affectionately known as **W.M. Hassim**, son of **Sheikh Marikar**, was born on January 26, 1880. His birth was registered by C.L.M. Abdul Majeed (son of **Shekadi Marikar Cassim Lebbe Marikar**), who was his mother's sister's husband. **Hassim** attended Wesley College, Colombo, and was preparing to appear for the Notary's examination when his elders recommended that he take up to trade and business. His eldest brother, **W.M. Abdul Jabbar**, was, at this time, the Manager of his uncle's (**I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar**) hardware business. Another brother **W.M. Thaha** was also involved in the same establishment. **Abdul Jabbar** assisted his younger brothers, **Thaha** and **Hassim** to start a separate business, in 1906, at No. 77, Main Street, Pettah. Being an enterprising young man, Hassim's business flourished. Thaha left Ceylon in search of greener pastures in the Far East.

On December 14, 1907, **Hassim** married the third daughter of **O.L.M.A.L.M. Alim**, one of the successful businessmen and landed proprietor of that time.

Another successful businessman, **S.L. Naina Marikar Hajjar**, who was a relative of **Hassim**, also gave him much encouragement in his new business venture.

**Hassim's** charity knew no bounds for both Muslim and non Muslim causes. The state, acknowledging his philanthropy and educational activity, honoured him with the title of Justice of the Peace on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the accession to the throne of His Majesty King George V. The Maligawatte Denham School was supported by **Hassim** being the largest individual contributor of funds for its management. His ancestors had, previously, contributed magnanimously to the Maradana Mosque and the Grand Mosque in Colombo.

**Hassim** was a founder member and first Vice President of The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home. He also held the position of Vice President of The All Ceylon Moors Association. In the latter capacity, **W.M. Hassim**, together with, **Mohammed Hussain Alim**, **Katheeb Maradana Mosque**, **Y.M. Khalid**, **B.D.M. Cassim**, **A.L.M. Lafir**, **H.A.S.M. Raffiudeen**, **A.M.A. Caffoor**, **A.I.L. Marikar**, **M.M. Sulaiman**, **M.C.M. Fuard**, and **I.L.M. Thowfeek**, proprietor Hotel Bulgari, succeeded in forestalling the notorious Fatwa Meeting held at the Colombo Town Hall under the Chairmanship of Yaseen Moulana to erase the term "Sonahar", "Yonagar", and "Ceylon Moor", describing the race and to substitute the term "Ceylon Muslim" instead.

His sons are **Mohammed Thaifoor**, **Mohammed Kamil**, **Ahmed Jameel**, **Mohammed Mohideen**, **Mohammed Ameen** and **Mohammed Sulaiman**, who were all devotedly engaged in their father's business and have lived up to his bountiful acts of charity.

W.M. Hassim passed away peacefully on July 6, 1960

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## **KHATEEB SHEIKH OMAR (of Yamani) (aka Lebbe Sinne Lebbe)**

### **Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Abdul Latiff (Lebbe Sinna Lebbe)**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen092.html>

**Katheeb Hussain Lebbe Muhallam Sheikh Ismail Lebbe** of the Colombo Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, had recorded over three hundred (300) marriages of Moors (Muslims),

from March 26, 1882 to January 18, 1844. In his "**Kadutham**" book, he had recorded not only the names of the parties, Wolis, and witnesses but also their addresses.

His son, **Abdul Latiff**, also known as, **Levve Sinna Levve**, who was also appointed Katheeb of the Colombo Grand Mosque, had his appointment confirmed by the Governor, His Excellency Lt. General Sir Colin Campbell, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Military Order of both Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the British settlements and territories in the Island of Ceylon with dependencies thereof, on February 13, 1845.

The following authority of the Governor was granted for the remains of **Abdul Latiff** to be interred alongside his father's grave at the Colombo Grand Mosque.

**No 1112.**

**Colonial Secretary's Office**

**Colombo, 16 May, 1906**

**Sir,**

**I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your petition dated the 6th April last, and to state that His Excellency has been pleased to grant the request made therein.**

**(2) His Excellency desires me at the same time to state that he hopes that many years will still lapse before it becomes necessary to make use of the permission granted.**

**I am Sir,**

**Your Obedient Servant**

**for Colonial Secretary**

**Segoe Ismail Lebbe Abdul Latifue**

**Muhammadan High Priest,**

**83, New Moor Street,**

**Colombo.**

In the Ceylon Daily News of Saturday, March 10, 1945, the following reference was made to the centenary celebration at the Grand Mosque in connection with the services as **Khateeb of Abdul Latiff** and his progeny:-

**"A special assembly congregated after the Jumma prayers at the Grand Mosque, Colombo, to commemorate the century of service rendered to the members of the congregation of the Mosque by the house of the first officiating priest, late Khateeb Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Abdul Latiff. The service was continued by his son, the late Khateeb Abdul Latiff Abdul Caffoor, followed by his son, the late Khateeb Abdul Caffoor Abdul Jawad. This is now being continued by the latter's son, Khateeb Abdul jawad**

**Muhammad Warid. In appreciation of his uninterrupted and unique service to the Jama'ath of the Mosque, glowing tributes were paid by several speakers, reference being made to the special grant by Governor Sir Colin Campbell on February 13, 1845"**

**Abdul Lateef's son Abdul Caffoor** was subsequently appointed Khatheeb of the Grand Mosque and His other son's were **Abdul Rahman, Abdul Cader, and Muhammad Zakariya**. His daughter's were **Azeeza Umma** and **Jainath Umma**.

Abdul Caffoor's son **Abdul Jaward** succeeded him. **Abdul Jaward's son Muhammad Warid** succeeded him in 1936.

**Abdul Lateef's** youngest son was **Muhammad Zakariya** whose son was **Muhammad Lafir**. Muhammad Lafir's children are **Muhammad Noor** (married to Mazeera Rashard), **Fawzie Fathima, Nawaz** (married to Shireen Hussain Mohideen), **Faizal** (married to Yasmin Sahill), **Ayeshathul Rila** (married to Zameek Hussain), **Ireefathul Khair** (married to Rummy Rasheed) and **Shazmina** (married to Mursy Zacky).

**Abdul Lateef 's** grandfather was **Khateeb Hussain** whose father was **Khateeb Hassan** and whose father was **Khateeb Sheikh Omar** of Yamani.

Presently (1995), the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Colombo Grand Mosque is **Al Haj Shafee Muhammad** who was elected in 1992. His appointment was confirmed by the Ministry of Muslim Religious & Cultural Affairs. He is the grandson of **Khateeb Abdul Caffoor Abdul Jawad** and brother of **Al Haj Muhammad Hussain Mohideen** - former member of the Board of Trustees of the Colombo Grand Mosque during the period 1968 to 1980.

**Abdul Lateef's Great Grandson, Muhammad Shibly Shihabudeen**, son of **Abdul Rahman Muhammad Shihabudeen**, was appointed Administrative Trustee of Ghaneemathul Cassimiya Jumma Masjid at Dematagoda Place, Colombo 9, from 1980 to 1983. He was responsible for the construction of a two storeyed building for the Mosque that facilitated the upgrade of the Mosque to a Jumma Masjid.

The above family trace their ancestry to the Head Moorman, **Mahmood Naina Marikar** of Sheikh Ma'roofal Karkhee.

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## **SHEIQ FAREED - I**

### **Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar 1829-1925**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen050.html>



About the year 1016 A.D., a few Arabs, among whom were expert physicians and master masons, settled in Ceylon. One of them was called **Sheikh Fareed**. They were welcomed by the natives and settled themselves in different vocations. Their history was maintained orally until about the year 1770. In the "Thombu" of 1770 (the Government record), there is reference to one **Paridoe**. It is a custom of the Muslims to carry the name of their ancestors in the line of genealogy and this Paridoe is the name carried from **Sheikh Fareed**.

There lived a wealthy lady, possessing vast extents of land at Ambagahawatte, in the lineage of this **Fareed**. When she passed away, **Arasi Marikar Wapchie Marikar**, was the heir left behind to inherit this property.

After collecting his own share, **Arasi Marikar Wapchie Marikar** bought the shares of several other heirs of this land and donated a portion of it to build a mosque and later built another mosque called the Fareed Thakkiya. He had started off his career as an apprentice working under expert builders. His flair for Islamic architecture can be seen in the many arches used in his architecture. He mastered the building profession and undertook the erection of buildings independently as a building contractor.

So long as brick and mortar endure his name will be long remembered as the builder of the General Post Office in Colombo, the Colombo Museum, Colombo Customs, Old Town Hall in Pettah, the Galle Face Hotel, Victoria Arcade, Finlay Moir building, the Clock Tower, Batternburg Battery etc. The Old Town Hall in Pettah, which is now a busy market, was built on a contract for the sum of 689 Streling Pounds.

In January 1877, the completed building of the Colombo Museum was declared open by His Excellency, Governor Gregory, in the presence of a large crowd, amongst which there were many Muslims present. At the end of the ceremony His Excellency asked Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar what honour he wished to have for his dedication. The same question was asked by His Excellency from the carpenter who assisted Wapchi Marikar with the wood work of the Museum who desired a local Rank and was honoured

accordingly. Wapchi Marikar, noticing the large number of Muslims present, feared that they would spend their time at the Museum on Friday during the Islamic congregation prayer, and requested that the Museum be closed on Fridays. This request has been adhered to by all authorities in charge of the Museum to this day.

When the throne of the last Kandyan King was to be exhibited at the Museum, the then Prime Minister, Mr. D.S.Senanayake, obtained the consent of **Sir Razik Fareed**, Wapchi Marikar's grandson, to keep the Museum open on the intervening Fridays only.

Endowed with wealth, **Wapchi Marikar** contributed to the development of his communities welfare, religious, economical, social, and educational needs and searched for more avenues and opportunities to help them in every way possible. He resided in the vicinity of Marakkala Palliya Watta, the present Maradana Mosque grounds and patronized the mosque. His family residence was acquired by the state for railway extensions thus compelling him to build a large house at Vauxhall Street where he moved in subsequently. He continued to contribute towards the development of the Maradana Mosque by being a prominent member of the congregation. He also joined hand with and financed **M.C.Siddi Lebbe**, from Kandy, who started the Muslim educational movement in 1880.

**Siddi Lebbe**, in his "**Asrarul A'lam**" on page 199 writes,

"I have two friends in Colombo, one who takes great interest in educational matters, opening up schools and spending liberally his money is **Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar** philanthropist, who comes forward to spend in all good causes. The other is **Ghulam Mohiyadeen Sahib Bahauddin** of Tanjore (Kashwat Alim)".

**Wapchi Marikar** and **Siddi Lebbe** set about looking for a place to establish a school for the Muslims and eventually selected the abandoned portion of the Maradana Mosque grounds. Since Wapchi Marikar was, at that time, the Vice President of the Management Committee of the Maradana Mosque, he urged the committee to grant a lease of the land in order to build the school.

A society, called the "**Jamiyathul Uloom**" (Muslim Educational Society) was thus formed.

**Wapchi Marikar**, at his own cost, erected a building for the school and also built four houses that would be rented and the income utilized for the maintenance of the institution.

During this period, **Wapchi Marikar** was involved in the construction of Masjid-E-Careem at 4th Cross Street, Pettah, for **Carimjee Jafferjee**. At his request Jafferjee contributed money for an additional building at the Maradana Mosque grounds for the cause of Muslim education.

When the Kuppiyawatte burial grounds was given to the Muslims (Crown grant 3325 dated 18-8-1879), a condition was laid down by the Government that a boundary wall must be erected within three years of that date. The Mussalman's United Assembly had insufficient funds and approached Wapchi Marikar who negotiated with Careemjee Jafferjee for building the wall in exchange for a portion of land for use of burial of the dead of the Borah community.



When the Muslims of Ketawallamulla needed a mosque they approached **Wapchi Marikar** who bought a house at Clifton Lane and converted it into a mosque. **A.L.M. Meera Lebbe Marikar**, who lived opposite the mosque, was made the Trustee. **M.L.M. Ahmed**, JP of Ahmed Brothers, 3rd Cross Street, Pettah, is the son of **A.L.M. Meera Lebbe Marikar**.

The school building was finally completed and Madarasahul Zahira ( Zahira College) began to function. **Arabi Pasha** conducted the opening.

The houses constructed for the purpose of revenue for running the school were acquired by the government in 1906. Using the compensation received from the acquisition, **Wapchi Marikar** built a row of houses facing Darley Road, presently T.B.Jayah Mawatha.

**Wapchi Marikar** was also the Treasurer and Manager of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society.

In 1907, **Wapchi Marikar** was relieved of the burden of management and Advocate Abdul Cader was appointed as Manager of Zahira College. However, Abdul Cader had to relinquish his position on account of relocating himself to Batticaloa in the Eastern Province.

An address presented to **Wapchi Marikar** by the Moors (Muslims) of Colombo in 1907 reads as follows:-

**ARASY MARIKAR WAPCHI MARIKAR ESQ.**

**The late Manager of the Muhammadan Boys' Maradana School, Colombo.**

**(MADARASATHUL ZAHIRA)**

Sir,

We, the members of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society, have the pleasure of conveying to you our warm appreciation of the work done by you, with zeal and energy, in managing the Muhammadan Boys' Maradana School for the last fourteen years; and of expressing to you, on your retirement from the said managership, heartfelt and sincere gratitude, on our own behalf and on behalf of the Muhammadan Community of Colombo, for the said work as well as for the pecuniary assistance generously rendered by you for establishing the said school to impart religious and secular education to the Muhammadan youth of this country; for your liberal endowment towards its upkeep; and for your enthusiastic cooperation with which we have so long controlled and conducted the affairs of the said institution. While announcing our hope that you will find health and strength to continue to cooperate with us for long, as a member of the Treasurer of our Society, in conducting the said affairs for the future, we beg to state that we have resolved to place in the upper storey (which will, in the future serve the purpose of a Muslim Reading Room or Library and Lecture Hall) of the new wing of the Madrasah, which has now been constructed through your enterprise, an enlarged photograph of yourself as a memento of your benevolent acts.

In conclusion we pray that Almighty Allah may be pleased to grant you long life, good health, happiness and prosperity.

**Yours affectionately,**

**Cassim Lebbe Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar**

**President Colombo Muslim Educational Society**

(Uncle of the late N.D.H. Abdul Caffoor)

**1. Muhammad Ismail Abdul Rahman Mudaliyar (Trustee Maradana Mosque 1902)** (Father of A. Cader A. Raheman)

**2. M Abdul Cader, Advocate, Jaffna**

**3. Colande Marikar Meera Lebbe Marikar (VP & Treasurer, Maradana Mosque)** (Father of M.L.M. Reyal)

**4. Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez (Trustee Maradana Mosque 1903-1913)** (Father of Rishard A Azeez)

**5. Sulaiman Lebbe Noohu Lebbe (Trustee Kuppiyawatte Burial Grounds, 1903)** (Grandfather of M.U.M. Saleem)

**6. Ismail Lebbe Marikar Muhammad Usoof Alim (Katheeb, Maradana Mosque)** (Father of M.Y.M. Hamza)

**7. Oduma Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Alim** (Father-in-Law of W.M. Hassim, JP)

**8. Wapu Marikar Abdul Jabbar (Treasurer, Maradana Mosque)** (Father of A.J.M. Jameel)

**9. Assena Lebbe Muhallam Segu Lebbe (Katheeb, Maradana Mosque)** (Father of S.L.M. Hashim)

**10. Aboobucker Lebbe Marikar Oduma Lebbe Marikar (President, Executive Committee, Maradana Mosque)** (Brother of A.L. Ibrahim Lebbe)

The descriptions of the signatories are later interpolations for better understanding of the persons involved in relation to presently known persons amongs the Muslim Community.

In 1907, **Wapchi Marikar** built, at his own cost, an extension building to the existing first school building. A section of the Educational Society collected a sum of Rs. 12,750 and entrusted it to **Wapchi Marikar** for the construction of houses along the street adjoining the New Olympia Theatre in Maradana. Unfortunately, the Colombo Muslim Educational Society did not function for very long and it became incumbent on Wapchi Marikar to manage the affairs of Zahira College all by himself as a single individual using his own personal finances and the welfare of some other Muslim philanthropists.

Finding the income from rents of the Darley Road properties insufficient to manage the school he offered the income from his own properties at Wellawatte to augment the revenues of Zahira College. In 1921, being physically unfit to attend to the daily affairs of Zahira College, **Wapchi Marikar** discussed the matter with two of the members of the

now defunct Education Society and handed over the management to the Maradana Mosque.

He was a devout and pious Muslim who built, served and developed mosques spending liberally for all religious affairs. His maxim was "**cut ones coat according to the cloth**". He passed away on May 14, 1925 at the ripe old age of ninety six. His only son was the Hon. **W.M. Abdul Rahman**, M.L.C. and his daughter was **Mariambu Natchar**.

### **Hon. W.M. Abdul Rahman 1868-1933**



W M Abdul Rahman, was born at Colombo on 26-Mar-1868, educated at the Government School at Gasworks Street and later on at Wesley College, Colombo. He was the only son of Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar and the apple of the old mans eye. To a few of Wapchi Marikar's close friends, among the elite, who attended the naming ceremony of his beloved son, he whispered while he proudly took the little infant – snug in the silk cushion – in his arms, "I expect him to carry on after me in my service to my people – Allah is Great!" A leader to follow his father was thus born in the lap of luxury and affluence. The fond father, imbued with an inherent zeal to ensure continuity of service towards the progress of the community, earmarked his beloved son for this noble purpose. His own son was a more certain guarantee to fulfil this mission rather than dependence on others, however cooperative. Though brought up with a silver spoon young Abdul Rahman had a flair to study in the "School of Life" rather than graduate in an academy of Instructions. He was admitted to the Government School at Gasworks Street, Pettah, for his early education. Here, he mixed freely with his colleagues who hailed from various strata of society – the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak. His free association with all classes of students, his inquiring disposition whenever he found a friend unhappy or distressed, and his ready willingness to extend his generous hand of fellowship when needed, drew towards Abdul Rahman a large circle of friends. They rallied at his calls, knowing such calls were purposeful, though at times mirthful. The youngster Abdul Rahman grew up acquiring slowly but surely the knowledge of humanity – their joys and sorrows among his young company of students. Subsequently, he was moved to attend high school at Wesley College. Here, Abdul Rahman, came into direct and profitable contact with contemporaries of the time.

Abdul Rahman joined his father's building enterprise in 1888, where at the young age of 20 was involved in the construction and management of such gigantic projects as the building of the GPO at Colombo Fort, the Colombo National Museum at Cinnamon Gardens and the Colombo Eye Hospital at Ward Place. These grandiose structures of construction still stand tall in the new Millennium proving the caliber of the master builder and construction magnate of that ancient era. In 1900 Abdul Rahman was nominated to the Legislative Council as the Muslim member. In his honor the Moor's Union hosted a dinner party presided over by **Abdul Azeez**. He died on 6-Apr-1933 and was buried at Kuppiyawatte Muslim Burial Grounds, Maradana.

On November 14, 1902 a Committee of the Legislative Council was appointed to consider the treatment of criminals. The committee comprised of Hon A.J. Lascelles, Attorney General, Hon Loos, Hon H.H.Cameron, Hon H.L. Crawford, Hon S. Bois, Hon W. M.Abdul Rahman. Another committee was appointed on January 23, 1903 to consider the Customs Duties Amendment Bill. composed of the Attorney General, Auditor General, the European Member, the Mercantile Member, the Principal Collector of Customs and the Muhammadan Member, the **Hon. W.M.Abdul Rahman**.

On February 10, 1943, **Abdul Rahman** supported the enlargement of the Executive Council in the Legislative Council. On December 15, 1905 the Attorney General moved that the bill for the consideration of the Tariff amendments be undertaken by a committee consisting of the following:- Attorney General, Auditor General, PCC, Hon J.Ferguson, Hon M.F.Walker, **Hon Abdul Rahman**. On November 22, 1906 the hon Treasurer moved that the following sub-committee be appointed to reply His Excellency the Governor's address: The Hon Treasurer, Hon Director of Works, Hon Registrar General, Hon Low Country Sinhalese Member, The Planting Member, The Hon General European Member, and the Hon **W.M.Abdul Rahman**, the Muhammadan Member.

On December 12, 1906, in the Legislative Council, The Hon member for the Muhammadan Community, **Hon W.M.Abdul Rahman** expressed the condolences of his community at the death of Sir Alexander Ashmore, the Colonial Secretary. On February 10, 1909, the **Hon W.M.Abdul Rahman** opposed the expenditure of large sums of money on the lake Scheme from Loans on account of many other urgent works that were of higher priority and were being kept in abeyance.

In the Legislative Council, on February 25, 1909, **Hon W.M.Abdul Rahman** desired that His Excellency the Governor should have the power to appoint deserving members in Government service to some of the higher posts without having to take competitive examinations. He claimed that it was unfair to expect senior Government servants to compete with boys fresh from school.

**Abdul Rahman** was a member of the Agricultural Society, Orient Club, Ceylon Turf Club and Liberal League. He was also the Vice President of the Social Reform Society and a keen supporter of sports. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Maradana Mosque and the President of the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society Ltd., Muslim Spiritual Society and the Moor's Sports Club.

In 1905 a massive public meeting was held at the Maradana mosque grounds to protest against the action of the Supreme Court in refusing to hear **M.C.Abdul Cader** address the court as an Advocate because he wore a Fez cap, the national headgear of the Ceylon Moors, on his head. The **Hon W.M. Abdul Rahman** presided at this meeting. Subsequently permission was granted by the Colonial Secretary for Muslims to wear the Fez cap in

court provided they also wore the long black coat which they normally wore at ceremonies.

In 1912 **Abdul Rahman** presided at the mass meeting of Muslims to protest against the Italian invasion of Tripoli, then ruled by the Turkish Sultan.

At an interview by a news reporter of the "Ceylon Independent" in 1917 **Abdul Rahman** said,

**"English education among the Muslims was at a low ebb and considering the population the percentage of really educated men was awfully small. We have the Zahira College, started about twenty six years ago by my father...."**

**"... and there is every possibility of enlarging the building, mproving the school by the addition of a Science Laboratory and employing a larger and more efficient staff of teachers ...."**

Speaking on the conditions of the Ceylon Muslims, **Abdul Rahman** said,

**".. it was deplorable. The apparent prosperity of the people was due to the fact that they possess ancestral property on which they live at ease. There was great competition in trade now and the trade that used to be in the hands of the Moors is now shared with others. For the past seven or eight years a revival was noticeable and young Muslims were taking to the professions and the Clerical Service and evincing a greater interest in English education. If that was not followed up with energy, the Muslims, he feared, would, in another twenty or thirty years, be only rawers of water and hewers of wood".**

In 1924, **N.H.M.Abdul Cader** submitted a Bill to the Legislative Council for incorporating the body of the Maradana Mosque management. **Abdul Rahman** objected and suggested certain safe-guards for the congregation who are permanent residents of Maradana. his suggestions were included in the Bill.

**Abdul Rahman** passed away on April 6, 1933, leaving three children. One was **Sir Razik Fareed** and the other two were daughters, **Mrs. Razeena Mohideen** (wife of **Ghouse Mohideen**), manageress of the Muslim ladies College, Colombo and the first Ceylon Moor woman Justice of the Peace, and Mrs. **Rakeeba Fuard** (mother of **M.F.A.Jaward**, Private Secretary to Sir Razik Fareed).

According to a memo issued by the Department of Income Tax, Estate Duty & Stamps, dated Colombo, 29 january 1936, it is mentioned that an estate duty amounting to Rs 10,591.70 was paid in full on account of the estate of **Abdul Rahman** as per Estate No: ED/A 72 – DC Colombo Case No.6456 – **Hon Mr Wapchi Marikar Abdul Rahman** – Deceased

In the matter of the Last Will and Testament of the Hon **Mr Wapchi Marikar Abdul Rahman** of "Razeendale" Bambalapitiya South in Colombo, under Testamentart Jurisdiction No 6456, where **Abdul Rahman Abdul Razik** (son of Abdul Rahman and later referred to as Sir Razik Fareed), the inventory of the estate of WM Abdul Rahman was declared as follows:-

#### **MOVEABLES**

Amount in Imperial Bank of India	Rs	69.52
Amount due on promissory note dated 14 December 1927	Rs	3,000.00
Household furniture etc.	Rs	3,179.00
Rents outstanding at date of death	Rs	914.00

**Sub Total** **Rs 7,162.52**

**IMMOVEABLES**

1. Premises bearing assessment No.423 (formerly No.54) Galle Road, Bambalapitiya being Lot B in Plan No.610 in extent 1A.1R.7.54P  
Rs 35,000.00

2. Lot B of premises bearing assessment No 24/1 Temple Road, Maradana in extent 0A.1R.9.11P  
Rs 5,000.00

3. Premises Nos.713D/54, 713C/55, 713B/56, Third Cross Street, Pettah, in extent 0A.)R.1.57P  
Rs 25,000.00

4. Premises bearing assessment No 483B/55 (being a divided portion of Lot 10 of No 55 Kensington Gardens) presently 6 Foenander Place, Wellawatte, in extent 0A.1R.0P  
Rs 15,000.00

5. Premises bearing assessment No 30/14, now No 3 Turner Road Wellawatte, in extent 0A.0R.12.75P  
Rs 7,000.00

6. Mylagama Estate situated at Mahagalboda Megoda Korale of Waudawili Hathpattu in the Kurunegala District, North Western Province:

Bearing coconut	- 250 acres	
Coconut about to bear	- 25 acres	
Coconut young plantation	- 100 acres	
Paddy Field	- 25 acres	
Jungle	- 75 acres	Rs 87,000.00

7. Kahinda Kutikarambee Hena at Eriyagama in Yatinuwara, Central Province, in extent 3A.0R.25P  
Rs 1,000.00

8. Dandeniya and Dandenyahena situated at Nugawela in Pannil Pattu of Atakalan Korale in the District of Ratnapura, Sabaragamuwa Province, in extent 14A.1R.4P  
Rs 700.00

9. An undivided half share of 80 acres at Meepitiya in the Hiriyala Hatpattu of Ihala Visidekay Korale in the District of Kurunegala, North Western Province, value unknown  
Unknown

10. An undivided 5/6 share of 80 acres of land at Dompe in the Uda Pattu of Kuruwita Korale in the District of Ratnapura, Sabaragamuwa Province, value unknown  
Unknown

11. An undivided ¼ share of 777 acres 3R.23P at Kosgahakanda Atulugama Korale of Three Korales in the District of Kegalle, Sabaragamuwa Province  
Rs 1,000.00

12 An undivided 2/3 share of 0A.2R.29P Galapolakapalla Galapitiya situated at Bandarawela in the Mahapalata Pattu of Udakande in the District of Badulla  
Rs 1,000.00

13 Allotment of land in the Plan of David Dewapura in Wellawatte in the extent of 0A.2R.64P – to the value of Rs 12,000 (STRUCK OFF THE LIST)

14. An undivided 2/3 share of No 10 Temple Road, Maradana being lot No 10 Temple Road, Maradana beong lot No 8 in Plan of Chas Schwallie dated 25/9/1871 containing in extent 0A.0R.18.75P  
Rs 4,000.00

15 An undivided 2/3 share of No 38 Ward No 1306 Colpetty in extent of 0A.0R.6.15P according to Plan No 348 dated 30/7/1924  
Rs 4,000.00

16 An allotment of land marked Lot 9 and bearing assessment No 17, 19<sup>th</sup> Lane A situated at Wellawatte in extent 0A.0R.77.85P as per plan No 4118 dated 25<sup>th</sup> July 1933 by MJ Theideman, Surveyor  
Rs 12,650.00

**Total**

**Rs 204,632.52**

**Sir Razik Fareed Kt. OBE, JP UM (1893-1984)**



(Standing) (L-R) Al-Hajj. M.H.M.Yusuf.(born in 1911, d:Jun 2003 ), Mr. A. R. M. Saleem. (Snr) (born in 22/3/1904, d:9/10/1967). (Seated) Al-Hajj. Sir A.R.A.Razik Fareed. Taken at the Savoy Hotel London in the summer of 1934.

**Sir Razik Fareed**, was born on 29-Dec-1893 and educated at Madrasathul Zahira and Royal College, Colombo. He held the prestigious positions of President, All Ceylon Moors' Association, Member CMC, HR, Senate, First Member Colombo Central, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Pakistan. Gifted lands to establish Muslim Ladies College. Founder Member Moors' Islamic Cultural Home in 1944 and held the position of its first President. Established Maternity Homes in the City of Colombo and rural hospitals in predominantly Muslim areas. Died:23-Aug-1984

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### **Sir Razik Fareed's birth anniversary - December 29**

Sir Razik Fareed was born on the 10th day of Muharram 1312 (29th December 1893) at the Layards Broadway. He is the son of W.M. Abdul Rahuman and Hajara Umma his mother passed away when Sir Razik was only three years. He was the grandson of Wappichchi Marikar. He came into residence at 'Hajara Villa' Fareed Place, Colombo in 1915.

Sir Razik Fareed inherited from his ancestors the spirit of service to his community and country. Wappichchi Marikkar founded Zahira College Colombo, while Sir Razik founded the Muslim Ladies College two leading schools for boys and girls.

Sir Razik championed the cause of Sinhala - Moor unity and a united Sri Lanka, thus demonstrating that the interest of the Moor community and the welfare of all Sri Lankans were near and dear to him. In this respect he proved his sincerity by his relentless service to the Muslim community and the country. No wonder he was popularly known as the 'Uncrowned King of the Ceylon Moors.'



In 1930 he entered politics and was elected a member of the Municipal Council. He was a Senator and a Member of Parliament in a long political career capped by his appointment as a Minister in 1960. Later he moved into the diplomatic field and was Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Pakistan. He wanted the Muslims to be politically mature and that they identify themselves with national parties. He left the choice with the people in selecting the national party that they should support.

Muslims were elected as representative in majority Sinhala voter electorates like Borella, Akurana and Beruwala. The majority community reposed confidence in Muslims.

In 1946 Sir Razik was associated with Mr. D.S. Senanayake in founding the United National Party. He established the Muslim Ladies' College to give every educated Muslim boy and educated Muslim bride. Former principal of Zahira College Colombo Marhoom A.M.A. Azeez said that he would live in the history of our country as the 'Father of the Government Muslim School.'

Sir Razik was a person with a generous heart. He has spent much of his wealth on the poor without many knowing it. He served the community as president and later life president of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home (MICH) for more than 40 years. His



grandfather and father had done a great service to Muslim Community. In 1932 Marhoom Sir Razik was made a Justice of Peace and an unofficial magistrate.

Sir Razik Fareed lived with unity with other communities in this country. Sir Razik's father was a good friend with the Sinhalese Tamils and Burgher communities leaders. Sir Razik was example Sinhala-Muslim Ekamuthukama. He was good example today's Muslim politicians and follow the examples of Mahroom Sir Razik Fareed, Dr. Baduidin Mahmood, Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel and Dr. T.B. Jayah who made an effective contribution to the community and country. They lived with self-respect maintaining the dignity and well being of the community.

The late Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike said, "I regard Sir Razik not only as the leader of the Ceylon Moors but also one of the greatest Ceylonese Leaders."

A grateful community has established a foundation inspired by a sense of gratitude called the Sir Razik Fareed Foundation to foster and preserve for posterity the humble service rendered by him.

He passed away on August 23, 1984 at the age of 91.

'Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Illahi Rajioon'

M. Ruzaik Farook JP, President Sri Lanka Islamic Society

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**Sir Razik Fareed's 20th death anniversary is tomorrow:**

### **Flame that lit lives of thousands**

*by P. P. M. Saheed SO Aug 22 2004*



Twenty years ago today, a flame that lit the lives of thousands in this country was extinguished. But the light of the great are never really snuffed out. They continue to fire our spirit, our wills, give us courage, help us to sacrifice and continue to illumine every dark corner if our lives... as long as we continue to remember and honour that great goodness of soul that make such men unique.

This is why today, I stand in testimony to this great light and recall that surging spirit of a man who served his country so well, so ably, so dedicatedly. He was as Dr. W. Dahanayake called him, "the uncrowned king of the Moors of Sri Lanka." He was Sir Razik Fareed, a man so towering in mental stature, so noble in word and deed, that all honour sat lightly upon him and the minutes of his everyday moved in slow, measured tread, as though time itself passed and paused at his feet in order that he could make the fullest use of every ticking second.

**Acknowledgement**

I pen this note to acknowledge him... not to merely remember him. We in Sri Lanka, will always remember. not only the Muslim community but the people of all races and creeds. We have all of us benefitted from this one life; and I may well quote Shakespeare in saying that this, indeed, was a man....." whence cometh such another."

His long years of national and community service are studded with many milestones. Member of the Central Muslim Youth Conference in 1913....Lieutenant of the Colombo Town Guard in the civil strife of 1915.....President of the All Ceylon Moors Association for nearly 40 years.....President of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home for over 30 years.....Founder member of the United National Party....Member of the Colombo Municipal Council for 16 years....Member of the then State Council and Senate.....Member of the House of Representatives for Colombo Central for three terms.....High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Pakistan in 1968.....President of the Ceylon Kennel Club.....President of the Ceylon Poultry Club and Orchid Circle.... steward of the Ceylon Turf Club.

He straddled the political scene of our country for over a generation and was also a distinguished member of the Peace Council of Sri Lanka. Above all, he put country first evidenced by what he maintained both publicly and privately many times over. When Great Britain wanted to give us our independence, he said:

Let us (Muslims) not think of our own selfish interests. We join hands with the majority community and we say we want independence: we want freedom for Sri Lanka". All his life, he also worked for the amelioration of the conditions of the Muslims of this country.

His doughtly efforts saw the establishment of schools for Muslims all over the island as well as Muslim Teacher Training Colleges at Addalaichenai and Aluthgama. He gave Muslim education the massive impetus that has put it in seven-league boots today, and furthermore he never detracted from his great vision of a united Sri Lanka - a nation of multi-racial, multireligious, multi-cultural unity where all communities lived in harmony, equality and peace.

Sir Razik Fareed was also the "Father of the UNANI system of Medicine in Ceylon." In paving the way for our independence he said on the floor of the House in 1945:

"It is our political sanctity if I may say so, and a sense of justice, that made us stand up and fight side by side with the Sinhalese in the course of obtaining Dominion Status". To Sir Razik, Sinhala-Moor unity - Sinhala Yonaka Ekamuthukama was almost an article of faith. He was, above all, a great bridge-builder between communities, and here, above all, in his loss felt most keenly.

Many of us remember Sir Razik as the last surviving Sri Lankan knight... for he was the link with British honours. But Royal conferment only served to emphasise the true nature of the man. He had been a true knight all his life with all those knightly qualities impelled him to serve, alleviate pain, ease the pangs of distress, set to right the wrongs of public and community life, defend the oppressed, succour the enfeebled, uplift the downtrodden.

I still remember with pride his words in his presidential address at the opening at the new building of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home in 1965:

"The island needs the close co-operation of all creeds and communities to develop its resources with patriotic zeal and, if need be, with sacrifice. This must transcend all other considerations. Let me therefore appeal to you and to all right-thinking citizens to sink all differences in the national interest and strive to make Ceylon a happier place to live in and die for. I exhort my fellow compatriots to remember what the Prophet of Islam meant when he said: Patriotism is part of the Faith."

When I consider the breathtaking arena of Sir Razik Fareed's life's, work I have often wondered how such frail shoulders could bear all they carried. This, to me, was the wonder of the man who my close personal friend for a great many years. Everyone's just battle became his own. He fought the British-owned Gas Company of Colombo a long time ago so that the city of Colombo be lit by electricity. He fought for the education of Muslim girls and set up the Muslim Ladies College, which is today one of the biggest educational institutions for Muslim girls in this country.

### **Fought for a cause**

What is more, he fought for the cause of the Moulavis - the Islam and Arabic teachers who were at the mercy of mosque trustees and earned a pitiful pittance of about Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 as salary. Sir Razik Fareed brought them into recognition as government teachers on par with the others, thus giving these skilled, erudite scholars a place in the educational sun.

This is only as it should be. Sir Razik inherited from his family, a love for education.

His grandfather, Wapiche Marikar, built and nurtured Zahira College and a number of Arabic schools in Colombo. Sir Razik Fareed's father, W. M. Abdul Rahman, was President of the Muslim Educational Society and superintended the educational progress of the Muslim community. This is the mantle Sir Razik inherited and wore with such grace all his life. He it was, who was instrumental in founding a Department for Arabic studies in the University of Peradeniya.

How does one measure the worth of such a man? It is said that the soldier is measured by his medals; the politician by his words; the artist by his canvas; the craftsman by his hands.

How, then, does one consider the worth of this distinguished son of Sri Lanka? As his friend and associate for many years, I have only one yardstick as I look around and see all who honour him on this his 20th death anniversary. I see the outpouring of love, of deep respect, and feel the keen sense of loss. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, this is how I would measure him: by the love he awakened in us, the respect he so easily earned, the admiration he commanded, the valour of his every action, the fortitude of his every earthly hour.

### **Association**

My association with Sir Razik Fareed, then (A. R. A. Razik) started in 1947, when I went to him to get a job as an English Assistant Teacher, which I received on the same day. This was a miracle. This association lasted till his death in August 1984 - a period of 37 years.

To him I was always "dear Saheed" or "dear M.P.M."

I recall with what great joy I congratulated him by letter on June 12, 1981, when he was honoured as a national hero of Sri Lanka. It was also then that I decided to put this tribute into more concrete form. I had already established a fully equipped meeting hall in Kandy to cater to the social and cultural needs of the Muslim community. What better name, I decided, than the Sir Razik Fareed Assembly Hall and so it was.

And so did hundreds gather at this hall on Saturday the 28th November 1981 to honour Sir Razik Fareed and acknowledge that if today, we as a community can raise our heads to be equal with all others, it is because of the single-handed efforts of this great and good man.

On that occasion my heart was too full for words. But I could say with prayerful conviction that this was a full man-living a truly Islamic life and devoting himself to the service of man... which ultimately is the one and only way to seek God as enjoined by all the great religions of the world.

Such then is the pith and substance of this man we never can forget. Generosity was the very nature of his being. He gave away all he had to the people he served, eventually living in a rented room in the last days of his life. And, like an intricately-cut jewel, many other facets of his nature gleamed and glowed and enriched all about him. His love for the beauty of nature led him to cultivate the orchid and learn the many enchanting secrets of the flower.

Even his home in Fareed Place, Bambalapitiya held a small orchidarium where trailing vandas and large-clustered dendrobiums where trailing stars in glorious profusion. How often have I seen him among his orchids, tending them along with his wife, Lady Ameena who shared his love for beauty.

It was Mr. Eric Garth of Kundasale, Kandy, who at my request, paid gracious tribute to Sir Razik in naming a new hybrid orchid he grew after Sir Razik. To this day, orchid lovers around the world see this clear blue flower with its deep-blue lipped sepals and know it as the Sir Razik Fareed....and so does a flower perpetuate his name.

This orchid was registered with the Royal Horticultural Society of England on 15-11-1984.

For us, however, he will always be as a flower in our hearts. Sir Razik Fareed was a beacon, a guiding light, a tower of strength, a fortress of courage, a champion that belonged not only to each of us individually but to all the nation and moreso, all the Muslim world.

It behoves us, surely, that Allah sends us such men with rare frequency and this, the, is our greatest joy - that we in our lifetime have seen the passage of such a man as this. May I conclude by recalling the words of Shakespeare.

"His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that nature might stand up and say to all the world: 'This was a man'"

Yes, this indeed was a man.... and, dear brothers and sisters, the mark he has left on all over lives will never be erased:

"Those who are not grateful to their Fellowmen will not be grateful to Allah" Nabi Muhammed (O.W.B.P)

### **The women who influenced Sir Razik's Family**

Submitted by Ms. F. S. Mahmood on February 13, 2008

Sir Razik and the Moors claim Arab descendency. But Lady Fareed is the daughter of a Nobleman who sojourned in this country and shared in the work of Ceylon Moors.

The Government archivist has document which is of Dutch origin, it is the Tombo. It was maintained under the Colombo Dissawany as long ago as the year 1766; details of Sir Razik's ancestry are itemized under the "head and Land Tombos of the four Gravets of Colombo." The extract of the document under reference contains the first name Segoe Paridoe.

The subsequent reference to this line of descent appears on 16th March. 1829 when a lady by the name of Thangachy Umma, by her application No. 1585, applied and was granted letters of administration on the even date. She was a widow, having been married to one Wapotchay. She applied for letters of administration as the administratrix of the property of her grandfather Mamouna Pille. The correct name is Mahmud Naina; (Pulle is only an honorific)

Thangachy Umma sold by deed No.1585 to one Moetatjie, wife of Asma Marikkar Segoo Pardoo of Colombo, a garden called Ambagahawatte for a consideration of £37 equal to 493 Rix Dollars and four fanams. Moetatjie Umma died intestate in 1859. Her son Segoe Paredoe Udema Lebbe Marcar applied to the District court of Colombo for letters of administration. This was application No. 3173 supported by M.F.G Morgan, Proctor, dated 17th August, 1866. This Application contained an annexure giving the names of 43 heirs of Moetatjie Umma which is filed of record. Among these names there appears the name of Sella Umma who was the widow of Aresy Marcar of Slave Island and she is named in the annexure as the daughter in law of Motatjie Umma. Aresy Marcar was Motatjie Umma's son. Yet another heir to these properties was Wapche Marikkar, grandson of Motatjie.

Mamouna Pulle referred to above was possessed of vast property. One such property was a land near the former Victoria Memorial Eye Hospital. This area, however, was earmarked under a scheme of widening of roads. It was acquired and the owner was promised compensation. It was agreed by the then Government Agent that he, his heirs or representatives should have a plot of Cinnamon land in the neighborhood. The present Dewatagaha Mosque stands on this land. Justice Berwick in District Court Case No. 61162 dated 15th November, 1873 affirms this compensation was agreed on in 1845 and on this land stood an old grave of Mussulman, which has since then come to be regarded as place of sanctity.

He further says

"it would seem that the administratrix Thangachy entered into possession of the ground with the consent Government Agent as an exchange for the land taken by Government and that from that time she and some persons not very well defined either in number or in their connection with the deceased Mamou Nayana, by calling themselves of his family or descendents began enhancing the religious character of the place and the

collection of offerings and the erection of those buildings which have at length become woven into the present Mosque, but evidently without any but a very vague and indeterminate system of management or responsibility or trusteeship. The usual history in such cases is that some particular old man specially either with the religious sentiments, or the constructive faculty having leisure and taste that way, expands his leisure and energy in what the neighbors look on as the laudable business while at the same time they leave him to work alone at his hobby till it has developed beyond all original contemplation and they step in and claim common credit for it, or, as in this case legal title."

The late A.M Wapche Marikar had two children by his wife Thangachy Natchia. One was a boy and the other a girl. His son was Named Abdul Raheman and his daughter Mariambu Nachia. Abdul Raheman Married Hajara Umma, elder daughter of Isubu Lebbe Marikkar Hadjar. They had three children, two girls and one boy. The girls were named Ummu Razeena and Ummu Rakeeba and the Boy Razik.

Sir Razik, when he came age, married the grand-daughter of Seyed Abbas, a member of the Dosh Sultan Family. This was a family great renown. Seyed Abbas was very pious. He was used to constant devotion to Allah. He died at Tharaweeh prayers in the Grand Mosque, New moor Street, while prostrating in Sujood.

Seyed Abbas married Muthunga Natchia or Magdoom Natchia, a sister of Naina Marikkar and father of Abu Backer, A.M. Thowfeek, a.M Shahul Hameed and A.M. Kudoos. Seyed Abbas had a daughter named Moomina Umma should marry her cousin, Abu Backer. But owing to a misunderstanding the proposal fell through. Her father, Aeyyed Abbas, looked for a pure Arab for the hand of his daughter. It was this time that Ibraheem bin Ahmed was carrying on successful silk shop in the premises known today as Bulgarian Hotel. Ibraheem bin Ahmed was from Arab country called Zabeedee. He was very prosperous businessman and was investing large sums of money on immovable properties on either road facing his shop. A prominent figure among local Muslim circles, he joined in all their activities. He was very magnanimous with his offers of help for the educational movement, for Zahira College and Hameedia School.

Seyed Abbas married his daughter Moomina Umma to Ibrahim bin Ahmed, a nobleman of Arab descent. A beautiful daughter, named Amina Umma was born to him. She was destined to become the wife of Sir Razik Fareed in 1913. He was the envy of many suitors.

Ibrahim bin ahmed's nephew (his siter's son) Abdulla Seyed Mohamed Dawood Al Battah is a Quazi in Crater.Aden. He is very regular correspondent with his cousin, Lady Fareed. Amina Umma or Lady Fareed has a genealogy extending right up to Mohammad (Sal) and her genealogy is given below

Sir Razik, by this marriage, had one daughter whom he named Hajara. Unfortunately, she was destined to die early.

Source; - SIR RAZIK FAREED

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## **A M SHERIFF of Kattankudy**

The Eastern Province of Sri Lanka is the most thickly populated Muslim area in the whole Island. To these Muslims, "ILM" (knowledge) meant the study of Arabic and Tamil, which was their mother language. A few Muslims from this region also studied English and AM Sheriff was one of them. Besides mastering the Arabic and Tamil languages he also studied higher English and qualified as a Proctor of the Courts.

In 1890, Colombo was in need of Muslim lawyers and Sheriff was invited to settle in the capital and complied with the request. In 1899, the Mohammedan seat in the Legislative Council fell vacant and at that time ZH Mantara, a Malay, had been enrolled in as an Advocate. Muslims divided into three groups and supported the candidature of the above, with the third being BW Bawa, for the seat in the Legislative Council. Bawa was the son of Ahmadu Bawa, a Galle Muslim, who qualified as a Proctor and was practicing in Kegalle and Badulla Courts. He had written a paper on the Marriage Customs of the Moors which was sent for publication to the Royal Asiatic Society Journal. The theory of Ahmadu Bawa was that the Moors did not know whom they married until the bridegroom was led into the bridal chambers and that there was no courting or dating before marriage. The view of Moors is that they love the girl they marry, known or unknown, rather than marry the girl they love.

Ahadu Bawa's wife, mother of BW Bawa, was a European lady and hence there was no wholehearted support for BW Bawa. As for ZH Mantara, the argument raised against him was that he was only a young rising Proctor from a small minority Malay group within the Muslim community.

AM Sheriff was well versed in Tamil and his knowledge of Arabic was much above the regular average Arabic speaking Alims of that era. He was on par with MC Siddi Lebbe in many ways. He had access to Arabic works of eminent theologians and jurists of the Muslims of the past. He was in touch with the publications issued from Cairo, Egypt and Turkey. He made a comparative study of all the various sects in Islam. He also conducted religious classes at Sheikh Abdul Cader's (Bakala Sahib) house at Old Moor Street in Colombo.

Sheriff's candidature for the vacant Mohammedan seat in the Legislative Council was found acceptable and the Government nominated him. He was given a large house at Grandpass and a carriage driven by two horses and sometimes even four horses in order to attend the Council meetings and other official duties. Owing to ill health he gave up his duties in Colombo and returned to Batticaloa in 1900.

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## **Amir Arslan SHERIFF**

**J .P. Attorney-At-Law / Former City Coroner 1927-2009**

To the greater Colombo region he was known as Amir Arslan Sheriff, to us he was our dear "Grumpy," a commanding personality who earned much respect and authority and yet a man who lived a simple life never losing the common touch. Our dear grandfather lived a fruitful eighty-two years and sadly passed away at home on Friday, February 13, 2009. The memories of him are manifold. His life as a politician and Attorney-at-Law inspire us and invoke our admiration. But it was the little things that touch our hearts - the

way his face lit up when we visited him or the pride in his voice as he spoke of his grandchildren. The proceeding is an appreciation of his life.

### **Family**

Amir A Sheriff was born and raised at No. 7, Mutwal Street, Mutuwal. Dissatisfied with the fact that his street name had no meaning, he later moved a Motion in Council to re-name it "Muthuwella Mawatha" (street by the sea) during his professional career. Born into a family of 4 brothers & 5 sisters he was the youngest son of Cassim Sheriff who served in the Postal Department of Colombo as an Accountant for nearly 42 years during the British regime. His three older brothers were Ex-Servicemen, retired Government Servants, and Ex-Justices of Peace. The late Sir Razik Fareed, for whom Amir executed the Last Will and Testament, was closely related to his mother, Sithy Zavahira.

### **Background:**

### **Educational**

He was educated at Ananda College Colombo, where he excelled in academics and extracurricular activities. He was the Junior President of the Literary and Debating Unions, not realizing at the time that this would mark the start of a successful career in Law and Politics. Upon completing his A/L's, he began employment as Postmaster and Signaller Class II, a Permanent Government Servant, at the Department of Inland Revenue. Late Mr. J.A.R. Felix, Commissioner of Income Tax at the time, saw much talent and scope in the young Amir and encouraged him to resign from his government post and follow his dreams by pursuing a career in Law. Amir Sheriff entered the Colombo Law College, where he became a member of the Ceylon Law Students Union and the Association of Muslim Majlis. In addition to his academic excellence, Amir Sheriff was also an all-round sportsman. He was the President of the Colombo Football League and a member of the C.F.A Council. He even served as a Part-time Play Ground Instructor for the C.M.C.

### **Heights:**

### **Professional**

**&**

### **Political**

### **Accomplishments:**

In April 1957, Amir Sheriff fulfilled his dreams by completing Law College and registering as a Proctor of the Supreme Court. He proceeded to register as Solicitor U.K. in 1964. His professional career as an Attorney-at-Law & Notary Public in Colombo spans over a period of 50 years, during which time he was appointed as Justice of the Peace in 1960, J.P.U.M. and Inquirer of Sudden Deaths (City Coroner, Colombo) in 1975. He also acted as Municipal Magistrate in Colombo. As he progressed in his career, Amir Sheriff received several Semi Judicial appointments; he was appointed on the Panel of Judges of the Industrial Court, as President of the Motor Transport Tribunal, Member of the Hospital Committee of the Colombo General Hospital, and member of the Public Assistance Committee of the C.M.C.

Amir Sheriff's professional career as an Attorney-at-Law led him to enter the political arena. He did so at the time Hon. Dudley Senanayake was Prime Minister of Sri-Lanka. Amir Sheriff was elected as member of the Colombo Municipal Council (C.M.C) in 1965. His was a sweeping victory; as an independent candidate, he defeated candidates of leading parties despite the fact that at the time Aluthmawatha Ward No.4 in the C.M.C was predominantly a Sinhala-Buddhist Ward, where the Catholics were equally strong and the Muslims were only a minority. He served as Member of the C.M.C for over a decade, holding various Chairmanships in Law and General Subjects, Sanitation and Markets, Housing and Town Improvement.

### **Community**

Being a devoted Social Welfare Worker inter alia, he was designated as Hon. Manager of

### **Service:**



the Deaf Club, an institution that promoted "Recreative Sports" for the Deaf. He further rendered his service as an active Member of the Prisoners Welfare Association in Colombo.

Amir Sheriff's tenure as a Member of the CMC was well spent. He worked towards improving the living conditions and infrastructure of Colombo North. He moved a Motion to grant an extension of the Madampitiya Muslim Burial Grounds by approximately an acre. This was duly seconded, and with the unanimous support of all political parties, it was finally approved at the General Council Meeting in October 1969. He then proposed to make the Non-Muslim General Cemetery more accessible by widening the road between Madampitiya and Mahawatte. This was facilitated by donating eight perches of land belonging to the Muslim Burial Ground to the C.M.C free of compensation.

He worked to enhance the educational facilities for the under-privileged. At the time, the Hamza School was the only Muslim school in Colombo North and consisted of a makeshift un-authorized structure that did not have enough capacity to accommodate all under-privileged Muslim children of the region. Amir Sheriff presented a proposal for the establishment of a State School in Mattakkuliya, to the then Minister of Education, Late Hon. V. Dhanayake, which was accepted and notably, today Zahira College stands as a government school in silent testimony to Amir's efforts. He ensured that the school was provided with free books from the C.M.C by obtaining approval for a state grant.

He continued untiringly to serve the Muslim community of Colombo North. As Chairman of the Mosque Building Committee, he helped on expanding the Mutwal Jumma Mosque, built four houses and two garages for Mosque maintenance, and was instrumental in facilitating the Mosque to be provided with electricity. It was his vision to have a Mosque at the Henamulla Camp in Madampitiya where the downtrodden Muslims live. On his invitation, the late Hon. Dr. B. Mahmud laid the foundation stone for this Mosque.

Whilst being the President of the Ceylon Moor Youth League, he was invited by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (an organization based in Budapest, Hungary) to represent Sri-Lanka at the World Youth Forums held in Vienna (1959), Moscow (1964) and Egypt to promote peace and friendship amongst youth in the world. Further, Amir Sheriff served as Vice President of the All Ceylon Moors Association, Deputy President of the All Ceylon Muslim League Youth Front, Chairman of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home Building Fund Committee and as a member of the Board of Trustees of the M.I.C.H. from its inception to his retirement.

### **Conclusion**

His career was successful, his service to our community was abundant, and his role as "grumpy" is unforgettable. He leaves behind his wife Zehra and children Dinazarde, Cherahzarde (Lankavacations Ltd), Amer Azad, Farah Umareen, and Ahamed Yousry. Inna Lillahi Wa Inn Ilaini Rajjoon...May Allah grant him Jennathul Firdous. Aameen! (Fondly remembered by his granddaughters Alia, Sameera, Sameeha, Maria, & the grand sons Sajed-Ali, Altaf, Sabir, Aman, Amir, Akif, Abdulla, & Abdulrahman)

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**CASSIM SHERIFF**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen052.html>

**Cassim Sheriff** of Mutuwal in Colombo North was popularly known as "**Budda**" Sheriff Nana amongs the Muslims. His father was a textile trader from Beruwela, who, during his early years, settled down in Mutuwal. The latter and Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel's father, Casie Lebbe, were first cousins.

**Cassim Sheriff** was employed as a sorter of mail in the General Post Office, Colombo, where he served for 42 years and rose to the position of Accountant at the time of his retirement. During his period of office he indulged in living a very frugal life, and, with the monies saved, he invested in real estate in the area where he resided. These properties were valued at Rs. 75,000 at that time.

He maintained a very high standard of honesty and integrity and the people of the area loved and respected him. In his own way he made generous contributions towards many charitable causes and was very helpful to the people, especially his tenants who found him to be a very sympathetic landlord. He was elected President of the local Mosque congregation. He was also a pioneer in the cause of education for Muslim girls and ensured that his own daughters received their basic secondary education, which was not favourably looked upon by Muslims of that time.

**Cassim Sheriff's** Father-In-Law, knwon as "**Kochika**" Shamee Nana hailed from Hambantota and was engaged as a transport contractor for the Government. He was the owner of real estate at dawson Street, Slave Island, opposite Colonial Motors. His eldest Brother-In-law was known as Shelton Saly Nana and he was a co-palintiff with H.A.B.M.Misbah in the famous Maradana Mosque case in which the late N.H.M.Abdul Cader was the respondent.

**Cassim Sheriff** died in 1934 at the age of 66 having been a Government Pensioner for almost 11 years. He had 14 children. His oldest son was also called **Cassim Sheriff** and was employed as a Probation Officer in the department of Probation Services.

**Cassim Sheriff** served for three years in the Public Assistance Committee of the Colombo Municipal Council. He was also the Chief Trustee of the Old Mosque situated in Mutuwal and Vice President of the Mutuwal Mosque Congregation. He also held several appointments in public organizations.

One of his sons, **Anis Sheriff** (1922) was the first Muslim to be the Deputy Mayor of Negombo Municipal Council and was also a member of the Western Provincial Council.

His youngest son, **Aamir Arslan Sheriff** is an Attorney-at-Law by profession, a Justice of the Peace, and a member of the Colombo Municipal Council since 1966, serving a predominantly Catholic Ward, which he won comfortably. He also served as City Coroner, Colombo, and proved a great asset to the Muslim community in expediting their deceased for immediate burial as per the Sunnah. **Aamir Sheriff** married **Sithy Zehra**, daughter of Mr. **Hameem Dastakeer** of Matara.

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## **JAMEEL SHERRIFFDEEN**

**Jameel Sheriffdeen** (ex SL Customs and Commonwealth Secretariat UK), d:29 Dec 2007, Colombo, Sri Lanka

29th December 2007 approximately 5 am brought to an end the earthly mission of this wonderful, hearty, warm hearted, broad shouldered, dignified man. He was dignified in life, dignified in death and brought dignity to his final resting place in a secluded corner of the Dehiwela Burial Grounds.

**SHERIFFDEEN MOHAMED JAMEEL** formerly of Sri Lanka Customs & Commonwealth Secretariat, London. Beloved son of late Sulaiman Sheriffdeen (Head Guard CGR) & late Ummu Habeeba, beloved husband of late Delrene, step father of Laureen Silva (UK) & Sherene Costley (Hilton, Colombo), brother of Haseena Azeez, late Thowfeek (Kurunegala), late Haneena Hassendeen (Kandy), late Ummu Razeena Jamaldeen (Gampola), Hafeela Hashim (Kolonnawa), Huzaima Gaffar (Mt. Lavinia), Prof. A.H. Sheriffdeen, Nawaz (formerly Petroleum), Suhada Hassen (Borella) & Inayath (Chicago). Funeral took place on Saturday 30th December 2007. No. 14, 1st Lane, Jambugasmulla Road, Nugegoda. INNA LILLAHI WAINNAILAIHI RAAJIOON. Family is grateful to all those who participated & helped in numerous ways. SO Jan 6 2008

He was:

- Jamo to his friends, Sinna Dorai to his siblings and Jameel Maama to everyone else
- a friend of the needy
- a benefactor of the helpless
- an upright citizen
- a loyal friend
- an ardent social worker
- a systematic manager
- an applauder of one's tiniest achievements
- an adherent of his religion who enabled and encouraged others to follow theirs
- a helpful neighbour
- an active sportsman
- a kind disciplinarian
- a faithful old boy of his schools
- a convenor par excellance of social events
- an exemplary team man
- a caring relative
- a true friend
- a benefactor to his subordinates
- a indefatigable sponsor of events
- a ready participant at these events
- a Patron of the family
- etc etc etc
- ..and we're all going to miss him so very much

Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'oon. May Allah grant our prayers for you to enter Jennathul Firdous

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**M A M SHUKRY**

**A salute from afar Tribute to Dr. M A M Shukri**

By Seyed Alavi Sheriffdeen, Naleemi, BA, M.Ed(Deakin) – Sunday Times Jun 22 2008

It gives me great pleasure to pen these lines for my teacher and mentor Dr. Mohamed Ali Mohamed Shukri (known as "Dr Shukri" in Sri Lanka). The long relationship I have had with this intellectual for over two decades inspires me to salute him as a loyal student and friend.



I met him first at Naleemiah Institute. I was a new student from a village and my admiration of Dr. Shukri was sparked from the first speech he delivered welcoming us to the institute. His outstanding intellectual capacity, melodious tone and eloquent lectures would attract anyone. Then in our mid-teens, we were very eager to listen to his speeches at morning gatherings at the institute.

Dr. Shukri would take us through an enjoyable academic journey which would touch the golden ages of those leading institutions with which he was associated. During class discussions, he would forget his supreme position of director, his authority, and the traditional gap prevailing in developing countries between students and teachers and mingle closely with us.

A ceremony to felicitate Dr. Shukri was held at the BMICH on June 21

In those days when we didn't know about the academic world, he would talk about top academic journals, authors, thinkers and modern thoughts. The glimpses I had through his presentations in our classroom discussions greatly assisted me when later I pursued my graduate studies in Sri Lanka and postgraduate studies at Deakin University, Melbourne University and Victoria University in Australia. Dr. Shukri's charisma and deep analysis with his presentations would touch us all. He is an erudite scholar, humble human being and inspiring mentor.

He was born in 1940 in Matara, Sri Lanka. He studied at St. Thomas College, Al Hamra College and Zahira College. He was fortunate to be guided by great people like A.M.A. Azeez of Zahira College, Prof. Imam of Peradeniya University, Prof. William Montgomery Watt (Emeritus Professor in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh) and Prof. Kailasapathy (University of Peradeniya).

He entered the University of Peradeniya and passed out with First Class (Honours) in 1965. He was awarded a Commonwealth scholarship to pursue his Ph.D in Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, UK (1976). Unlike many others, Dr. Shukri chose to return to his motherland rather than living a comfortable living in the West.

He functioned as head of the Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies at the Universities of Kelaniya and Peradeniya. When Naleemiah was in need of a person who could drive it to an international level, Haj Naleem identified Dr. Shukri as a person who would be ideal for the task. He took over Naleemiah's directorship in 1981, the year I entered Naleemiah. His appointment led Naleemiah along a steady path which many Islamic institutions missed out on, in Sri Lanka. The appointment of a person educated in the West has given a different paradigm to this religious institution.

Dr. Shukri worked very closely with Naleem Hajjar and guided Haj Naleem in many community welfare projects such as the Islamic Renaissance Movement or Iqra Technical Institute from which many poor students benefited for their higher studies.

One of the outcomes of their association was the international conference held in Naleemiah on the history of Muslims of Sri Lanka. A book on this conference was launched at the BMICH where former president J. R. Jayaewardene and Colvin R. de Silva were guests. Dr. Shukri has also authored about 15 books and contributed several research papers to learned journals and international conferences.

His contribution to the academic world especially to Sri Lanka should be appreciated by all. He has left a legacy of academic achievement in the education of Muslims and others that must be taken as a model by younger generations.

I wish him every success and a long healthy life to serve this country at this time of turbulence.

*The writer is a lecturer at Higher Colleges of Technology in United Arab Emirates*

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/080622/Plus/timesplus0022.html>

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## **SILAT**

Abdul Aziz Ismail Silat rendered yeoman service to the Memon Community in his capacity as General Secretary and later as Vice President and President of the Memon Association of Ceylon. A keen sports enthusiast he was instrumental in reviving the Memon Sports Club in 1962, becoming its first Hony General Seretary. He also introduced indoor and outdoor games, viz Badminton, Table Tennis and Carrom, at the Messenger Street premises of the Association. He is a Justice of the Peace for the entire Island.

Haji Osman Haji Ali Mohammed Silat, born in 1912, came to Ceylon in 1930. He started his early life by working for Aboobucker Kataliya and later opened a shop by the name of O A Mohammed & Company in Matara.

Haji Eliyas, born in 1939, started life working at his fathers company, O A Mohammed & Company in Matara. He then joined Habib Tayab & Company in 1962 and worked there till 1976. He then ventured into partnership with Alimiya Bapu, running two firms, Hussain Ebrahim & Company, an umbrella house. In 1992, after winding up the partnership with Bapu Elyas, he continued Umbrella House, a trading company with his only son Nafees.

He has been a Trustee of the Memon Mosque from 1976 to date (2006). He was the President of the Sunni Razvi Society for nearly 17 years. He served on the Memon Association Committe during the time of the Presidency of H A Cader. Hed also served as the President of the Faizan-e-Auliya and the Niaz Committee.

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## **SINNA LEBBE MAHMOOD Hajjar (1868-1940)**

Sinna Lebbe Mahmood Hajjar, born in September 1868, was the son of P.T. Sinna Lebbe, a wealthy merchant of Pettah. He received his English education at Wesley College. He studied Arabic under Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim who lived next door. He took

up to business with his younger brother S.L.Abdul Rahim. He visited several Muslim countries in 1883 accompanied by his Arabic tutor. Their first visit was to Egypt. They then proceeded to Istanbul. Subsequently they visited Makkah and performed the hajj pilgrimage and returned to Colombo.

S.L.Mahmood contributed a sum of two thousand rupees towards a sum of twelve thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees needed for the erection of houses for Zahira College.

Having made contacts with merchants in Arab countries, Mahmood Hajjar commenced exporting Ceylon produce and importing Middle Eastern products.

When the Muhammadan seat in the Legislative Council fell vacant in 1900 his name was submitted by a section of the Moors for nomination. He was the Secretary of the Jammiyathul Hameediah Educational Association which conducted the Hameediah School.

During his visit to England he visited Liverpool where Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam was carrying on Islamic propaganda and the British newspapers referred to him as a Singhalese Muslim.

Early Muslims who settled in Ceylon were of the orthodox Sunnat Jama'at. They followed the Shafi School of jurisprudence.

Mahmood Hajjar was a keen student of Islamic Mysticism and well versed in Arabic. The Moors lived in the Moorish quarter of New Moor Street and Old Moor Street and the surrounding areas. After the first World War some Moors like A.M.Wapchi Marikar, Haji Ismail Effendi, M.L.M.Ismail, S.M.L.M.Haniffa and a few others started migrating to Colombo South. many other Moors followed suit.

He was the Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, and was a prominent member of Salihu Thakkiya of Abdul Gani Bawa and President of the Jama-Athus Salihya Burda Majlis.

He was conferred the title of Justice of the Peace by the Government and also was on the Fez Committee.

He passed away on June 24, 1940 at the age of seventy two and was buried at Maligawatte. He had one son, Muhammad Yusuf and three daughters, Nafia Mohideen, Ameena Mohideen and Ummu Thahira Naina-Marikar

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## **SINNE LEBBE MARIKAR SAHIB DORAI**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen020.html>

**Sinne Lebbe Marikar Sahib Dorai** married **Ummu Hany Umma** on 18th October, 1851 (22 Dhul Haj 1267 H) at 47, New Moor Street, Colombo 14. They begot a son, **Ismail**, on 23 August 1854 (28 Dhul Qa'da 1270H). Ismail attended Verandah Arabic Quran School during the day and studied Tamil under a "Waathiyar" (private tutor) at night. The Arabic language attracted Ismail and he pursued its knowledge at Madrasa Arabic College and soon came under the notice of the Arab scholar Sheikh Usthazul Kamil Wal Arif Hadarath Abdullah ibn Omar Batheeb Al Yamani Hadaramiya Shibamiya.

## Sahib Dorai Haji Ismail Effendi



**Ismail** began to write Arabic literature after studying various Egyptian books and newspapers. His "silsila" (works) Genealogical Poems of the Shaikhs were highly applauded by his mentor.

On January 10, 1883 fifty five Egyptian exiles led by the famous Colonel Arabi Pasha arrived in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and Ismail's knowledge of Arabic proved extremely useful for interacting with them. He developed a close relationship with Arabi Pasha and the exiles.

**Ismail** commenced his business at No.7 Main Street, Colombo 12 with gems, jewellery and curios. He decided to perform the pilgrimage of Hajj and also visit some other Muslim countries. Several of his friends decided to join him in this adventure cum pilgrimage. They were **Yousoof Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar Hajjar** (later Haji, Effendi & grandfather of MHM Yousoof Haji), **Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Hajjar Zainudeen** (later Haji, Effendi MMC and paternal grandfather of Mrs. MMI Kariappar), **Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Shamsy Lebbe Marikar** (later Haji, Effendi and father of Al-Haj SLM Abdul Rahman and paternal grandfather of Rasool Ahmed Rahman), his Arabic student **Sinne Lebbe Marikar Mahmood** (later Haji, Effendi, Alim and JP, father of MHM Yousoof Haji) and a cook named **Rawuthen Hajjar**. They set sail for Egypt by SS Malwa on 27 March 1884. At Bombay, on May 7, 1884, they changed ship to an Austrian vessel, SS Austria-Hungary. They reached the Suez on 21 May 1884 where they met Saeed Haji bin Sultan Baba, a Sri Lankan who hailed from Galle. On arrival at Cairo they visited the residence of Arabi Pasha with letters to his family and friends. They also visited many important sites in Egypt. They then set off for Turkey where they were granted audience by **Sultan Abdul Hameed Khan** of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The historic event was reported by "**Al-Ihtidal**", an Arabic Newspaper, on Ramazan 11, 1302H (1884), of Istanbul (Constantinople), giving reference by name to the visitors who had landed on the shores

of Turkey. Special reference was made to **Sahib Dorai Ismail** as "***an individual of great learning.....who is learned in law and logic, and whose use of the Arabic language is refined and acceptable***". They later continued on their peregrinations and visited Madinah Al-Munawwarah, Palestine, Damascus and finally performed the pilgrimage of Hajj in Makkah Al-Mukarramah before returning home safely.

**Ismail** married **Haleema**, the daughter of **Ahmed Ali Marikar** of the Kappodear Family whose ancestors came to Sri Lanka from Koniya in Turkey around 800AD, on 27 July 1886, at 39, new Moor Street, Colombo 14. The wedding was also attended by Arabi Pasha and the other Egyptian exiles.

He was an important member of the Maradana Mosque Management Committee and the Colombo Muhammadiyah Education Society (Jamiyathul Ithikanul Uloom). Ismail died, at the age of 42, in a tragic train accident at the Wellawatte railway Station on 11, January 1896 (26 Rajab 1313H).

**Ismail** had two sons, **Muhammad Sameer** and **Muhammad Anis** and one daughter, **Sithy Saleema**.

#### **Travels of Haji Ismail Effendi in 1884**

*extracted from the archives of Mohammed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi bin Sahib Dorai  
(ex Chief Clerk Colombo Municipal Council, ex Trustee Colombo Maradana Mosque)*

The following account of the peregrinations made by Sahib Dorai Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim (born 23 August, 1854; died 11 January, 1896) - later SD Haji Ismail Effendi - in 1884, in the company of,

(i) Yousoof Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar Hajjar (later, Haji, Effendi), grandfather of MHM. Yousoof Hajji),

(ii) Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Haji Zainudeen (later Haji, Effendi, and MMC, grandfather of Mrs. MMI. Kariappar),

(iii) Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Samshi Lebbe Marikar (later, Haji, Effendi, father of SLM. Abdul Rahman),

(iv) Sinne Lebbe Marikar Mahmood (later, Haji, Effendi, and Alim, father of MHM. Yousoof Hajji) and

(v) Rawthen Hajjar (Cook).

This account, from the beginning to end of the journey in Istanbul, Turkey is now translated into English by Sithy Rameela Sameer (w/o AWM. Ghouse), the eldest daughter of Muhammad Sameer son of Haji Ismail Effendi.

May Allah be pleased with him!

8 January 1971

Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi bin Sahib Dorai



298, Bambalapitiya Road, Colombo 4, Sri Lanka

When I was young I was very anxious to travel in foreign lands but was helpless. Some Ulema taught me a little knowledge of the Arabic language. I read the Holy Quran and discovered that, based on several verses contained within it, people of the old days considered embarking on journeys and seeking knowledge and experiences an essential requisite for believers as follows:-

Quran Surah AnAm (6:11)

***"Say, Go about in the earth and see what was the end of those who treated the Prophets as liars"***

Quran Surah Yusuf (12:109)

***"Have they no then traveled in he Earth and seen who was the end of hose before them?"***

Quran Surah Naml (27:63)

***"He guides you in every kind of darkness of the land of the sea, and sends the winds as glad tidings"***

Quran Surah Ankabuth (29:20)

***"Travel in the earth and see how He originated the creation"***

Quran Surah Fatir (35:40)

***"Show Me then what they have created of the Earth"***

Quran Surah Moomin (40:21)

***"Have they not traveled in the Earth and seen what was the end of those before them?"***

Quran Surah Muhammad (47:10)

***"Have they not traveled in the Earth and seen what was the end of those who were before them?"***

Quran Surah Mulk (67:15)

***"He it is Who made the Earth, even and smooth, for you, so traverse through its sides"***

And, it is also revealed in many other verses, of the blessings and the esteem in life of undertaking journeys. Prophet Muhammad (Sal) and his followers traveled in other ands and, by this Islam was spread across the globe.

According to Imam Shafi,

***"To seek a position you must travel, from the place of birth, and you will know five things. First, you will get rid of your worries, second, ..., third, you will gain knowledge, fourth, you will learn manners and fifth, you will obtain the friendship of noble men."***

My mind never turned away from the thought of travel as my ambition was not fulfilled.

Late on, when Ahmed Arabi Pasha came from Egypt to Ceylon, we used to meet at his house and he used to talk about Egypt. Sinne Lebbe Marikar, his brother's son, Zainudeen, and Sinne Lebbe Mahmood were amongst us.

One day, Zainudeen told me that he wished to travel to Makkah to perform the pilgrimage of Hajj and also visit other places abroad. On another occasion, at Mahmood

Pasha Samy's house, when I was present with Sinne Lebbe I too indicated my desire to travel to Makkah. Mahmood Pasha was very pleased with me and indicated that only a few Muslims from Sri Lanka would embark on the pilgrimage on account of the majority of them being poor, especially in external affairs and manners. He said that it would be very useful if I would undertake this trip, travel beyond the seas, and learn about Islam. By this more Muslims in Ceylon would benefit from the knowledge and experience gathered.

I was very encouraged by such statements. I agreed with Zainudeen and joined Sinne Lebbe and started preparing for the journey. Shamsi Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar's son. Shams Lebbe Marikar also agreed to join us. Packeer Thamby Sinne Lebbe Marikar brought his son, Mahmood, along and asked us to take him along too. We also asked a cook, Rawthen Hajjar, to join us.

During our preparations, some Muslims who were jealous of this adventure, tried to convince us that the Afghans were against the British Government (Afghan war) and they were planning to attack British ships. Some of my friends changed their minds on these instigations of these half-educated Mullahs. Some even endeavored to mislead my friends through similar false statements. We ignored them and prepared for our journey, confirmed our date of departure by sea and requested a friend to obtain our tickets for the planned days. Some even attempted to influence this friend to tell us that no tickets were available. This disturbed many of us. Then Yousoof Lebbe Muhammad Lebbe Marikar (father of Zainudeen) volunteered to obtain the tickets for us himself and conveyed this good news to me which brought about some satisfaction amongst us. He was successful and we thanked him profusely for his assistance. Ahmed Arabi Pasha gave me some letters to be delivered to his family in Egypt and I had to conceal them inside my pillowcase for fear of being found out by the British authorities who had exiled him.

Many of our people, Muslims, friends, Lemmas and Khatheeb, accompanied us to the harbor on the day of our departure. We then boarded the Steamer SS Malwa. Our friends and family visited us on board until the ship set sail the next day, the 27 March, 1884., at 12:00 Noon.

Fearing sea-sickness we confined ourselves to our rooms. After about an hour we came out and watched the mainland going out of sight. The next day we saw nothing but the sea and sky all around us until we finally sighted the Malabar coast of India.

On April 1, 1884, we arrived at Bombay Harbor, and there, we saw thirty seven steamers, loading and unloading goods. We disembarked and went to look at the town. We saw many large buildings, high roads, and various different kinds of people, tramways, a kind of iron carriage pulled by horses, and buggy carts. There were also beautiful markets. In one of them, built with iron gates and having electric lamps, by which everything was illuminated, we saw a factory where silk cloth was made. Free access to the factory was not allowed. Yet, with the help of some high officials we were able to enter inside and inspect the factory. There were laborers, both male and female, about five hundred in all.

In Bombay we also saw Gahuwa (Coffee) Cafe Hotels where Arab merchants kept their businesses open till late at night. On May 7, 1884, we embarked the good ship SS Austria-Hungary, belonging to the Royal Company - Thabuk Steamer - and set sail once again.

For six days the sea was calm. We spent time enjoying the reminiscences of home. We bathed every day. We also conversed with Austrian passengers on board. On the seventh and eighth days the sea became very rough. We spent most of our time within our rooms. The next day we noticed the lights on the shores of the coast of Aden. We then entered the Red Sea and saw land on the other side. We also noticed the points of Muqa and Aukandry. From in between these two we also saw the tomb of Sheikh Syed Rahmatullah and supplicated Allah to Bless him. While passing through we witnessed land and mountains on both sides of the Red Sea. At one point we saw a huge rock called Dadloos. At night a lamp was placed on top of it in order to guide steamers. We noticed several ships wrecked, misguided by the rock. Passing this we saw another light, and then the African mountains; besides these we saw Pyramids, and, by their sides, Arab caretakers' huts. At another point we saw two pieces of land joined together with two mountains upon them. They were named after two brothers we were told. There is also a famous light kept on top of them.

After about a quarter of a mile, we crossed Mount Sinai (Thursina). We felt warm. We then approached the sea where the Pharaoh was drowned by Allah during the time of Prophet Moses (alaihiss Salam). The Arabs call this place Birka Pharaoh. Along the coastline we saw many lights and huts. On the morning of May 21, 1884, we arrived at the Suez Harbor.

The steamer was quarantined until the next day on account of sickness. On Friday, after receiving permission from the doctor, we were asked to leave the ship. We disembarked and unloaded our things. We left them with the cook, Rawthen Hajjar, with instructions to take them to Ahmed Effendi's house. Meanwhile, as it was a Friday, we engaged donkeys and hurried to the town for Jumma Prayers. However, we were very disappointed that we were late and the Jumma service was already over by the time we arrived at the Mosque. We then proceeded to the house of Ahmed Effendi, exchanged greetings, and had discussions with him. He dispatched a man to seek Rawthen Hajjar and bring him to the house along with our goods.

The next day, Saturday, 23 May, we went sight seeing and met Saeed Hajjar bin Sultan Bawa (a businessman from Galle). He handed me a letter, sent from Colombo, showing an account of us, that appeared in the Ceylon Times, depicting us as men against the Government of Ceylon. I indicated to him that this was the work of some jealous Muslims who did not approve of our journey overseas. We then took a train journey to Cairo. In the morning we visited a place called Khasrul-Ain. On Sunday we visited Ahmed Arabi Pasha's house. We met Ahmed Effendi Mathroos Ali, Mahmood Effendi Awmy, Ibrahim Araby, Haji Ibrahim Halby, and delivered the letters we had for them from Arabi Pasha.

On arrival at Arabi Pasha's house we inquired for and inquired for the Chief Occupier, Alim bin Araby. We were told that he had left the house. The servants hurried to inform everybody of our arrival. Two horse traps were sent for us to come to the palace. We were then taken by horse carriage to Syed Hussain Mosque, offered our prayers, made supplication to Allah, and proceeded to Arabi Pasha's palace.

On arrival we were received with great honour and were invited to stay. We were joined by Ahmed Effendi Mathru, his son, Ali Effendi Mathru, and his nephew, Muhammad Effendi Syed, and were taken on a sightseeing trip around. We visited the tombs of many great men. We also visited the School for the Deaf & Blind, where his nephew, Mohammed Effendi Syed, was a Teacher. During our stay in Egypt we were always accompanied by at least one or two of them wherever we went.

Arabi Pasha's sons, Ali bin-Arabi, Hassen bin-Arabi, & Ibrahim bin-Arabi, joined us several times. His daughter, Sithy Amina Hanum also came with us. Our friends, Muhammad Effendi Syed, and Syed Ali Effendi Mathru also accompanied us. They were always at our service and offered their services at all times.

The third day, Sunday, 24 May, at Noon, we hired two carts and went out sightseeing. We saw large buildings and palaces belonging to the Khedive of Ismailiya, Khedive brothers (Yunus Hassan Pasha's) palace. In this area there is a river called The Nile and over this river, a long bridge leads to the Nile Palace. There are two images of large Lions on either side of this bridge. Each day, after Dhuhar prayers (Noon), at One O Clock, the gates open for all ships to pass and at about two O Clock the gates are closed. Carts and animals run about day and night on this bridge which leads to many places, viz. Bulwark Railway Station, Iskandriya in the West, and Ayooth in the South. We visited many interesting places during the day and were visited by the Leaders of the town that evening.

We visited the tomb of Jaynambu, daughter of Ali (Raliallahuanhu), Sheikh-ul-Khusbir (Rahma), Sayed Rukiya (daughter of Ali Raliallahuanhu), Syed Sakeena (daughter of Hussain), Syed Athika (daughter of Abdul Muttalib), Syed Ali-Ul-Jawfer, Syed Murtala, Syed Nafeesa (daughter of Hussain), Imam Shafie (Ral) and his Companions on the next day, Monday 25 May. There is a large dome built upon the tomb of Imam Shafi the size of which we never saw anywhere else in Egypt. There were also many other tombs of learned scholars around Imam Shafi's tomb. In front of his tomb a golden pillar stands engraved with his genealogical tree.

We also visited the tomb of Abdul Hakan's sons, Abdul Rahman and Abdul Haleem the tombs of Shams princes, Muhammad Kamil (Ral), and Imam (Ral), who died on the day Imam Shafi arrived in Egypt.

We visited the Mosque of the King of Egypt, Muhammad Ali-Pasha, the next day, Tuesday, 26 May. It was a very beautiful place. On our way back we saw the tall Mosque of Sultan Hassen. Although it is an old building it had been maintained very well and looked very new. In it there are three hundred and sixty rooms. On our return we found many senior leaders of the country waiting to discuss with us. We had a short discuss with all of them.

The next day, Wednesday, 27 May, we visited several other Mosques and tombs of the Kings. On one the tombs we saw a dome as large as the one atop the tomb of Imam Shafi. Later we visited the Mosque of King Barkook. There, we saw a Mosque called Masjidul Kanka, where several learned Ulema lived. We discussed with them and were showered with their supplications to Allah for us and our travels. We also visited the tomb of the famous Ulema of Law and Theologian, Abiyul Bayyumi. Adjoining this tomb is the tomb of Kuwaisany Rahmathullah. They were both leaders of the Shafi school of thought. We visited the tomb of Sheikh Ul Kurdi (Ral), Ibn Abdul Raheem Damradah and his son, Abdul Raheem. We then traveled south to a place called Isbaki and visited a public park. It was beautifully decorated, there was a large lake in the center with boats for sailing. Close to this there were many Coffee Shops. We crossed a big iron bridge over this lake and tasted some Coffee from one of the Coffee Shops. We observed Salah and returned home to find more visitors waiting to discuss with us.

The next day, Thursday 28 May, we went along with Muhammad Effendi, Syed Ali Effendi Mathru, Ali bin Arabi, Hussain bin Arabi, and Sithy Amina Khanum (daughter of Arabi Pasha) to see the Pyramids of Giza. On our way we saw many paddy fields, date palms and large buildings. On arrival we visited a large palace built by Ismail Pasha. We had our breakfast in the palace and spent almost two hours inside it. We hired two persons and then went along to see the Pyramids. We had to climb high and saw a very deep well of which the bottom was completely invisible. We also saw a rocky room inside which was a blue cradle. We were told that the cradle belonged to the owner of the Pyramid. We also saw several curious objects and valuable antique furniture.

The next day, Friday, 29 May, we rose early, performed our Fajr Salah and attended the Jumma Prayers at a Mosque called Jamathul Azhar. On our way we saw the King of Egypt, Muhammad Thafeek Pasha, together with his Ministers, also on their way to the Mosque for Friday Prayers. He saluted them and they returned salutations to us. When we entered the Mosque we found many of the congregation reciting Surah Al-Kahf from the Quran. We joined them in this recital. After the prayers were over we had a short discussion with the Imam of the Mosque, Sheikh Hassan-UI-Saqqaf. When we returned we found many people waiting for us. Among them was the Imam of the Mosque, Sheikh Hassan-UI-Saqqaf. He told us that he saw righteousness in all our faces. He drank some coffee and offered us to drink the remainder. We obliged, kindly.

We spent time at the markets and purchased many things to take along with us. We then visited the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Aslam Sheikh Abbas Magdi (Rah). He was a man of around fifty years and was involved in teaching final subjects, viz.; Nahvu sa Fiqh Thafseer, Hadeeth, Haqaiq, Haulhaseth, Jalrafiya, and Thalimul Ilm. His Imam Mathhab, Imam Sheikh Ismail Hamdy, was seated next to him. He had several followers who all saluted and entered into discussions with us. They asked several questions on Makool and Namakool to which we replied. We also told them that in the event of any specific cases of religious disputes we would refer the cases to them and they gladly agreed to assist us. The Sheikh gave me a card with his name, address and contact information printed on it. He also took our addresses. On return home we continued discussions with several friends who were waiting for us.

That night, the fifteenth of Sha'aban, (May 30), the Mosque of Mohammed Ali Pasha was illuminated and the Qazi of Egypt, together with his followers, came to the Mosque for prayers. We joined them and then returned home.

The next day, Saturday, 31 May, we visited a place called Anthykkany that stands on the shores of the river Nile. It is a Museum. We saw several curious artifacts and images of the Kings of ancient times made out of red white and blue marble stones. We also saw the images of the gods these people worshipped during those times. Some had faces of humans and the body of animals. We also saw the mummified bodies of ancient kings that were preserved for almost five to six hundred years. They were all fresh and intact with not a bit of skin dried up or hair worn out. They were all kept in wooden boxes and on them were carved images of birds and the names of the kings. The writings were in a pictorial language which we could not decipher, known as hieroglyphics. We also saw the dresses of the Kings, six hundred years old, and worn out, and the bodies of fourteen kings who were known as Pharaohs who ruled Egypt in ancient times.

The first of them was the enemy of Moses (Alahis Salam), Pharaoh's great grand father; then his father and so on. However, we did not see the body of the Pharaoh who ruled during the time of Moses (Alahis Salam). We did see the body of his daughter. I touched

it and it felt dried and hard like stone. I also touched the hair on the hands of one of them and it felt like the hair on a living person. The images looked as if they were all staring back at us as some were with their eyes wide open. There were long boxes made of ivory with names engraved on them, lying besides the images, which we were told were the tombs of the kings. There were also the remains of several kinds of birds which looked as if they were ready for flight. We saw ancient jewelry that belonged to the Pharaohs and Kings.

The next day being a Sunday, 1 June, we did not go about anywhere. Many dignitaries of Egypt visited us at our abode and we spent most of the time in discussions with them on education. They were all well acquainted with the fight of Arabi Pasha and the Mahdi Sudan War. We suspected them to be Egyptian spies or detectives from the text of their discussions. We found out that they were Government Officials who were highly educated. We explained that it was not correct for Arabi Pasha to be exiled in Ceylon and they agreed with us. They spent almost three hours with us. We then went to a place called Isbakiyya where we were requested to attend a Mayndujily performed by French people. Arabi Pasha's daughter, Sithy Amina Khanon, accompanied us. We saw many curious feats and clever acts during the performance. People who witness such feats would never believe that humans could perform such clever acts. We then visited the palace of Ahmed Pasha Samy to see his children (Pasha was in Colombo at that time). They occupied the house of Adeela Khanon, the grandmother of Ali Pasha. They showed us the building, offered us coffee and had long discussions with us. They then introduced us to the two daughters of the Pashas, Sameera and Sataira. We were told that Abbas Pasha had been appointed guardian over these two minors and their property. We informed them of the health of Muhammad Pasha Samy. We also visited several other places and saw the Abdin Palace which was about a quarter mile long and a hundred feet high with several roads running around and through them. There was also an office of Muhammad Pasha Samy located within.

The next day, Monday 2 June, we prepared to leave for Tunis. We had to postpone our departure on account of the illness of Mahmood, one of our group. Hence we visited the Bazaar where we saw large shops belonging to both Muslims and non-Muslims. There were plenty of fruits and goods for sale. Yet there was not much business being enacted. Traders informed us that the Egyptian markets were even better than the markets in London ten years ago. We then visited a circus and saw many people dancing.

The next day, Tuesday 3 June, we went to the Egyptian Library at the palace of Darbul-Janamiya. On Wednesday, 4 June, we proceeded to Tanta with Ahmed Mathru and son, Ali Mathru, to visit the tomb of Ahmed Badvi (Ra). We missed the train at the station and hence decided to eat breakfast while waiting for the next one by which we went to several places, called, Kalyoob, Thook and Bauha. There were Mosques and Palaces, Bazaars and many different kinds of people everywhere as they are located on the shores of the river Nile. We then traveled to a place called Birkathusabu and then proceeded to Tanta, a city which belonged to Sadul Baduiy. We spent the night at a hotel after having dinner and a short spell of sightseeing.

The next day, Thursday 5 June, we performed Fajr prayers and visited a tomb that was enclosed in a very large building. The walls glittered like gold and they were also decorated beautifully. A stone stood at the right side of the tomb and we were told that the Prophet Mohammed (sal) stood on it. We kissed the stone, performed two raka'ats Sunna prayers and continued our journey. On our way out we visited a Mosque and talked to its caretaker who showed us that there were many saints buried around it. We

then proceeded to a place called Kafuruzayath. It was about half the size of Iskandiriyya. From there we went to Damanhud where we saw the tomb and Mosque of Abu Raysh (ral). The place was decorated beautifully on account of the visit of the Qazi of Egypt. We then proceeded to Thirathul Mahmoodiya and saw the place where Arabi Pasha fought. Then to a place called Malahath and then to Iskandiriyya. There were beautiful houses, roads, bazaars and palaces with various colorful lights. There were also many Mosques, Thakkiyas, Zaviyas and Coffee Shops run by Arabs. We visited many tombs and also the tomb of Busary author of Qaseedathul Burdah, the tomb of Abdul Abbasul Marsy and his son Syed Akhuthul Al-Arsh and also the tomb of Prophet Daniel. These tombs were maintained very beautifully and there was a Mosque there too. Iskandiriyya is really a very beautiful place. I used to be the Capita of Egypt at one point of time in its history. There were stations in the North, South and East. There was not a patch of land that was left bare and wasted. Large buildings and libraries were constructed outside the Fort. There was also a tall pillar, about one hundred feet in height, built by Sultan Iskandiriyya. There was also a large Mosque in the city which housed the library. There were three places known as Kiyman. One side was called the Fort where we saw the ruins of old buildings, pillars, and large stone pyramids. The pillar here was called Musilla but we were not able to find out who built it. There were several other pillars too. In the old days, whenever a king conquers a country he used to build a pillar of iron or marble, fifty to hundred feet high, and wrote their names and other information on them as a token of remembrance of their reign. This was called a "Musilla" and we saw many of them in the Egypt. We were also told that three such pillars have been sent to London, Africa and France.

The next day, Friday 6 June, we proceeded to Istanbul on board a Russian ship. The sea was very calm and the ship passed the huge Greek mountains. We saw the lights of the lighthouse at around 8 O Clock PM. The next day, Saturday 7 June, we saw the lighthouse of Anatolia situated on top of a mountain. On passing this we came to a place called Azmire and disembarked here around midnight. It is a city on the sea coast and a very busy one too. There were roads, buildings, shops, hotels, coffee shops, gas lamps and electricity. People looking at this city would believe that it was on fire. Having seen this place I could not decide whether Iskandiriyya or Azmire was more beautiful. We met a man called Usoof Effendi who was a teacher at a Government School in Tanta. He joined us for breakfast at a nearby hotel. We then hired two horsetraps and went sightseeing. We saw a road constructed by Puthiman Midhath Pasha, the General of Anatolia. It was a long road facing the sea. There were many hotels on the coastline and people on the shore could chat with people on board ships that were moored by the shore. There were twenty nine ships moored all along the side of this road by the shore. We went into the town and saw many shops containing silks, pearls, European goods, Chinese goods, and several other fancy items from various places. Cotton was exported from here and carpets were also manufactured in Anatolia. There was a factory that turned out linen cloth. Cotton threads, Felt Hats, Lakakaha laths and clothes, Medicines made from Opium, Zaitoon (Olive) Trees, Amber were all manufactured here. Several kinds of leather goods were also made here. We then proceeded to a beautiful Mosque called Sarjany. Within it Haji Mustafa (Rali) was teaching Hanafi Madhab rules. We discussed with him and he indicated that no one from any other country had ever visited him before. He then invited us to stay there with him for a few days as he found us to be interested in learning more about Islam. We could not accede to his kind request as our ship was due to sail the next day. Hence we returned to our hotel and returned to the ship the next day, Sunday 8 June. It was a very cold night and we had to don warm clothes and flannel socks before retiring to bed.

The next day, Monday 9 June, the weather was extremely cold and we were requested to stay in our rooms. Our brass kettles all froze into ice and we were unable to even touch them. The cold weather and winds lasted for two days until we arrived at Dardenels. From there our ship touched at a fort called Shimkhala. This port is used as a defense post by the Turkish Government. Here we saw twelve big War ships.

The Turkish newspaper, "Al Ihtidal" of the 11 Ramadhan, 1302 (1884), reported as follows:-

***"There are five visitors from Ceylon: Yusuf Lebbe Hajjar Sinne Lebbe Marikar Effendi, (Haji) Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Effendi, (Haji) Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Zainudeen Effendi, Sheikh Mahmood bin Sinne Lebbe Marikar Effendi Shamshi Lebbe Marikar Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Effendi, Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe Marikar (Haji) Effendi. They are people of repute in business in Colombo, Ceylon; in the neighborhood of India. They have come here on political and business purposes and will proceed to Hajj. They called at our office on Saturday last. This is a matter of great honour to us. They are people who extend to us their sympathies in our war with Russia. They have arrived in Istanbul, to be received by the Ameerul Mumineen (Sultan) in audience, after Jumma Service at Salemlik (Ceremony), and we pray that this blessing will be granted to them. There is, in this group, an individual of great learning, Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe, who is learned in Law and Logic, whose use of the Arabic language is refined and acceptable. They will be leaving shortly for Madinah, and from there they will proceed to Palestine and Damascus before going for Hajj. We are grateful for their visit and thank them.***

We pray that their Hajj will be Haj Mabroor (acceptable), and we pray that they will return home safely. May Allah increase this type of warriors to strengthen the cause of Islam."

We then left for Hajj and returned home by the Grace of the Almighty Allah.

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## **SAYANI**

The progenitor of the **Sayani** Family in Sri Lanka, Abdul Karim Yoosuf, was an enterprising young man who would not even hesitate to travel to Africa in pursuit of his livelihood during the period of WWII, a risky undertaking which almost cost him his life.

It was at the height of the war in 1942 that Abdul Karim boarded a passenger liner named "Thakliwa", owned by the British India Steam & Navigation Company, bound for Mombasa. The purpose of his voyage was to travel to Iban, in Mombasa, where he was a partner along with his uncle, in a shop dealing with textiles and sundry items. He contended himself with travelling deck class, the fare at that time being around Rs. 60 - food provided. The ship, with 800 passengers, left Bollard Pier, from Bombay on 20 Oct 1942 destined for Mombasa. On the fourth day of the journey, 23 Oct night, a loud blast was heard - a torpedo apparently fired by some Japanese ship or Submarine had struck the liner. Although it is a norm of war that passenger ships should not be attacked, the attack was probably due to an error in the intelligence of the attackers.

Be it as it may, the attack caused considerable panic with people running helter-skelter to save their skins. Abdul Karim also lost no time in donning his life jacket and made his way to a lifeboat. There were seventeen survivors who made it to that boat but eight of them died due to lack of food and water. The first to go was a youth of seventeen years followed by a woman fully adorned with jewelry. Her corpse with all gold intact was



thrown into the sea. Having survived for eighty hours under the hot blazing sun with sea water all around, the nine remaining survivors were rescued by a British warship and taken onboard. They were returned back to Bombay Port and kept in quarantine for a day. Abdul Karim, however, won his release after strong argument with the authorities concerned. They eventually released him with a warning not to mention anything about this unfortunate incident. This warning was also given to the other survivors. Some would have revealed it to their kith and kin as Abdul Karim, himself, did. But it never reached the masses until 56 years later when the Gujarati Newspaper, Chitralkha, of 25 May 1998 came out with the story. Such was the life and times of Abdul Karim.

He and his wife Ameena Dada, had between them four sons and three daughters. In 1946, after the end of WWII, the family migrated to Ceylon in search of a new life in the Island. They first settled in the predominantly Moor area of Moor Street in Hultsdorf, not far from Pettah, the commercial hub of Colombo. Their first son, Abdul Sattar, worked for Haji Mohammed & Sons, as a trainee salesman for a monthly salary of Rs. 15. He then moved to Sulaiman Vali Mohammed & Company as an Accountant and later to Vali Mohammed Abdul Rahman & Co as Manager. He became a partner of the firm in 1954 and married Zubeida, the daughter of Aboobucker Hashim Somar. The couple were blessed with four children.

In 1967 Abdul Sattar, popularly known as "Sattar Bhai", started Fergasam Garments, a small scale shirt manufacturing concern then based in Wolfendhal Street, Hultsdorf, with ten pedal operated machines. The venture initially manufactured garments for the local market, and, in 1972 began exporting shirts to Sweden. The Company, now, with heavy duty machines, soon expanded to serve the entire island with high quality shirts. It also captured the export market for readymade garments within a decade of its establishment. In 1983, Abdul Sattar, bought over Timex Garments, formerly owned by a fellow Memon, Sattar Gadit, making him one of the country's leading garment manufacturers. His two companies, now known as the Fergasam-Timex Group, expanded further, in the turn of the century, to cope with rapidly increasing orders placed by buyers from Europe and the USA. The Group, presently, runs ten factories and employs 5,000 employees, including 40 Memons whom it actively encourages to join. It specializes in dresses and lingerie doing business with up-market customers in Europe, like Marks & Spencer and Victoria Secret and earns an annual turnover of US \$50 Million.

Abdul Sattar's, three sons, Ashroff, Anis & Arshard, who had throughout supported the untiring efforts of their father in founding the Sayani Garment Empire, have now inherited their fathers legacy. Ashroff, as the eldest serves as the Chairman, while his brothers, Anis and Arshard and his mother Zubeida, serve as Directors of the Group. His daughter, Zaitoon, like her three brothers, is also involved in the garment business, and presently heads Asims Fashion. She began her first tailoring venture in 1987, turning out Shalwar Kameez and Saree Blouses, and later went on to establish a showroom for high fashion Sari's and Shalwar Kameez fabric sets at Havelock Road, near Police Park.

Abdul Karim's second son, Abdul Ghaffar, joined his father in his textile business A K Yoosuf & Sons, and later, along with his younger brother Abdul Razzak, started Sigiri Weaving Mills. Abdul Ghaffar's eldest son, Aslam, is presently Managing Director of Sigiri Exports (pvt) Ltd. His youngest son, Altaf, is the Managing Director of Sigiri Weaving Mills. In March 2004, Abdul Razzak left Sigiri Weaving Mills to start Sigiri Textile Industries (pvt) Ltd. which took over the weaving, dyeing and finishing functions of Sigiri Weaving Mills, which now only deals in knitted fabric. He has also involved himself in social activities and is presently Vice President of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka.

Abdul Aziz, younger brother of Abdul Razzak, besides being a partner of Sigiri Weaving Mills, also has a stake in H A Dada & Company.

Another branch of the Sayani's traces its origins to Abdul Latif, who went on to form a well known local textile firm, A L Essack & Company. One of his sons, Mohammed Rafik, is the Director of Hawai & Company, which deals in electronic items. Abdul Latif's son, Abdullah, had a daughter Zaitoon, who qualified as a teacher, and has taught in several Government Schools in Colombo and the provinces including distant Pallivasalthurai in the Puttalam District.

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## **SINGA LAXANA**

The following is an extract from Page 159 of the Jubilee Book of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club published in 1924

When Colombo capitulated to the British in 1796, the Malays of the garrison consisted of 11 companies nearly 800 strong, commanded by their own officers\* in addition to which there were the detachments stationed in Trincomalee, Galle, Batticaloa, etc

\* These Officers were, Major Kepping, who owned land at Wolvendahl and was probably a descendant of one of the original settlers, Captain Nollet Jaya, Singa Troena, Singha Joeda,, Joeda Witjaya, Singha Sarie, Pronkus, Lay, Sitja Goena, Weera Koesma, and **Singa Laxana**

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## **SOMAR**

The Somar family traces its origins to Hassam Somar, whose son Aboobucker, a native of Ranavav, had two wives, Khadija and Mariyam, from whom he had three sons, Yusuf, Sulaiman (from Khadija) and Habib (from Mariyam).

Farook Somar, son of Yusuf, joined his family business, Noorani's at Wellawatte, after leaving Royal College in 1968. Thereafter he joined Fergasam Industries as Factory Manager in 1978 and was later made a partner. In 1999, he started his own garment factory, Nasna Impex Garment Industries, and in 2000, Tulip Apparel (pvt) Ltd., in partnership with Iqbal Habib.

Hanif, second son of Yusuf Somar, was a bright student at Colombo's prestigious Royal College, but left school at the age of 17 to pursue a compelling interest in "doing business" armed with only a GCE O Level Certificate and a gritty determination to make it big. Looking back, Hanif has no regrets, although it brought to a premature end a very promising academic career. His involvement with the Memon run Expolanka Group helped him realize what no laurels in the world of academia could have given him. He was soon giving his best to the Group and was responsible for many of Expolanka's ventures into Shipping and Aviation related activities, ranging from his core business of International Forwarding to airline operations, General Sales Agencies for Airlines and Courier Business. In fact he was the man behind the establishment of twelve companies, including among others, Expolanka Freight Ltd, which is the number IATA Agent in Sri Lanka, Classic Travels (pvt) Ltd, which is ranked among the top 5 travel and tour operators in Sri Lanka, and Expo Aviation (pvt) Ltd., one of the few local airline operators operating in Sri Lanka. He was also responsible for various overseas ventures such as Expo

Express (pvt) Ltd., India, Expolanka Pakistan Ltd., and Expo Services, Maldives. Hanif serves as Managing Director of all the locally based companies and as Chairman in all the overseas subsidiaries. He also founded SkyCare (pvt) Ltd., and Globe Air (pvt) Ltd., who handle cargo for leading airlines of the world, viz; Royal Jordanian Airlines, and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

Aboobucker, third son of Yusuf Somar, received his bachelors degree in Business from Golden Gate University San Fransisco. Attached to the Expolanka Group of Companies, he is Managing Director Denshun Industries (pvt) Ltd., which manufactures childrens' garments and he also serves as Director Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology (APIIT).

Habib Somar, son of Aboobukcer and Mariyam, moved to Sri Lanka at the age of 11 and attended Zahira College, Colombo. he soon distinguished himself as an able Table Tennis player and at the young age of 16 was ranked the #1 Table Tennis player in Sri Lanka. Habib subsequently moved into business and managed Somar Textiles, then based in Kollupitiya. He married Noor Jahan Omar at the age of 26 and together they had three wonderful kids, Azam, Zuleikha, and Moinuddin. Habib left this world on July 2 2005, leaving behind many loved ones who still remember him with much love

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## **SULAIMAN ALIM**

Sheikh Muhammed bin Ahamed Aalim As Seylani (aka Kashawatta Aalim Appa) of Ahurana, Ceylon, devoted himself fully to the spreading of his learning. He had travelled far and wide including places like Kahatowita and Alutgama. This was no easy task then. He met learned men and sagas in those places and placed the benefits of his learning before them.

In his native region, he had gone on foot, to most places. There is evidence of his visits to Matale, Ukuwela, Kandy, Galhinna and Kadugannawa. There was no easy mode of transport, then. He walked afar to impart the knowledge of Islamics and organised schools called Madrasas for the teaching of religion and reading the Qur'an.

In his home, he provided free board and lodging to those who were eager to learn Arabic and become Aalims (learned men in theology). This is said to be the first school for the teaching of Arabic, in this country. After he set up this school, called Arabic Madrasa (College) in the mid-1850s, other such schools were came up around two or three decades later, in Weligama and Galle.

He also served as the Chief Imam (officiating priest) of the Grand Mosque of Akurana, during his lifetime, until his last day. He passed away on the nineteenth day of the month of Ramzan, in 1893, at the age of sixty three and was buried close to the mosque in which he served.

His scholarly works written in his own hand in Arabic and Arabic-Tamil, bound and illustrated by him are still extant, held by his grandchildren's children.

Kashawatta Aalim Appa was highly respected among scholars of that period. When he went to Mecca, to perform the pilgrimage, he had taken part in a seminar attended by several men of great learning, from various countries. His contribution towards the success of the seminar was highly appreciated, by the others. They praised him for his

meticulous attention to detail, without any books or notes. This went to show that he had read earlier, on his own, various volumes on the topics discussed long before the seminar took place, with no intention of taking part in any discussion. Those gathered conferred on him the title 'Seyyadul Ulema' (leader of scholars). The other participants were themselves highly qualified scholars and from different parts of the world.

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He had a warm smile and personality  
**Alhaj MARIKAR MOHOMED THAHIR**

It is with profound sadness that I write this tribute to my grandfather, Alhaj Samsudeen Marikar Mohomed Thahir. Born on September 1, 1918, to Alhaj Samsudeen Marikar and Khadeeja Umma, "Appa" as we called him, had his primary education in Kalutara and secondary education at Kotte Christian College, Rajagiriya and Zahira College, Colombo.

He managed the Allied Trading Agency established in 1930, with his brother Zain Marikar, until he founded Thahirs in Colombo in 1949. Although involved in his business, he was also the ideal family man. He brought up his children in an exemplary manner. He looked after his four sons who were in Colombo for their education from a very young age.

My father, Ifthikar Ahmed (Chairman, Allied Trading International Pvt. Ltd), often recounts the numerous incidents in which my grandfather tirelessly performed the dual role of successful businessman and caring father. Every Monday, at 4.30 a.m. my grandfather would set off for Colombo with his four little sons by train and arrive right on time for school. They returned to Beruwela only on Saturday.

Appa was very knowledgeable and many looked to him for guidance. The picture that comes to mind when I think of him is his smile that radiated the warmth of his personality. It was the kind of smile that made talking to him a pleasure. Children always flocked to him and he was ever ready to amuse them with tales of his ancestors, going back to the time of King Bhuvaneka Bahu.

He was proud of his large family and stressed how important 'unity' and 'compromise' were to keep the family tree alive. He told us that if ever a problem arose in the family after his demise, we were to discuss and resolve it with Alhaj Zam Refai (Chairman, Zam Gems Pvt Ltd) who is now the eldest in our family.

My grandfather was the livewire in our family. He was full of vigour and humour. Kindhearted, he helped the poor in every way. His advice to us all was to obtain a sound education. He encouraged us to gain knowledge and get qualified. He often told me, "Problems will arise, they always do, but you must never fear to confront and overcome them."

On May 9, 2003, he passed away at the age of 84. He was buried at the Masjid Al Sheikh Mustapha, Beruwela, according to his wishes. My beloved grandfather is no more, but his name, acts and words of wisdom will remain enshrined in the hearts of all those who knew him. May Allah grant him Jennathul Firdouse!

**Sabrina Ifthikar Ahmed**  
Sunday Times Nov 9 2003

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## MEEGAHAYATA GEDERA GURUNANSELAGE UDUMA LEBBE

**Muhammad Zain**, JP MMC, is a native of Udu Nuwara in the Kandy District. His great grandfather was known as **Meegahayata Gedera Gurunanselage Uduma Lebbe**, who was a well respected man in the Muslim villages of Udu Nuwara, viz; Daskera, Boovelikada, Elamaldeniya, Wellamboda, etc. He was also recognized and respected by the Government of that era as he was holding an important position among the Muslims of these villages. In addition to being a leader of the community, he was also a reputed physician for which the Government awarded him with the title of Vaidyaratne. The family was also referred to as "**Vaidyaratne Mudiyansele**". He also occupied his father's position as a teacher and was known as Gurunansey and the people of these villages flocked to him for advice and information. His residence was, always, an open house for all those who came to seek knowledge and assistance. Uduma Lebbe was also called "**Matticham**". This name was given by Muslims to men of standing who took up leadership within the community in those times. In addition to his way of imparting knowledge he was also a very generous and charitable person. His presence, always amongst Muslims, was very dignified and he was even considered a dignitary amongst the Muslim community within the village.

He had one son, named, **Ahamedu Lebbe**, who succeeded him in all respects and led his father's position and profession. He gave up his residence in Boovelikade and moved to reside in Daskera, an adjoining village, where his famous cousin **Liyamagahe Kotuwe Wederala Sulaiman Lebbe** lived. Sulaiman Lebbe and Uduma Lebbe were very active and reputed native doctors within the whole of Udu Nuwara amongst the Sinhalese and Muslim communities. It is interesting to note that these Vedarala's and his cousins, including Meegahayata Gedera Gurunanselage Ahamedu Lebbe (Muhammad Zain's grandfather), had been wearing a "KONDE" (hair knotted into a ball at the back of the head) of their hair as the local Sinhalese gentlemen of the area used to wear at that time.

Many other Muslims within the community also used to wear their hair in a Konde at the back of their heads. With this exception, Muslims who lived in all these villages of Udu Nuwara seem to have similar physical characteristics, customs, habits and language. Their way of speech was also very similar, and although their main language of use was Tamil they were still very fluent in Sinhala.

Ahamedu Lebbe had two sons, named, Mohammedu Lebbe and Uduma Lebbe (father of Muhammad Zain). Mohammedu Lebbe was the older of the two sons and did not embark on his father's profession of medicine. He was a very devout and pious man, kind hearted, gentle, slender, fair and also very handsome. He took to spending his time in the study, practice, and service of religion. He, later, left his village and took up the position of Pesh Imam of the Polgahawela Mosque.

His other son, Uduma Lebbe, became a businessman and took up the leadership of the Daskera village. He was also called a "Matticham". He had no male issue. While Mohammedu Lebbe spent his time in a religious life and settled down in Polgahawela, Uduma Lebbe took up his father's position and lived in his own village.

Mohammedu Lebbe had four sons and three daughters.

Although there are no written documents available to prove the beginnings of these Muslim communities in these villages, there are many stories that are being related, from generation to generation, to confirm that they came to live here during the Portuguese Colonial era. It must be noted that when the Portuguese army occupied the coastal areas of Ceylon they began to persecute the Muslims and even tried to forcibly convert them to Catholicism. In order to avoid this oppression and persecution, by the Portuguese, the Muslim communities left their abodes on the coastal belt and found their way into these remote Sinhala villages. The community had left in batches at various points of time and moved in several directions inland seeking safety and security. The Sinhalese people in the villages to which they entered were kind and hospitable and had welcomed them with open arms and assistance and even protected them from the Portuguese oppressors. The Muslims, thereby, joined the Sinhalese army to fight the Portuguese, who was their common enemy. The name "**MUDIYANSE**" was given to some Muslim families who joined the Sinhala army..

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## **MUHAMMAD UVAIS SULTAN BAWA**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen099.html>

The death of Muhammad Uvais Sideek Sultan Bawa on May 7, 1999, removed from our midst the foremost chemist of post-independent Sri Lanka. A son of Ruhuna, born and bred in Galle,, Sultanbawa showed his scholarship and promise in his early days at St Aloysius' College, Galle.

He entered the University of Ceylon and while progressing towards his degree in Chemistry, cruel fate downed him with sickness just before his final examination. Undeterred by this, a characteristic courage which he was to display on many occasions in later life too, Sultanbawa took the London University Examination and netted a First Class Degree. He joined the then Industrial Research Laboratory established by D.H. Balfour and for a time served as one of the "Balfour boys".

His preference for academic life soon brought him to the Department of Chemistry of the University of Ceylon. He went to the Imperial College London for his PhD and worked for Professors E A Braude and L N Owen. He returned to his native land in 1945. A batch of young chemistry (special) students, did not take too kindly at first to the new lecturer in the blue suit, who at that time failed to appreciate his new approach to chemistry teaching, with the accent on literature reading. It may even be stated that he was not the best of communicators. However, his great enthusiasm for the subject did rub off on some. He laid the foundation for a research-based university course and encouraged the investigative mentality in students.

Sultanbawa launched himself into the work of the Chemistry Society of Ceylon, now the Institute of Chemistry, and the Ceylon Association for the Advancement of Science, later the SLAA, as its General Secretary. He enthused students at that time and many of them assisted him and his good friend and colleague the late Professor Stanley Wijesundera and his research partner Jinapala Alles, in the organization of a series of islandwide school science exhibitions under the wing of the CAAS. Sultanbawa's interaction with the chemistry students of the time in this endeavor brought out the best in him.

Professor Eric Fonseka, the then head of the Chemistry department following the death of Professor Kandiah, left the organization and moved to Peradeniya with Sultanbawa. Indeed, this writer feels strongly that the University of Peradeniya would do justice by naming the department after him, "the Sultanbawa Department of Chemistry". For many years Peradeniya Chemistry was synonymous internationally with the name of Sultanbawa. He built its research tradition. The tribute paid by his colleagues, on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary a few years ago bears testimony to his incomparable contribution to the teaching of Chemistry in Sri Lanka, and in particular to the Peradeniya campus.

Both in his career as a research scientist and in his role of a scientific leader in his country many honors came his way. He was conferred with a Vidya Jothi by HE the President of Sri Lanka. Sultanbawa was made a Fellow of the Indian National Academy, and was a winner of the Guinness Award for Scientific Achievement in 1978. He and his research team at Peradeniya also won a Presidential Award for their research work, besides being recognized worldwide as one of the leading schools of research on natural products. Sultanbawa was a dynamic man with skill, dedication, and a philosophy that helped him keep his sense of dignity and balance despite hard luck that might come his way. This indeed was, apart from his special skills, the secret of his success. There was one other and that was his wife Sithna, whom every student and colleague voted was the ideal scientists' wife. She was a friend to them all, and a pillar of strength in a most unostentatious manner to her husband. As much as one lauded Sultanbawa himself, one was charmed by his talented family of two sons and two daughters.

The Sultanbawa family lost their father and their country Sri Lanka lost one of its great sons, after a long and productive innings. Sultanbawa's name and influence will remain for many generations through his students and the research colleagues and members of the chemical fraternity.

Daily News Wed May 12, 1999

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## **ISMAIL LEBBE MARIKAR SULTAN MARIKAR**

ILM Sultan Marikar received an elementary education but could converse in English fluently. He was able to read and write in Sinhala and Gujarati.

Sultan Marikar moved among Europeans in the commercial circle and was also well-known to the Borah merchants, such as TAJ Noorbhai, Carimjee Jefferjee, EG Adamally, MSH Abdul Ali Bhai, MSH Hibthulla Bhai, in the export and import trade. He was closely associated with Dodwell & Company in his export business.

Sultan marikar was a well-known and recognized planter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who had most of his business transactions in Tea & Rubber with Bartleet & Company, Auctioneer's & brokers, and also with JL Ross & Company, of Captains Garden, Galle. He was a landed proprietor and owned a number of estates among which were, Noorani at Padukka, 200 acres planted with tea and rubber and coconuts, Meepilawa in Puwakpitiya, 160 acres with tea and rubber purchased from Lady De Soysa. In 1902, some of his rubber fetched Rs 15/- per pound which was considered a record prize for the commodity.

Sultan Marikar was said to have transferred in trust a tea, rubber and coconut estate of 250 acres, near Galle, to the late Al Haj Ahamed Ismail.

He was a Trustee of two famous Thakiyas in Ceylon, Bukhari Thakkiya or Beruwela and Mubarak Thakkiya of Talapitiya in Galle. He played a prominent role in the Fez issue in 1905 along with ILM Abdul Azeez, MC Siddi Lebbe, and SL Mahmood Hajjar, when Advocate Abdul cader of Kattankudi was not allowed to appear before the bench wearing his Fez Cap. Abdul Cader politely refused to carry out the behests of the Chief Justice and withdrew from the Court.

Sultan Marikar founded a company with JL Ross in England, the prospectus of which was issued on the very day of his death in 1911.

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## **SURIYA**

The **Suriya** family, a small but prominent Memon family, traces its roots to one Haji Sulaiman Omar, who arrived in the country with his daughter, Haleema and infant son Hassim, in the aftermath of the Hindu Muslims riots of 1947 in India. He eventually settled in Kegalle town running a small business dealing in textiles. His son Hassim Omar, migrated to Colombo in 1971. In 1978, Hassim had amassed sufficient monies running a small business in Prince Street Pettah to invest in a bigger more ambitious venture Suriya Textiles in Keyzer Street. In 1984 he bought over a number of textile weaving mills in the upcountry in Mawthagama, Wattegama, Dambulla, Galewala, Ukuvila, and Matale, to start Suriya Textile Mills (pvt) Ltd., which produced for the local market and at one time employed around 1,000 staff. The factories gradually closed down beginning from the mid nineties due to market problems and he eventually moved to the import and supply of textiles for the local market under the same name from his office at 32 Third Cross Street, which he still manages.

However, Hassim is famous, not for his business activities which is no more than any ordinary run of the mill Memon concern, but for his patronage of local artistes. A much loved figure in literary circles, he finds time to present himself at the launching of vernacular Tamil and Sinhala works such as novels, short stories, and poetical compositions, purchasing the first copy with a generous sum that goes a long way to support these writers, who, despite their economic situations take immense pains to produce literary works of a high standard. In fact, he has attended about 400 such book launches, perhaps a world record. He also looks into the welfare of destitute local artistes, particularly those who have met with disabilities or some other misfortune. Among other services rendered by this large hearted man is the paying stipends to deserving students and volunteer teachers, regardless of race or creed.

Sulaiman, son of Hassim Omar, runs a multi cuisine Halal restaurant down Duplication Road called Queen's Cafe, named after a nearby street called Queen's Road. The restaurant is one that holds variety to be the spice of life and offers anything from Indian dishes, viz Buriyani & Naan, to Italian Lasagna and special mexican Enchilada's, made of chicken stuffing wrapped in tortilla rotti topped with cheese with a truly tantalizing dish.

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## **SUTARIYA**

The **Sutariya's**, unlike most other Memons domiciled in Sri Lanka trace their roots back to Upleta, a town in Rajkot District. Ahmed Shakoor Sutariya, is said to have been a grain merchant in his hometown in Upleta. His son, Taiyab Ahmed, upon migrating to Ceylon



was involved in sugar indenting in Colombo before moving on to the textile business in Colombo.

His son, Habeeb, went on to establish Habeeb Taiyab & Company in Main Street which traded in food commodities such as coconut oil and sugar. Habeeb also had a textile printing and weaving concern in Embilipitiya known as Parakum Textiles.

He had five sons, Rafik, Iqbal, Ariff, Shabeer, and Anver. Rafeek and Ariff are in the textile trade while Iqbal is into garment manufacturing and Anver a BSc graduate from Ramaya College of Engineering in Bangalore and is presently based in Dubai.

Rafik's son, Ahmed, is into tea manufacturing and has a factory in the Ratnapura District. Iqbal's son, Zia-ur-Rahman, graduated in business studies from the University of Reading, UK. Ariff's daughter, Sabina, holds a degree in business management majoring in Marketing from the Towson University in Maryland, USA. She is currently employed by Telecom Malaysia in Penang.

Habeeb's brother, Eliyas, who studied Electrical Engineering at the University of London, worked at ITT, UK, for over ten years before moving to Jakarta where he is engaged in the supply of electrical engineering goods to local industry. Eliyas's older daughter, Amira, followed her fathers footsteps and got her MSc in Electrical Engineering from the University of Washington. She presently works for IBM in Toronto, Canada. Her younger sister, Nadaa, is in Boston studying for her MA in Law and Diplomacy Degree at Tufts University.

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## **THOWFEEQ**

**Vali Mohammed Haji Ahmed Thowfeeq**, is the President of the Anjuman Faiz-e-Raza which runs the Madarasa Faiz-e-Raza, specially meant for youth of the Memon Community. Born in 1968, in Maradana, he is the twelfth child of **Haji Ahmed Thowfeeq**, a textile merchant and Rabiya Bhai. In 1973, his family who had previously resided at Wolfendhal Street, moved to Galle Road Kollupitiya and subsequently to Davidson Road, Bambalapitiya.

Having completed his studies at Stafford International College, taking Math and Physics for his A Levels in 1986, he followed the Diploma Courses offered by the Textile Training Institute of Ratmalana and MEETI Dehiwela. The following year he joined his brother Haroon in his shop Omega Traders and the same year entered the order of the Qadiriya Silsila by becoming a disciple of Huzoor Mufti-e-Aazam-Hind Moulana Muhammad Akhtar Raza Khan. He also took a keen interest in the activities of the Anjuman Faiz-e-Raza and was one of its founder members. He also successfully completed his Alim Course at the Madarasa Faiz-e-Raza under the guidance of Mufti Noorul Hassan Sahib and was awarded the certificate of Alim by Mufti e-Azam-e-Hind, Akhtar Raza Khan, in 2005.

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## **POOTHAN BOOTHIL UMBICHCHY**

Poothan Boothil Umbichy was a business magnate in Colombo. He started life in a small way hailing from the coast of Malabar. He spent his earnings very lavishly for the progress and development of the country, especially for the Muslims.

HS Izzadeen Hajar, Arabic teacher at Zahira College, Colombo and later Khatheeb of the Marada Mosque, requested Umbichchy, who was then appointed as a JP, to construct a series of buildings for Zahira College on the Maradana Mosque land. He put up the Kindergarten block at a cost of Rs 25,000.

Umbichchy contributed a large sum of money towards the purchase of Jiffriyathul Alaviya Thakkiya at 156 New Moor Street, Colombo 01100. He endowed two large substantial buildings called, Nafsiya Building and Misriya Building, in Pettah for permanent charity and the income of this was annually distributed, during the month of Ramadan, to the local Muslim widows, orphans, and needy.

He also built a Mosque at Wolvendhaal and added buildings thereto as a source of revenue for its upkeep and maintenance. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace (JP) in recognition of his many charitable acts.

He lies buried in the compound of the Mosque he built.

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## **PEACE OFFICER UNUS of Nelundeniya 1845-1898**

**Khalid Ahamed Unus Ibbun** had been appointed as a Peace Officer (Muladaniya) by the British Administrators of Ceylon, but neither the date of appointment nor the area that came under his administration is clear as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced. His eldest son Peace Officer (Muladani) Ismail had succeeded him after his death as the Peace Officer (Muladaniya) for the Colombo-Kandy Road from the 35<sup>th</sup> to 45<sup>th</sup> mileposts (from Warakapola to Galigamuwa) and for the Warakapola-Ruwanwella Road upto 7 ¼ mile post (from Warakapola to Galapitamada). Therefore it is assumed that he too would have been appointed as the Peace Officer for the same area for which his eldest son succeeded him as the Peace Officer on (24<sup>th</sup>) of May Eighteen Ninety Eight (1898).

He had three wives and was blessed with Eleven (11) sons and Four (4) daughters as follows. From his first Wife Asiya (Said to be the Paternal Aunt of former Galle Mayor A. R. M. Thassim) he was blessed with five (5) sons and a daughter namely Peace Officer U. I. M. Ismail, U. I. M. Ibn, U. I. M. Abdul Hameed, U. I. M. Abdul Samad, U. I. M. Abdul Razzak Town Arachchi and Nihmath Unus Ibbun (Abdul Cader Lebbe). From his second wife he was blessed with six (6) sons and a daughter namely U. I. M. Thalib, U. I. M. Abdul Raheem, Raviath Unus Ibbun (Abdul Raheem), U. I. Muhammed, U. I. M. Khalid, U. I. M. Shaheed, U. I. M. Abdul Latheef. From his Third wife he was blessed with two (2) daughters namely Kaina Unus Ibbun (Abdul Careem) and Maimuna Unus Ibbun (Musthafa).

The family is known as the Ralahamy Paula (Master's Family) among the Sinhala speaking community and as "Ralahamy / Oppisor Kudumbam (Master's / Officer's Family) among the Tamil speaking community in the area.

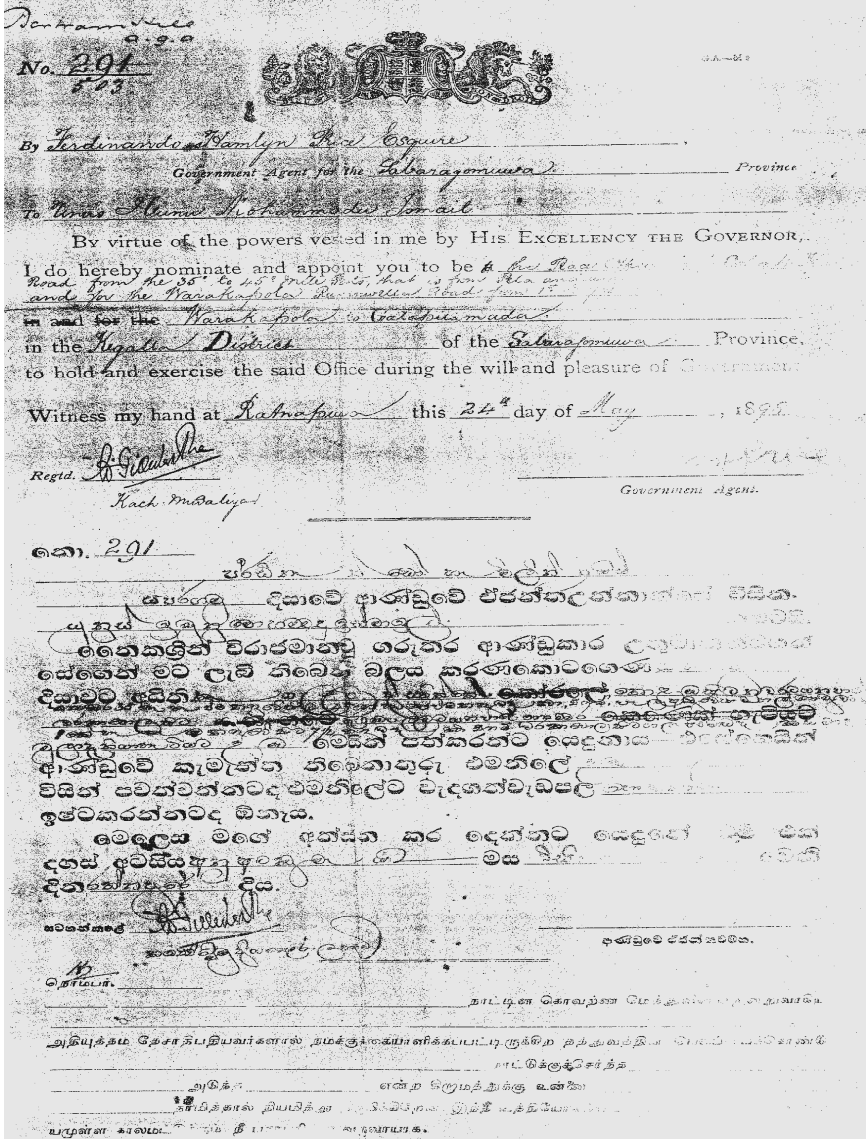
The following Grandsons of Peace Officer (Muladani) Unus Ibbun namely Mr. A. S. M. Thassim (2d3d) of Nelundeniya and Mr. A. R. M Sanoosi (2e3c) of Nelundeniya provided valuable information to prepare this family tree. In addition to above the original letter of appointment of Peace Officer (Muladani) Ismail (eldest son of Peace Officer Unus Ibbun) which was preserved by Mr. A. L. M. Thawus JP (2a3d4a) of Thulhiriya (a Grandson of Peace Officer Ismail) helped to trace the date of appointment and the area that came under Peace Officer Ismail's administration (it is assumed that Peace Officer Unus Ibbun

too would have been appointed as the Peace Officer for the same area for which his eldest son succeeded him as the Peace Officer).

Just for record purposes it is worth mentioning that it is believed that Peace Officer Unus Ibunu's ancestors had arrived from Batavia (Dutch name for Indonesian Capital Jakarta) and settled down in Galle before moving to Nelundeniya. Only evidence so far to support this belief is that some of his decedents have got Malay features. But the accuracy of this information needs to be further clarified since the records / information available from Peace Officer Unus Ibunu onwards indicates that the family had been identifying themselves as a Moor Family (a Muslim Family of Arab Origin) and have been marrying among Moors.

### **Peace Officer (Muladani) U. I. M. Ismail (1871-1918) of Warakapola.**

Unus Ibunu Muhammad Ismail was appointed by the British Administrators of Ceylon on the Twenty Fourth (24<sup>th</sup>) of May Eighteen Ninety Eight (1898) as the Peace Officer (Muladaniya) for the Colombo-Kandy Road from the 35<sup>th</sup> to 45<sup>th</sup> mileposts (from Warakapola to Galigamuwa) and for the Warakapola-Ruwanwella Road upto 7 ¼ mile post (from Warakapola to Galapitamada) in the Kegalle District of the Sabaragamuwa Province.



**Mr. U. I. Abdul Samad – 2d of Nelundeniya**

His children's property along Colombo-Kandy Road at Nelundeniya was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government in 1972 to put up Co-operative outlets.

**U. I. M. Abdul Razzak Town Arachchi (1885-1972) of Nelundeniya**

The British Administrators of Ceylon had appointed Unus Ibbu Muhammad Abdul Razak as a Town Arachchi (Arachchi is a Headman who had extensive Jurisdiction and also had powers to deal with Criminal Offences), but neither the date of appointment nor the area that came under his administration is clear, as the records pertaining to this information had been misplaced. However Nelundeniya was a part that came under his Administration.

### **A. R. L. S. Abdul Cader Lebbe Mathicham (1882- 1954) of Warakapola**

He succeeded his father Abdul Raheem Lebbe Mathicham as the Mathicham (Trustee) of the Dummaladeniya Mosque (Al-Masjid-Ur-Rahmath). His children wakfd one hundred and Ten Perches (110p) of land along Colombo-Kandy Road at Dummaladeniya Warakapola to this Mosque (the land to build this Mosque was donated by his father Abdul Raheem Lebbe Mathicham).

It is also worth mentioning that on the death of Peace Officer Ismail, his orphaned children (from his deceased first wife Sarah Abdul Raheem Lebbe) were taken care by Abdul Cader Lebbe Mathicham (brother of Sarah Abdul Raheem Lebbe Ismail) and Nihmath Unus Abdul Cader Lebbe (sister of Peace Officer Ismail).

### **Mr. M. I. M. Usman (1899 - 1957) of Warakapola.**

He started an Institute in 1932 together with Mr. M. L. Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala (paternal grandfather of Mrs Mafaza Rafeek Mihlar-2a3e4b), Mr. Usuf Lebbe Abdul Hameed (paternal grandfather of Mr. Rilwan 2a3d4b5c) and Mr Zubair of Dippitiya at Pilanduwa Warakapola (at the location where "Al-Madhrasathush-Shareefiyyah" of Warakapola stands today) by the name of "Al Madhrasath-UI-Raheemaniyyah" (Named after his maternal grandfather Abdul Raheem Lebbe Mathicham of Dummaladeniya Warakapola and his colleague Muhammed Lebbe Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Kandy Road Pasyala - Family # 31) close to his parent's home (bordering the land owned by Kadheeja Unus Lebbe Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala - Family # 31) to educate the children in the area. In 1944 this institute was shifted to the land donated at Horagolla Warakapola by Al Haj M. A. M. A. Hassan (JP) of Hassan Villa Kandy Road Wewaldeniya (Family # 31, 32 & 214) and is presently known as Babul Hassan Central College.

He started an Institute at the boarder of the land (bordering the land owned by Kadheeja Unus Lebbe Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala - Family # 31) of his parent's home (at the location where "Al-Madhrasathush-Shareefiyyah" of Warakapola stands today) in 1932 together with Mr. M. L. Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Pasyala (paternal grandfather of Mrs Mafaza Rafeek Mihlar-2a3e4b), Mr. Usuf Lebbe Abdul Hameed (paternal grandfather of Mr. Rilwan 2a3d4b5c) and Mr Zubair of Dippitiya at Pilanduwa Warakapola by the name of "Al Madhrasath-UI-Raheemaniyyah" (Named after his maternal grandfather Abdul Raheem Lebbe Mathicham of Dummaladeniya Warakapola and his colleague Muhammed Lebbe Abdul Raheem of Marikar Villa Kandy Road Pasyala - Family # 31) to educate the children in the area. In 1944 this institute was shifted to the land donated at Horagolla Warakapola by Al Haj M. A. M. A. Hassan (JP) of Hassan Villa Kandy Road Wewaldeniya (Family # 31, 32 & 214) and is presently known as Babul Hassan Central College.

### **Mr. M. I. M. Usuf (1903-1972) of Warakapola.**

His land along Colombo-Kandy Road at Pilanduwa Warakapola was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government to put up the Bus Stand at Warakapola.

### **Mr. M. I. M. Haneefa (1906 - 1958) of Warakapola**

He was a registrar of Muslim marriages.

### **Mr. M. I. M. Shareef (1913-1968) of Warakapola.**

The property of "Al-Madhrasathush-Shareefiyyah" (Formally known as "Al Madhrasath-Ul-Raheemaniyyah") of Warakapola which was owned and administered by the family was Wakfed by his two sons, Dr. M. S. M. Mihlar JP (2a3e4b) and Mr. M. S. M. Fareed (2a3e4e) in December 1999 (21<sup>st</sup> Ramadhan 1420) to the Warakapola Grand Jummah Mosque.

He succeeded his elder brother (Mr. M. I. M. Haneefa) after his death as the registrar of Muslim marriages.

His land at Pilanduwa Warakapola (behind his parent's home) was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government to start up the Baudda Vidyalaya (Buddist School) of Warakapola.

### **Mr. S. A. C. L. M. Shaheed (1912-1984) of Warakapola**

He was a member of the Warakapola Town Council and was instrumental in starting up the Dummaladeniya Muslim Vidyalaya at Dummaladeniya Warakapola.

### **Mr A. H. L. Abdul Cader of Colombo**

Together with his brother (Proctor A. H. L. M. Saleem- Family # 31) he donated the land to build the Muslim Ladies Arabic College at Kal-Eliya and was one of the founder members of this College. The Road leading to the Muslim Ladies Arabic College has been named as Abdul Cader Mawatha as a mark of respect to him.

Mr Muhammed Jaleel -2j3b of Nelundeniya

His property along Colombo-Kandy Road at Nelundeniya was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government in 1972 to put up the Nelundeniya Post Office.

### **Mr. A. L. M. Thawus JP (1930) of Thulhiriya.**

He succeeded his uncle (Mr. M. I. M. Shareef) as the registrar of Muslim marriages in 1965. He has donated his land to build a roadway connecting Nangalla & the Villages behind his Estate. This roadway had been named as Al Haj A. L. M. Thawus Mawatha. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the Judicial District of Kegalle in 1978. He preserved the original letter of appointment of Peace Officer Ismail, which helped to trace the date of his appointment and the area that came under his administration.

### **Dr. M. Shareef M. Mihlar JP (1946) of Warakapola.**

He was the founder President of the Horagolla Mosque which is now known as Masjid Al Hudha in Horagolla, Warakapola. In 1975 when he was putting up his house in Horagolla Warakapola he had the intention of building a mosque as there wasn't a mosque in that area. In order to accomplish his desire, with the generous contribution of the community a small plot of land was purchased in 1977 and the mosque was built in 1979. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the Judicial District of Kegalle in 1983.

*Mr. M. L. M. Lakariya JP (1945-2007) of Eheliyagoda.*

He donated part of his land at Kalavitagoda Eheliyagoda in 1995 to build Masjidul Muthkeen and was appointed as its founder president. He has donated his land in 1995

to build a roadway to the adjoining Village Asgangula South that had been named as Asgangula Mawatha. He was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for the Judicial District of Ratnapura in 1984.

**Mrs. Fareeda Abdul Cader Raheeman (1939) of Negombo.**

Her land was taken over by the Sri Lankan Government to start up the Technical College of Warakapola.

**Abbreviations**

JP	-	Justice of the Peace
Dr	-	Doctor
ACA	-	Associate Chartered Accountant
d.	-	died.
Div	-	Divorced

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## **YUSUF LEBBE IDROOS LEBBE MARIKAR Hajjar**

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/gen013.html>

Yusuf Lebbe Idroos Lebbe Marikar Hajjar was General Merchant and Landed Proprietor. He was the Trustee of the Grand Mosque and had donated a valuable property in Pettah for the Mosque.

His male ascendants in reverse chronological order are:- Yusuf Lebbe (Jemmi) - Uduma Lebbe - Idroos Lebbe (Batiar) - Ismail Lebbe.

His ancestors migrated to Colombo from Weligama. He had four sons and one daughter as follows:- Idroos Lebbe Marikar Haji - Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Haji - Sinne Lebbe Marikar Haji - Marikar Haji - and Mrs. Wappu Marikar Haji.

Idroos Lebbe Marikar Haji had two sons and a daughter by his first marriage to Fathumuthu Natchia. They were, Noordeen Hajjar (Saapu Wappa), Mohideen Hajjar and Zulaikha. He also had four sons and two daughters by his second marriage to S.M. Assena Natchia. They were, Sulaima Lebbe Haji, YYusuf, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Hameed, Amsa and Safia.

I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar succeeded his father Idroos Lebbe Marikar as Trustee of the Grand Mosque in 1900 and donated properties in Hultsdorf for the upkeep of the Mosque. he built the Hameedia School building, within the grounds of the Colombo Grand Mosque, at his own personal cost and named it after Sultan Hameed of Turkey. He took an active part in public life and was a member of the Fez Committee.

During the early stages of the first Great War (WW-I), 1914-1918, he would, with the aid of a wall map of Europe and Asia hung in his office room at "Muirburn", Turret Road, Colombo 3, where he lived with his son-in-law, S.L.Naina Marikar Hajjar, intensely follow the the fortunes of Turkey in the battle field.

Noordeen Hajjar had some knowledge of Unani medicine and would practice it on his family. There was a favourite decoction of his made from shoe flowers which was frequently given to the children.

He was stern disciplinarian who drilled in religion to his children and grand-children who invariably attained high proficiency in the recital of the Quran.

His eldest son, H.N.H. Jalaludeen Hajjar was one of the few Ceylon Moors who qualified as a Hafiz, at that time, and also accompanied his father on pilgrimage to Makkah and at the Masjid-un-Nabaviya in Madinah where he had the rare privilege of reciting from memory, at a single stretch, the full thirty chapters of the Holy Quran. Jaludeen Hajjar was a bosom pal of Haji Muhammad Macan Markar Effendi and inspite of his illness worked actively and whole-heartedly in 1924 for the election of his friend as first member for the all-Island seat in the Legislative Council. His sons are Thahir, Maruzook, Mohideen and YYusuf and his daughters are Noorul Hidayah, Sithy Fathuma, and Ummul Khair.

The eldest daughter of Noordeen Hajjar - Zohara Umma - married S.L.Naina-Marikar Hajjar while the youngest daughter - Ummu Nafeesa - married N.D.H. Abdul Caffoor



Hajjar and the intervening daughter - Ummu Su'ooda - married I.L.M. Abdul Cader. His youngest son, Mohideen married Haseena Umma, daughter of P.T. Meera Lebbe.

Noordeen Hajjar seemed to have known the exact moment of his death. He took his ablutions meant for prayer (Wudhu), prayed two rakaats and then laid himself to rest on his bed in the direction of the Ka'aba. He brought his arms across his waist in the position of prayer (Thakbir) while reciting "Allahu Akbar" before breathing his last.

I.L.M.H. Mohideen Hajjar was a full brother of Noordeen Hajjar. He was a crockery merchant, equally philanthropic and pious. He was also the Trustee of the Colombo Grand Mosque. He married Safiya Umma - granddaughter of Sekadi Marikar Cassie Lebbe Marikar (Mudaliyar). He had five sons, Gheyas Mohideen, Ghouse Mohideen (also Trustee of Grand Mosque), Zahir, Lahir, Abdul Hai, and Idroos, His daughters were, Faleela (mother of Ummu Jamala), Jameela (mother of M.I.A. Azeez - Engineer, Electrical Department and A.A.M. Thowfeek), Juwaila and Hafila.

Their sister, Zulaikha, who married S.L. Abdul Rahman, had five sons and three daughters, one of whom was Ummu Suroora, mother of Ahmed Salih Abul Mawahib.

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## **M S M ZAHEER**

Mr M S M Zaheer, Director, Islamic Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Madampe, Sri Lanka and Manager - Engineering, Data Management Systems (DMS) Pvt Ltd., Colombo passed away in Makkah recently after performing Haj, Inna Lillahi wainna Ilaihi Rajioon. He proceeded to Makkah to perform Haj with his wife and only daughter.

Mr Zaheer obtained his MSc degree in Computer Science from Russia. He has been functioning as the Director of IIIT almost from its inception way back in 1997, purely on a voluntary basis, in spite of his heavy responsibilities at DMS. He contributed immensely towards the progress of the Institute as the Director of the Institute and Chairman of the Curriculum Board.

He was instrumental in establishing Aluthgama Investment Fund (ALIF), a model project, in which funds were collected from Brothers and invested on many development projects, assisting the community in Aluthgama Town. We were informed that this project was a huge success.

May Allah accept his good deeds and grant him Jannathul Firdows.

**Dr Ziyad Mohamed Thaha**  
Chairman, IIIT, Madampe  
[ziyadthaha@yahoo.com](mailto:ziyadthaha@yahoo.com)

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## **MUHAMMAD LEBBE MARIKAR ZAINUDEEN Hajjar, MMC**

Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Zainudeen, MMC, was the son of Idroos Lebbe Muhammad Lebbe Marikar, a leading merchant in the Pettah. He resided in a house in Grandpass and received his English education at Wesley College, Colombo. He, together with his brother Ismail, joined their father's business of Commission Agency and General

Merchants. They had their showrooms at Hameediah Buildings, Main Street, Pettah, in the year 1880.

In 1883, Zainudeen, under the leadership of Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim, later known as Haji Ismail Effendi, together with a few other Muslims, visited several Muslim countries. It is said that they carried a petition to the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt from the Egyptian exiles in Ceylon, namely Arabi Pasha and his colleagues.

Zainudeen and group travelled extensively in Egypt and proceeded to Constantinople (Istanbul) before arriving in Makkah to perform the pilgrimage of Hajj. On returning to Ceylon, Zainudeen exported large consignments of Ceylon produce, viz hides, cocoa, corn, fibre, oil, coconuts etc. to those firms with whom he had made arrangements with during his stay in Africa and Europe.

Zainudeen was elected a member of the Pettah Ward in the Colombo Municipal Council in 1900.

The following account of the election appeared in the "Crescent" of Liverpool dated October 10, 1900:-

"The election of a councillor for the Pettah Ward took place on Saturday, the 24th August last, at the Town Hall. At first there were two candidates in the field - Mr. Zainudeen and Mr. John Clovis de Silva, but the latter withdrew his candidature a few days previous. The election took place at 8 a.m. the appointed hour. Mr. Herbert White, acting Mayor and Chairman, presided, and there were besides, a few Muslim and Sinhalese householders of the ward present.

The proceedings commenced by Mr. C.B. Brodie, the well-known Fort merchant, formally proposing the name of Mr. M.L.M. Zainudeen as a fit and proper person for election as member to the Pettah Ward. Mr. I.L.M. Ismail Marikar seconded, whereupon Mr. C.P. Dias, MMC handed in 850 proxies in favour of the nominee. The Chairman examined the lists, and declared Mr. Zainudeen duly elected councillor for the Pettah Ward. Mr. Zainudeen briefly returned thanks, and in turn proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, the latter acknowledging the compliment briefly. Mr. Zainudeen was "At Home" to his friends and well-wishers during the whole of Saturday, when a large number of people called and congratulated him on his election. Among them were members of the Council".

The Muslims of Ceylon, along with the Muslims of the World, celebrated Sultan Abdul Hameed Khan's Silver Jubilee with grand illuminations and decorations of the Mosques and houses on the day previous to the election of Zainudeen to the Council.

The Muhammadan community in the vicinity of Zainudeen's residence repeated the decorations and illuminations on his election.

Zainudeen was subsequently re-elected for the Pettah Ward and served as such till 1907. An account of his life appears in the "Twentieth Century" impressions of Ceylon edited by Arnold Wright and published in 1907 by Lloyds Great Britain Publishing Company Limited.

He was the paternal grandfather of Mrs. M.M.I. Kariappan.

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## **YASMIN ZAROOK**

### **Double international Sports Queen**

Premasara EPASINGHE - DN Mon May 22 2006

TODAY, I am, featuring on an outstanding sportswoman, who has brought credit and honour to this country as a sports star, coach and sports administrator.

If a sports personality can represent his or her country in one sports discipline, it is an achievement. But, here is a sports woman star who represented Sri Lanka, not only in one sport discipline, but in two - Swimming and Squash. Therefore, in short, she is a double international - a great achievement indeed.

Who is the sports-woman?

She is Yasmin Zarook.

Her parents - M. L. M. Ahamed and I. Ahamed. She was born to a family of one brother and four sisters.

Little Yasmin started schooling at St. Bridget's Convent, Colombo in 1958 and left in 1969. It was at St. Bridget's, she started her sports activities. As a 6-year-old little girl, she participated in Throwing the Cricket ball and she came first. Then, she took part in cycling.

Yasmin's forte was Swimming in school. At the age of 11 years, she broke the National Record for Breast stroke in the under 14 category.

"I was very fortunate, that I was under an Australian Swimming coach at that time. I excelled as a school girl from 1964 to 1966 and had the proud distinction of representing the country for three consecutive years.

It was Indo-Sri Lanka Swimming Meet. My coach was Tony Wall from Australia. I still remember the residential camp we had at Gurutalawa S. Thomas' College helped me a lot," stated Yasmin Zarook.

She played Netball and took part in Athletics and Tennis at St. Bridget's. She was an all-round sports woman.

As Muslims, the girls and ladies are conservative and rarely you come across a Muslim lass taking upto sports in a big way.

"As a community. girls rarely took a keen interest in sports. My father did not oppose my taking part in sports. In the same way, he did not encourage me. But, my brother an old Thomian Faiz Ahmed gave me encouragement. I never given up," stated Yasmin Zarook.

In 1972, Yasmin married a leading Criminal Lawyer from Matara - Razik Zarook. An old boy of St. Servatious College, Matara, he was a keen sportsman, who encouraged sports in a big way.

I can remember that when he was the Chairman of CWE, he gave a helping hand to many young sportsmen and sportswomen. He is a thorough gentleman and a fine human being. Today, he is a leading criminal lawyer in Matara.

"After marriage, I played Tennis with my husband and I was crowned as the Southern Province Women Tennis Champion. I won the Mixed Doubles with Colone Devanayagam as my partner. This is the beginning of my racket sports," stated Yasmin Zarook.

After they came to Colombo to settle down, she became a member of Sri Lankan Ladies Squash Federation. In Colombo, she met Mrs. Nain, wife of Lanka Oberoi (Cinnamon) General Manager and she really motivated her in Tennis and Squash.

"At the beginning, the Ladies Squash Federation, comprised some outstanding players like Padmini Samarasinghe, Damayanthi Ralwatta, Siritunga, Sujatha Nadasen, Nilufour Arasakumar, Mrs. Eabo Pteris etc. They were all instrumental in taking this game to girls and ladies.

Yasmin was the undisputed Queen of Sri Lanka Squash for nine consecutive years from 1992 to 2000. She captained the four Asian Championships - 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th held in Bombay, Jordan, Malaysia (8th and 9th) respectively and represented Sri Lanka and captained Asian Cup Squash Championship in Malaysia.

Yasmin Zarook's professional qualifications in Squash is highly commendable. She holds level 1, 2 and 3 certificates awarded by the Asian Squash Federation.

Further, she attended world coaching conferences held in Malaysia, Australia, Egypt, Malmo-Sweden and was the National Coach for Junior and Senior Teams in 1995-1997. She trained boys and girls for SAFF games which were held in Islamabad, Pakistan, July, October 2001.

Presently, Yasmin Zarook trains the Squash players of Royal College, Vishaka Vidyalaya and Holy Family Convent, Bambalapitiya. Further, she is at the moment coach and train over 20 individual players of whom many are ranked in their individual age group. Many have also represented Sri Lanka.

Further, she was a swimming coach for Vishaka, Museus and Bishops Colleges. Her achievements as a sportswoman in Squash are many. She was the winner of the Plate Events in Jordan.

In 1996, she was awarded the "Robbialac Kreeda Sammanaya" for Squash by the Ministry of Sports. After retiring from the game, she took up to coaching and Squash Administration.

In June 2001, Yasmin Zarook was appointed as the Sri Lanka National Coach. Then in 2003, National Schools Squash Association appointed her as the Coach. She was the Chief Instructress for the ASF Level I, Coaching course held on October 11-20, 2002 in Sri Lanka.

Further, she was the official referee for the Junior World Championships held in India in December 2002.

She was the National Coach for Commonwealth Games held in Melbourne, Australia in 2006.

Otters Aquatic Club conference Yasmin Zarook the Roll of Honoured for her achievements in Swimming and Squash on 20th May 1998. Yasmin and Razik's only daughter is Rishdha Zarook - a lawyer by profession. She is married to Mafaz Ishaq.

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## **ZHOLKA**

The Zholka family has its origins in Dhoraji, north of Junagadh. It was in 1900 that Mohammed Abdul Karim Zholka, also known as Dhorajiwala named after his hometown, arrived in Ceylon. He worked as an Accountant at first in a rice storehouse (kittangy) in the Pettah and married a Malay lady from Moedra in 1916 who bore him three sons and two daughters. The family lived at Kew Lane in Slave Island.

One son, Abdul Aziz, is a well known social worker among the Memon community. He currently works as a general Clerk at the Memon Society of Sri Lanka. He has also served in the Namaz Committee of the Memon Association of Sri Lanka which has been the live wire behind the organization and conducting of Eid Prayers at the Galle Face green during the two Eids each Hijri year since 1958. He has seven children of whom four are sons.

One of Abdul Aziz's sons, Mohammed Siddique and fifteen members of his family, including his in-laws, were caught in the Tsunami of 2004 where thirtenn of them perished in the lashing waters that engulfed them on the Pelawatte Bridge on their way to visit a shrine at Akuressa in the southern province. Siddique survived but the rest of his family perished.

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## **COLENDAMARIKAR MUHAMMAD ZUBAIR, Dr**

### **First Ceylon Moor Doctor**

"The Ceylonese" of Thursday, January 25, 1917, published a news item under the heading "Death of a Ceylonese Doctor in Scotland: Dr CMM Zubair". It read,

*"News has been received in Ceylon that Dr CMM Zubair, who passed the MB ChB, at Glasgow recently and was about to leave for Ceylon in about a fortnights time, died of meningitis.*

*He was the first member of the Moorish community in Ceylon to obtain British medical qualifications. He left Ceylon a few years ago, having put in a course at the Ceylon Medical College, where he passed the Junior final.*

*The sad news has been cables to Mr CMA Hassan of Dematagoda by Mr Gunaratne, a medical student in Edinburgh. Mr Hassan has wired back requesting that the remains of Mr Zubair be buried according to Mohammedan rites.*

*Considering that at present there are many Egyptians and other of the Muslim faith in Edinburgh there should be no difficulty in according the late Mr Zubair a Mohammedan burial.*

*We extend our sympathies to the members of the bereaved family."*

Thus the Ceylon Moor community's first Western qualified doctor was fated not to return to Ceylon and to his family with the unique distinction he had gained.

This old boy of St Joseph's College, Colombo, was one of its outstanding cricketers, excelling in bowling along with C Horan. He helped St Joseph's College to beat both Royal College and St Thomas' College, to emerge schools champions in 1905.

His best feats were 4 for 18 vs Royal, 2 for 31 vs Wesley, and 3 for 23 vs St Thomas'. Describing the schools match against Bloomfield C and AC, the press reported: "*Zubair for St Joseph's College bowled with remarkable success, taking 5 wickets for 16 runs.*"

That year he was picked as twelfth man for the Combined Colleges team, that played the Colts. The Combined Colleges team comprised the following:-

ROYAL COLLEGE: F Fonseka, HW Pieris, E Ondaatje

ST THOMAS' COLLEGE: CA Perera, W Don Abraham, S Gunasekera

St JOSEPH'S COLLEGE: LS Mendis, B Ohlmus and CMM Zubair (12th man)

The "Ceylon Sports Annual" (edited by PL Bartholomeusz of the "Times of Ceylon: with cricket notes by EW Foenander) said of the 1906 St Joseph's College cricket team:-

*"There were three thoroughly reliable bowlers in S de Silva, C Horan and CM Zubair (sic). The trio presented the variety that is so udeful in cricket. Zubair was hardly as effective as in 1905, but Horan, a left handed medium to slow bowler was more so and de Silva did some remarkable performances at times.*

*Still, with these three, the bowling was hardly strong enough on the good run getting matting wickets on which most of the college matches were played... In batting, Zubair occasionally came to the rescue of the side at a pinch..."*

His mentors at St Joseph's College followed his scholastic career right to the end. When he was successful in the preliminary examination to enter Medical College, the Rector of St Joseph's College, in a letter dated January 28, 1909, counselled him:-

*"My dear Zubair, I was very glad to hear from you again and especially to hear that you have passed your prelim. I am sure you will get on excellently at the Medical College. It is very wise to work up your science subjects before joining. That will give you a good start. I wish you every success and very many Happy New Years..."*

*Have you given up your cricket altogether? I don't know what we are going to do this year. Well, I hope."*

After his death, the St Joseph's College magazine, "Blue and White", No 13 of October 1917, had this "In Memoriam" citation:-

*"Dr CMM Zubair died in Edinburgh almost on the eve of his expected return to Ceylon. he left for England on March 31, 1912, and had a career of uninterrupted success at the University of Edinburgh until he passed the final degree of MB and ChB, in July 1916.*

*He was the first Ceylonese Mohammedan doctor with British qualifications and was Vice President of the Ceylon Students' Union in Edinburgh.*

*The news of his untimely death was a severe shock to his relatives and many friends who were looking forward to his return home as a distinguished doctor.*

*He fell ill about the beginning of January at a seaside place some miles away from Edinburgh. He completely underrated the serious nature of his illness, until, on the pressing advice of a friend, he called in a doctor. As Typhoid was suspected he was removed to the city hospital where he was attended to by several famous doctors.*

*Finally, it became evident that his case was one of meningitis and in spite of all possible attention and the best treatment, he expired on 22nd January 1917, at the age of twenty four years."*

*After Zubair, followed Dr SM jabir, MRCS (England), LRCP (London) in 1917, and Dr MCM Kaleel, MB ChB (Edinburgh) in 1926. Dr M Shafi Hassen was also a contemporary of Dr kaleel in Edinburgh.*

*Dr Zubair, who was the son of Mr and Mrs Hassen (Assen) Lebbe Colenda Marikar of Dematagoda, Colombo 9, had four brothers and three sisters - CM Abdul Hassan and CMM Salih (businessmen), CMM Maharooof (who took to medicine but later became a proctor), CMMS Mackeen (shroff at Apothecaries Ltd), Fathima (Mrs ALM Mohideen), Nafeesa (Mrs Hassan bin Ibrahim) and Razeena (Mrs SLM Mohideen).*

*It was Mackeen's only daughter, Mufthiha, who emulated her paternal uncle's pioneering achievement in 1970 by being the first Ceylon Moor woman to obtain a Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. While being a Senior Prefect at Bishop's College, Colombo 2, she won prizes in science, zoology and chemistry and also took the coveted Dr GH Soysa Memorial Prize for Science. Like her uncle she too excelled in sport, playing in the university's tennis and hockey teams.*

[THE SUNDAY TIMES - SEPTEMBER 9, 1973]

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**Muslim Personalities in Sri Lanka,  
then and now  
Part II**

**Trade, Business, Religion,  
Social, Professional &  
Political**

Compiled by  
Fazli Sameer

To Dad, Mum & Aunty Shireen



## CONTENTS

<b>Main Street Pettah &amp; Moor Business establishments of old</b> .....	<b>451</b>
No. 7 Main Street .....	451
No. 42 Main Street .....	451
No. 47 Main Street .....	451
No. 48 Main Street .....	452
No. 62 Main Street .....	452
W.M. Hassims No. 77 Main Street .....	453
Zitan Stores No. 228 Main Street.....	453
Hameedia Buildings Main Street.....	453
<b>Abdul Rahims – 136 years of trading</b> .....	<b>454</b>
<b>Lady Fareed Home for the Aged</b> .....	<b>457</b>
<b>Names of Ceylon Moors, Malays and other Muslims</b> .....	<b>460</b>
LEGAL DIRECTORY – Advocates, Proctors, & Notaries, Interpreters.....	460
CIVIL SERVICE – Clerks, Cashiers, Officers, Shroffs, & Superintendents.....	463
COLOMBO TRADE LIST .....	466
Muslim Consuls .....	470
<b>Business Establishments</b> .....	<b>471</b>
Muslim Business Establishments – Since 1820 .....	471
<b>Legislative/State Council &amp; Parliament Representation</b> .....	<b>472</b>
Muslim Members of the Legislative Councils of Ceylon – 1833-1931 .....	472
Muslim Members of the First State Council of Ceylon – 1931-1935 .....	473
Muslim Members of the Second State Council of Ceylon – Mar 17 1936-Jul 4 1947.....	473
Muslim Members of Parliament – 1947-1999 .....	474
Elected to by Election subsequent to General Election – 1947 .....	475
<b>Colombo (Western Province) Municipal Council 1881-1941</b> .....	<b>482</b>
<b>Kandy (Central Province) Municipal Council 1865-1940</b> .....	<b>483</b>
<b>Galle (Southern Province) Municipal Council 1882-1941</b> .....	<b>483</b>
<b>Votes Polled at Elections</b> .....	<b>484</b>
Municipal Council Elections – Colombo Voters & Votes polled – 1885-1994 .....	484
Galle – Candidates, Voters & Votes Polled 1882-1937 .....	485
Kandy – Candidates, Voters & Votes Polled 1902-1937 .....	486
<b>Commissioners appointed by the Government to draft the Mohammed Code of 1806</b> .....	<b>488</b>
<b>Committee (Mathecham) responsible for building the Maradana Mosque in 1840:-1841</b> .....	<b>490</b>
<b>Members of the Congregation of the Maradana Mosque</b> .....	<b>494</b>
<b>Contributions of the Members of the Grand Mosque, Colombo, for purchase of land extensions in 1855</b> .....	<b>498</b>
<b>The Members of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society in 1895</b> .....	<b>500</b>
<b>Managing Committee of the Maradana Mosque in 1900</b> .....	<b>501</b>
<b>Muslim Educational Society contributions for the extension of the first Madrasa</b> ...	<b>502</b>
<b>Population Statistics of Sri Lanka Malays by District</b> .....	<b>503</b>
<b>Malay Population increase from 1881 to 1981</b> .....	<b>504</b>
<b>Alphabetical Directory of Sri Lankan Muslim Professionals</b> .....	<b>505</b>
<b>MOSQUES IN COLOMBO</b> .....	<b>510</b>
<b>MOSQUES IN SRI LANKA</b> .....	<b>523</b>
<b>Muslims and Politics in Sri Lanka</b> .....	<b>534</b>
<b>The Ahadiya Movement in Ceylon</b> .....	<b>538</b>
<b>Ayesha Siddeeqa Educational Institute</b> .....	<b>540</b>
<b>Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (Inc) - MICH</b> .....	<b>542</b>

History .....	542
Events .....	543
Activities .....	543
Founders.....	546
Beyond our Fondest Dreams.....	549
MICH Office Bearers 1944 to date.....	558
MICH Women's Section .....	561
<b>MICH Chairmen of Committee's 1944 to date .....</b>	<b>562</b>
<b>All Ceylon Y.M.M.A. Conference .....</b>	<b>573</b>
ALL CEYLON YMMA .....	575
ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE.....	575
OFFICE BEARERS .....	577
CONTACT DETAILS.....	577
MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP.....	578

## **Main Street Pettah & Moor Business establishments of old**

### **No. 7 Main Street**

Haji Ismail Effendi bin Sahib Doray commenced his business at No.7 Main Street, Colombo 12 with gems, jewellery and curios. He decided to perform the pilgrimage of Hajj and also visit some other Muslim countries. Several of his friends decided to join him in this adventure cum pilgrimage. They were Yousoof Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar Hajjar (later Haji, Effendi & grandfather of MHM Yousoof Haji), Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Hajjar Zainudeen (later Haji, Effendi MMC and paternal grandfathere of Mrs. MMI Kariappan), Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Shamsy Lebbe Marikar (later Haji, Effendi and father of Al-Haj SLM Abdul Rahman and paternal grandfathere of Rasool Ahmed Rahman), his Arabic student Sinne Lebbe Marikar Mahmood (later Haji, Effendi, Alim and JP, father of MHM Yousoof Haji) and a cook named Rawuthen Hajjar.

### **No. 42 Main Street**

John Capper in his "Old Ceylon – sketches of life in the olden time" pp154-161 dealing with Ceylon Moor shopkeepers in main Street, Pettah, in the year 1848 describes Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar as "Number 42" based on the address of his business located at No 42, Main Street, Pettah. Many of the Moor businessmen were thus called by the assessment number of their respective businesses in the Pettah as their names were too complex to be remembered and pronounced by the Colonial rulers (British). Capper describes Sulaiman Lebbe as follows:-

"The most flourishing of these gentry is certainly Number Forty Two, a portly oily-skinned, well conducted Moorman with a remarkably well shaved head surmounted on its very apex by a ridiculously little colored cap like an infantive bee-hive. His bazaar is admitted on all hands, especially amongst the fair sex to be "fi.....chop". Yet a stranger would imagine that the fiscal had possession of the place and was on the point of selling off by auction the entire contents; so confused and motley an appearance do they wear.

The doorway, narrow and low, is jealously guarded by a pile of grindstones, surmounted by a brace of soup-tureens on the one side and by tools and weapons of offence on the other"

Number Forty Two directs your attention, in the most winning manner, to a choice and very dusty collection of hanging lamps of the most grotesque fashion. Hos fowling pieces are pointed out to you as perfect marvels.

If you require any blacking brushes or padlocks or Windsor soap or smoking caps or tea kettles, he possesses them in every possible variety, just out by the very latest ship.

### **No. 47 Main Street**

John Capper describes No. 47 as follows:- "For instance there is Number 47, a remarkably well conducted man, very steady, very civil and exceedingly punctual in settling his accounts with his merchants who esteem him accordingly. This worthy Moorman transacts his business much on the principles as his neighbors, but unlike Forty Two and

one or two other active numbers, he is given to indulge in certain siestas during the heat of the day, which no influx of customers can debar him from enjoying. As the hour of high noon approaches he spreads his variegated mat upon the little, dirty rickety, queer looking couch under the banana tree at the back courtyard by the side of the well, and there, under the pleasant leafy shade, he dozes off, fawned by such truant breezes as have to venture within such a cooped-up, shut-in of a yard, dreaming of customers, accounts, and promissory notes. During this slumber it is in vain for anyone to attempt to coax a yard of muslin, or a fish-kettle out of the inexorable Forty Seven. The somniferous spell has descended upon his dwarfy deputy, who rather than wake his master, would forfeit his chance of Paradise, and he no less drowsy himself opens one eye and his mouth only to assure you that the article you require is not to be found in the shop. You insist that it is. You know where to lay your hand upon it. The deputy Forty Seven shakes his drowsy head in somniferous unbelief. You seek it out from its dusty murky hiding place and produce it before his unwilling face. He opens another eye, smiles and nods to you and is away again far into the seventh heaven. There is no help for it but to appropriate the article and pay for it on your next visit."

### **No. 48 Main Street**

John Capper describes No. 48 as follows:- "Number Forty Eight is a small bustling variety of Moorman making vast show of doing a large stroke of business. But as far as I could perceive, doing next to nothing, he bought largely, paid as regularly as most of the other numbers, was constantly opening huge packing cases and crates and sorting out their contents into heaps, but I never remembered to have seen a single customer within his shop. How the man lived was, was for a long time, a perfect mystery to me; But I learnt at length that he disposed of his purchases entirely by means of itinerant hawkers who armed with a yard measure and a pair of scales, and followed by a pack of loaded coolies groaning under huge tin cases and buffalo-skin trucks, perambulated from town to village, from house to hut, and by the dint of wheedling, puffing, and flattering, succeeded in returning with a bag full of coins."

### **No. 62 Main Street**

John Capper describes No. 62 as follows:- "For Number Sixty Two, I entertained a more than ordinary respect. Unlike his Moorish brethren he possessed a remarkably rational name - Saybo Dora. Originally a hawker, he had by his steady conduct won the confidence of the merchants who supplied him with goods wherewith to open a store, of a time when such places did not exist in the town. From small beginnings he rose to great transactions; and now beside a flourishing trade in the bazaar, carried on pretty extensive operations in many smaller towns throughout the country.

It was by no means an unusual thing for this simply-clad mean looking trader to purchase, in one day from one merchant, muslins to the value of a thousand pounds, crockery for half that amount, and perhaps glassware for as much more. For these he would pay down one fourth in hard cash and so great was the confidence reposed in him that his bags of rupees, labelled and endowed with his name and the amount of their contents, were received and placed in the strong-room of the Englishman without being counted - Saybo Dora's name on the packages gave them currency."

## **W.M. Hassims No. 77 Main Street**

Wapu Marikar Hassim, affectionately known as W.M. Hassim, son of Sheikh Marikar, was born on January 26, 1880. His birth was registered by C.L.M. Abdul Majeed (son of Shekadi Marikar Cassim Lebbe Marikar), who was his mother's sister's husband. Hassim attended Wesley College, Colombo, and was preparing to appear for the Notary's examination when his elders recommended that he take up to trade and business. His eldest brother, W.M. Abdul Jabbar, was, at this time, the Manager of his uncle's (I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar) hardware business. Another brother W.M. Thaha was also involved in the same establishment. Abdul Jabbar assisted his younger brothers, Thaha and Hassim to start a separate business, in 1906, at No. 77, Main Street, Pettah. Being an enterprising young man, Hassim's business flourished. Thaha left Ceylon in search of greener pastures in the Far East.

## **Zitan Stores No. 228 Main Street**

During the early years of their life, Y.M. Naina-Marikar and his brother, Yousoof, lost their father and came under the care and guidance of a close relative named Minna Marikar Lebbe Marikar who had no issue. They were absorbed into the business of Minna Marikar who traded in laces and embroidery of local make. When Minna Marikar became ill and decrepit the two brothers became the custodian of the small business and after his death they ventured out into a business of their own which later became one of the most famous of Moor businesses titled Zitan Stores. It was established at No. 228, Main Street, Pettah.

YM was a very philanthropic and kind gentleman who spared no pains in alleviating the hardship and suffering of his community. He was the only Muslim to be marked out for recognition on the occasion of the Coronation of King George VI, for his philanthropy and public spiritedness, as a Justice of Peace, Western Province.

He built a palatial home at No. 76, Rosmead Place, Colombo 7, using only imported Burmese Teak wood for the entire woodwork. He lived there with his wife, Muhsina until their death.

## **Hameedia Buildings Main Street**

Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Zainudeen, MMC, was the son of Idroos Lebbe Muhammad Lebbe Marikar, a leading merchant in the Pettah. He resided in a house in Grandpass and received his English education at Wesley College, Colombo. He, together with his brother Ismail, joined their father's business of Commission Agency and General Merchants. They had their showrooms at Hameedia Buildings, Main Street, Pettah, in the year 1880.

In 1883, Zainudeen, under the leadership of Sahib Doray Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim, later known as Haji Ismail Effendi, together with a few other Muslims, visited several Muslim countries. It is said that they carried a petition to the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt from the Egyptian exiles in Ceylon, namely Arabi Pasha and his colleagues.

Sunday, October 26, 2008

## **Abdul Rahims – 136 years of trading**

A family company standing up to the challenges of time

By Duruthu Edirimuni Chandrasekera

I.L.M. Mohammed Cassim may not have dreamt his small trading business which he established in 1872 in Galle Fort would see its fifth generation – but it did. Mr. Cassim, who had four sons decided to name his business after his oldest son, M.C. Abdul Rahim and also include 'brothers' in it, at the time. As such he called it M.C. Abdul Rahims and Brothers.

A native of Galle, Mr. Cassim's decision to start the business there was with a lot of insight. At the time Galle Fort, with the Galle Port on one side was a bustling city of trade in the 1800s with a lot of British influence (as Ceylon was a colony of the British Empire).

### **Buzzing trade**

Speaking of the inception of their business, the grand nephew of Mr. Cassim, Ruzly Hussein, now Chairman Abdul Rahims, reminisced what he had heard from S.M. Hussein (a son of one of Mr. Cassim's sons) saying that by the 1870s, there was a need for a retail and trading outlet of household items. "The trade was buzzing at the time in Galle Fort. What Mr. Cassim did was seize that opportunity." He said during the latter part of the 1800s, M.C. Abdul Rahim and his three brothers took over their father's business.



Cutlery at the store

"Many products that were traded at the time were British. In the early part of the 20th century such as the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, the company represented brands like Prestige, Wedgwood and Johnson Brothers. Also at the time the company had evolved to wholesale and retail," he said.

Mr. Rahim did not have any children. "But he was very much involved in the business till he passed away in 1930," Bary M. Jaleel, Managing Director of the company, who is Mr. Hussein's nephew,

said joining in the discussion.

"The third generation who were the sons of Mr. Rahim's brothers who had joined the business during the first half of 20th century took over the business after Mr. Rahim. "There were seven brothers and cousins who joined – S.M. Hussein, my father, Cassim Jaleel, Zain Jaleel, Razik Cader, Nizam Cader, Dr. Zain Cader and S.M. Mashoor," Mr. Hussein said.

By this time, Abdul Rahims had expanded into the main street in Galle Town. "By the 1930s we branched out to Kandy and then to Nuwara Eliya – probably in the 1940s. Then we went to Wellawatte in 1958. This year we are celebrating 50 years in Wellawatte," Mr. Hussein said. "We expanded to Pettah as well - this may have been in the 1930s," he added.

Survival

So how has Abdul Rahims survived for the last 136 years and onto the fifth generation? "I

believe it is all to do with integrity and ethical dealings, through which we built confidence among our customers," Mr. Hussein said.

He recalled an incident which took place four years ago during the Sinhala-Hindu New Year at Abdul Rahims' Galle Branch. "A customer wanted six lemonade glass sets, but they were not available at the time. The man insisted saying, 'We always buy from Abdul Rahims the first purchase for the New Year (Ganu Denu) and it has been a custom.' So I called Bary (Jaleel) in Colombo and got him to get the lemonade sets across to Galle. I asked the man to visit the store in the evening and pick them up. Around five o'clock in the evening he came, picked his ware and was elated," he said. Mr. Jaleel noted that it is a southern custom in Galle to conduct Ganu Denu at Abdul Rahims.

Mr. Hussein also asserted that in the 1930s, Abdul Rahims was dealing with international suppliers. "Petromax Lanterns from Germany and Aladdin Lamps from England were the most popular. This international exposure in business may have taught them how to conduct business with professionalism early on."



Ruzly Hussein

Bary M. Jaleel

Mr. Hussein said that during the Second World War, Abdul Rahims opened a furniture manufacturing and selling outlet in Trincomalee to cater to the British Naval base. "After the war we closed it," Mr. Hussein said. He added that the fourth generation, his generation, took over a decade after the Second World War. "I joined in 1964 at the age of 17." By then import licences had been introduced. Exchange control was in place. "Socialism had taken root, which at the time was very fashionable," Mr. Hussein recalled.

### **Worst times**

However he said the worst times were from 1970-'77. "This was a more invasive kind of closed economic society that took root with three economic-related cabinet portfolios in charge of leftists – Ministry of Finance (Dr. N.M. Perera), Ministry of Constitutional Affairs (Dr. Colvin R De Silva) and Ministry of Housing (Peter Keuneman) together with draconian laws which were economically counter productive," he said noting one such policy was the ceiling of Rs. 2,500 on income.

"One needed an exit permit to leave the country and there was the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) which allowed for people to be taken to custody without being hauled before court. These types of economically deterrent laws were in place which inhibited the country," Mr. Hussein said. He said it was the 'worst' era for businesses but Abdul Rahims survived with a lot of difficulty. During 1964, Abdul Rahims branched into industries. Diamond Ceiling fans, Diamond Kerosene cookers, Diamond enamel ware and Diamond glassware were some. Abdul Rahims did this with Hong Kong-Chinese collaboration "We had these industries till 1994-1995, but we realised that manufacturing consumer items with a limited market was not economical due to Indian and Chinese product influxes and we exited this segment in 1995," he added.

He said that Abdul Rahims started two corrugated carton plants which they sold to Munchee (due to the same reason) in 1995. "After this we just concentrated on retail

wholesale and institutional sales. We aggressively did tableware and kitchenware catering to the hotel and the food industry during the last 10 years," Mr. Jaleel said. Abdul Rahims changed into a limited liability company in 1995. "This was easier to function than a partnership than before and also easier to trade in the stock market," Mr. Hussein said. What now?

"We want to do something completely outside trading. We are looking at options in the food industry such as restaurants," he said. He added the company is also looking at the Maldives for some ventures. He said the company was trying to start housing projects during the last two years, but has put it on hold for the moment due to the current economic downturn. "We also want to enhance our brand network. We have aligned with Singer Mega outlets for cross trading," he said, adding the company is planning to bring in professionals to the company in a bid to be professionally managed.

### **Stock options**

"We would like at some point in time to list on the Colombo Stock Exchange, but a lot of other things need to come into place. That is why we are on the process of professionalizing the company to keep in line with this idea," he noted.



# **Lady Fareed Home for the Aged**

## ***Ladies who long for Company***

**By *Nirmala Kannangara***

In youth the days are short and the years are long; in old age the years are short and the days long - Panin

For the 'residents' (inmates) at Lady Fareed Home for Elders the days are long. They want company, attention, love and happiness. Like the rest of us they too love to spend their time amongst their kith and kin. But the sad fact is that they do not have anyone near and dear to dote on them and bring them a little happiness in these their sunset years.

They long to see someone visiting them. Anybody who visits them be it known or unknown they rally round them as if the guest is known to them for long years. When The Sunday Leader visited Lady Fareed Home for Elders in Pamunuwila Road, Makola, Kiribathgoda, the 14 residents were overjoyed. For some we were their friends and for the rest we were some of their kith and kin.

Established in 1957 and opened by Sir Oliver Gunatilake the then governor general of Ceylon, this was the only elders' home for Muslims in the country then. This was a generous gift by Philanthropist Lady Ameena Fareed who also gifted Muslim Ladies College Bambalapitiya. She was the wife of Sir Razeek Fareed, father of the Sinhala-Yonaka Ekamuthu Kama and the one who moved the Sinhala Only Bill in the then legislature.

### **Destitutes and those well to do**

Governed by the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home and managed by a committee, Lady Fareed Home for Elders could accommodate 60 although the number of residents are only 14 at present.

There are two types of residents - the destitutes, and those who can afford to spend on themselves. Those who are destitute are given free food and accommodation while those who could spend on themselves make a contribution. "We do not demand a particular amount from these residents, but according to their affordability they give us money.

"This is a place where the elderly can spend the evening of their lives in a quiet and tranquil environment. It is tidy and comfortable and those living abroad prefer to keep their parents and loved ones at this home.

"Those who need medical treatment are attended to by our doctor who visits the home twice a week, and the home provides them the food they really love to taste," said the management committee members on the basis of anonymity, to The Sunday Leader.

### **Mutual help**

Enjoying the facilities provided for a comfortable life, the inmates gather at meal times in the well kept dining room and watch movies in the lobby. They are happy. They share jokes. They also help one another. The residents give a helping hand to those who cannot walk without help. They also help out those who cannot do things on their own like combing hair etc.

Although this home was housed in a grand old building earlier it later became dilapidated with time. It is now housed in a new building put up by Hajee Eliyas Abdul Kareem in memory of his departed parents Abdul Kareem and Zubeida Mohamed. The home shifted to the new building from September 2 this year.

### **Friendship and warmth**

The childlike faces of these inmates speak volumes and they seek friendship and warmth. They need our love and care very badly and sharing a few hours with them would bring them happiness and satisfaction. Charity does not mean just giving money. It means providing happiness - a ray of hope and light to those who are in the evening years of life.

"Although some are from affluent families they still love to get a present - no matter how small - for it brings them happiness.

"There was a rich lady from Kandy - a teacher at Girls' High School, Kandy who passed away a little over two years ago. Though her kith and kin bought her whatever she needed she still loved to receive gifts from visitors. Once I asked her what she would wish to have and she innocently came up to me and whispered 'a bottle of spray perfume.' The very next day I gave her the bottle of spray perfume," added the management committee member.

The Sunday Leader spoke to some of the residents and this is what they had to say about their lives and how they spend their time at the home.

Ranee Cuttilan from Kandy, although old and feeble told The Sunday Leader that she was 16 years old.

### **Not given in marriage**

Cuttilan is forgetful, and according to her friends she was not given in marriage and she still feels sad about it. She is from a well to do family and her relations visit her sometimes. "I am 16 years old and I will be going home tomorrow. My father got a big house built for me and I'll be getting married tomorrow. Please do attend my wedding reception," she invited me to her imaginary wedding. She held a doll in her hands and when asked as to who that was, started stroking the doll's head. "This is my baby. I love her so much and I want to cuddle her," she said with an aching heart and innocent smile.

Marian from Kannantota is another inmate who spoke to The Sunday Leader.

"I am not married but have relations in Avissawella. They are not in a position to visit me due to financial difficulties. I have been in this home for the last 11 years and a few years ago I got TB and I was hospitalised in Ragama and Welisara. All my expenses were borne

by the management. Although I am really happy here, I would like to stay with my relations.

### **Suffered immensely**

"But this is life, what's to be done. From my small days I was working for a Muslim family in Avissawella but they ill treated me. I had to suffer immensely. Fortunately a kind hearted lady brought me here," claimed Marian.

"I am the only child and come from a well to do family. After the demise of my Mummy and Daddy my relations brought me here. I am really happy here. I do not want to go home again," said Razul Jessima from Balangoda .

"I was adopted from my childhood and they brought me here. I have never seen my parents," said Abusa from Kandy.

H.M. Hijudeen, 76 years old, looks after the home in the absence of the warden. He claims that he has a son who is a DJ and is longing to go back home once the construction of his son's house is finished.

### **Met with accident**

"My wife is not living and I was a salesman in a mercantile firm and once the government sent my Indian employers back to India I worked at a security firm as a supervisor/control officer. I met with two accidents and now one leg is two and a half inches shorter than the other. I am here for the past 10 years," claimed Hijudeen.

"I studied in a leading girl's school in Colombo but cannot remember the name of the school. Although I am staying here I am very rich. I like to go home but nobody wants to take me," said Bin from Mt. Lavinia, innocently.

For those who would like to share a lighter moment with these innocents, the management is ready to arrange the setting for such a meeting. The management would welcome those generous enough to provide a meal or two to the inmates, and those who wish to have the meals cooked at the home could make use of the well kept kitchen - there are two helpers to give a helping hand in the cooking - and share the meals with the inmates to bring a smile onto the faces of these helpless people.

## Names of Ceylon Moors, Malays and other Muslims

### Extracted from The Ceylon Directory and Handbook – 1876

Compiled, printed and published by "Ceylon Observer" office on 15-Dec-1877

### LEGAL DIRECTORY – Advocates, Proctors, & Notaries, Interpreters

[DC = District Court, SC = Supreme Court, CoR = Court of Requests]

Name	Position	Dept	Location	Ref. Pg #
A. Kariappar	Notary		Kalmunai	571
A.C.M. Jayman	Notary		Badulla	571
A.L. Mohamadoe Lebbe	Notary		Kandy	570
A.L.M. Oduma Lebbe Marikar	Notary		Dickwella	573
A.L.M.P. Ibrahim	Notary		Tangalle	573
A.L.S. Mamet Mudaliyar	Tamil Int.	DC	Galle	582
A.M. Esalirvai	Notary		Kattankudi	571
A.M. Jayman Mudaliyar	Tamil Int.	DC	Badulla	582
A.M. Seria Lebbe Marikar	Notary		Galuplade	573
A.M.A. Lebbe Marikar	Notary		Kandy	570
A.Z.A. Enayatoollah	Notary		Jaffna	572
Agmedo Lebbe Sinnepillai	Proctor	DC	Batticaloa	562
Ahamado Bawa	Proctor	SC	Colombo	562
Assen Marikar Suguna Marikar	Notary		Kalpitiya	571
C.A.L. Marikar	Tamil Int.	Police	Galle	584
C.L.J.L. Marikar	Notary		Kalutara	569
C.O.L. Marikar	S&T Int.	CoR	Colombo	583
D.S.L.L.M.S. Mustappa Lebbe	Notary		Weligama	573

<b>Ibrahim Ahmadu Naina Marikar</b>	Notary		Puttalam	571
<b>J. Marikar</b>	Notary		Mannar	572
<b>J.L.C. Marikar</b>	Notary		Ganetenna	568
<b>J.L.M. Marikar</b>	Notary		Kattankudi	571
<b>J.L.M. Odeya Marikar Miskan</b>	Notary		Tangalle	573
<b>J.M.O. Marikar</b>	Notary		Kalutara	569
<b>J.S. Assen Naina Marikar</b>	Notary		Chilaw	571
<b>K.L. Slema Lebbe</b>	Notary		Kandy	570
<b>L.K. Onderobavai</b>	Notary		Kalmunai	571
<b>L.M. Cassim Maricar</b>	Notary		Kandy	570
<b>M.A. Mohamatudan</b>	Notary		Mannar	572
<b>M.L. Cuppa Tamby</b>	Proctor	SC	Colombo	563
<b>M.L.O. Kroos Lebbe</b>	Notary		Matara	573
<b>M.M.L.W.M.C.S. Marikar</b>	Notary		Mannar	572
<b>M.S.S.J.L. Marikar</b>	Notary		Kalutara	569
<b>O.L. Abdul Cader</b>	Notary		Galuplade	572
<b>O.L. Sultan Marikar</b>	Notary		Tangalle	573
<b>O.L.M. Ahamado Lebbe Marikar</b>	Notary		Dondra	573
<b>Ossenwapu Kadar Mohamad</b>	Notary		Chilaw	571
<b>P.T.K. Thambi</b>	Notary		Ruwanwella	568
<b>P.T.T.S.A. Kadar</b>	Notary		Mevatagoda	568
<b>S. Ahamedo Lebbe (Agamutbulevrai)</b>	Notary		Puliyantivu	571
<b>S.L. Cassim Thamby</b>	Notary		Colombo	568
<b>S.L. Marikar</b>	Proctor	SC	Kandy	564
<b>S.L. Sultan Marikar</b>	Notary		Kandy	570

<b>S.L.M.O.L. Marikar</b>	Notary		Kalutara	569
<b>S.M.S. Marikar Lebbe</b>	Notary		Kandy	570
<b>T.P. Buksh</b>	Writer	Police	Puttalam	584
<b>U.L.J. Lebbe Marikar</b>	Clerk	Police	Hambantota	584
<b>W.M. Ahamedo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Notary		Kandy	570
<b>Y. Kather Kannetame</b>	Notary		Punamalen	571

## CIVIL SERVICE – Clerks, Cashiers, Officers, Shroffs, & Superintendents

[PWD=Public Works Department, P/Office=Post Office, Reg/BMD=Registrar or Birth, Marriage & Deaths]

Name	Position	Dept	Location	Ref. Pg #
A. Preena	Clerk	Registrar	Colombo	590
A.L.J.L. Marikar	Stamp Clerk		Kandy	577
A.L.M. Lebbe Marikar	Asst. Shroff	Kachcheri	Colombo	574
A.S. Noordeen	Postmaster	P/Office	Hambantota	581
Abbas Juman	Dispenser	Medical	Colombo	589
Abdul C. Marikar	Clerk 9 <sup>th</sup> .	Treasury	Colombo	574
Abdul Rahman	Head Clerk	Railways	Gampola	593
Adjim	Clerk	Police	Kandy	590
B. Massaron	Inspector-4 <sup>th</sup>	Police	Kurunegala	590
B.H. Muttalaib (Mudaliyar)	Salt Supdt.		Hambantota	576
B.T.A. Doole	Mudaliyar	Magam Pattu	Hambantota	576
C.C. Aboobucker Mudaliyar	Cashier	Customs	Colombo	580
C.L.M. Abdul Kareem	Clerk 5 <sup>th</sup> .		Galle	576
C.L.M. Abdul Majeed	Asst. Cashier	Treasury	Colombo	574
C.W. Usup Lebbe	Clerk 4 <sup>th</sup> .		Kurunegala	575
E. Abdul Cader	Clerk	PWD	Pioneer Br.	579
H. Akbar	Inspector	CMC	Colombo 7	599
Habeeboo Johoran	Comm. Collector	MC	Kandy	600
Jemedar Ahlip Sourjah	Inspector-3 <sup>rd</sup>	Police	Galle	590
Jemedar Rasseedeenuera Dewango	Inspector-3 <sup>rd</sup>	Police	Panadura	590
Kasi Lebbe Samsudeen	Shroff	Kachcheri	Colombo	574

<b>M. Haniff</b>	Clerk	Railways	Colombo 2	591
<b>M. Musafar</b>	Gaoler	Prisons	Colombo 12	590
<b>M. Ossen Lebbe Marikar</b>	Consul, Turkey	DPL	Colombo	609
<b>M. Saddue</b>	Station Master	Railways	Colombo 4	591
<b>M. Samahon</b>	Gaoler	Fiscals	Badulla	587
<b>M. Siddi Lebbe</b>	MMC	MC	Kandy	600
<b>M. Varish</b>	Clerk	Railways	Colombo 2	591
<b>M.C. Abdul Rahuman</b>	MMC	CMC	Colombo 1	599
<b>M.R. Muthaliph</b>	English Registrar	Reg/BMD	Colombo 2	586
<b>M.T.E.L. Maraikar</b>	Comm. Collector	MC	Kandy	600
<b>N. Fareed</b>	Irrigation Officer	PWD	Muttur	578
<b>N. Salahim Cassim</b>	Clerk	Fiscals	Hambantota	587
<b>O.A. Marikar</b>	Storekeeper	Roads	Matara	595
<b>O.L.M. Sinne Lebbe</b>	Clerk	MC	Galle	600
<b>P.T.M. Markar</b>	Postmaster	P/Office	Haldumulla	581
<b>R. Muthaliph</b>	Clerk	PWD	Colombo	578
<b>R. Packiar</b>	Clerk	Railways	Mount Lavinia	591
<b>S. Amit</b>	Inspector-4th	Police	Kandy	590
<b>S. Kitchilan</b>	Under Brakesman	Railways	Colombo	592
<b>S.H. Eman Saibo</b>	Gaoler	Fiscals	Anuradhapura	587
<b>S.L. Cassim</b>	Salt Constable		Hambantota	576
<b>S.L.M. Abdul Rahman</b>	Process Clerk	Fiscals	Badulla	587
<b>S.M.C. Lebbe Marikar</b>	Tamil Registrar	Reg/BMD	Colombo 12	586
<b>S.M.O.L. Marikar</b>	Shroff	Loan Board	Colombo	587
<b>S.N. Salim</b>	Salt Constable		Hambantota	576



<b>Sheikh Bucktowan</b>	Foreman	Railways	Nawalapitiya	593
<b>Sheikh C. Buksh</b>	Interpreter		N' Eliya	577
<b>T. Samsudeen</b>	Clerk	CMC	Colombo 7	599
<b>U.L.A. Mohamado Lebbe</b>	Record Keeper		Kandy	577
<b>U.L.J. Marikar</b>	Clerk	Roads	Hambantota	595
<b>U.L.M.A. Marikar</b>	Head Shroff		Matara	576
<b>U.L.M.C. Marikar</b>	Asst. Shroff		Matara	576
<b>W.L.A. Carim</b>	Postmaster	P/Office	Badulla	581
<b>W.M. Nainda Marikar</b>	Tamil Registrar	Reg/BMD	Colombo 14	586
<b>Z.A. Cassim</b>	Storekeeper		Hambantota	576

## COLOMBO TRADE LIST

Name	Business	Street	Location	Ref. Pg #
A.L. Mahamedo Lebbe Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
A.L. Lebbena Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
A.L. Samsudeen	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Abdul Rahman	Jewellers	Main Str.	Colombo 11	619
Abubacker Lebbe Ibrahim Lebbe	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
Ahamado Ally Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Ahamedo Mohideen	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Ahamedu Lebbe Tamby	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Amby Marikar Idroos Lebbe Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Arasy Marikar Mohammedu Lebbe Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Assen Lebbe	Jewellers	26 Main Str.	Colombo 11	619
Assen Lebbe Shamsuddeen	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
Avoo Lebbe	Jewellers	16 Main Str.	Colombo 11	619
Avoo Lebbe Marikar Sinna Lebbe	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
C.L. Wappu Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
C.M. Avoo Lebbe Marikar	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
Casie Lebbe Marikar Doray	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
Hadjie Marikar & Sons	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
I.L. Assena Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
I.L. Ibrahim Lebbe	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
Isboe Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621

<b>K.G.L. Avoo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
<b>K.L.M. Saibo Doray</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Katoo Bawa Madana Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Kunjee Marikar Kolanda Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
<b>M. Ossen Lebbe Marikar</b>	Jewellers	Baillie Str.	Colombo 1	619
<b>M. Ossen Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.C. Abdul Rahman</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.C. Mohamed Ismail &amp; Sons</b>	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>M.C. Mohamedo Usoof</b>	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>M.J. Nooris</b>	Jewellers	Main Str.	Colombo 11	619
<b>M.L. Lebbe Cando Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.L. Rasa Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.L.M. Slema Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.M. Abdul Cader</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.T. Assen Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>M.T. Cassie Lebbe</b>	Jewellers	Chatham Str.	Colombo 1	619
<b>Mohammedu Lebbe Kandu Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>N.M. Uduma Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>Naina Lebbe Mahamadu Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>O.L. Mahamadu Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>O.L. Samsi Lebbe</b>	Jewellers	Chatham Str.	Colombo 1	619
<b>O.L.M. Ahamedo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>O.L.M. Slema Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>P.B. Omar Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622

<b>P.T. Colanda Marikar</b>	Stamp Vendor	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>P.T. Sinne Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Packeer Bawa &amp; Sons</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>R.M. Tamby Marikar &amp; Company</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.D. Ismail Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.L. Ahamedo Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.L. Avoo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.L. Mohammedo Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
<b>S.L. Samsy Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.L. Samsy Lebbe &amp; Company</b>	Auctioneer, Commission Agent & Retailer	Main Str.	Colombo 11	618
<b>S.L. Sinne Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.L. Slema Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
<b>S.L. Unis Lebbe</b>	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>S.M. Moulana</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.M.L. Ahamedo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.T. Colanda Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>S.T. Sraye Lebbe</b>	Trading	42 Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>Saibu Ismail Lebbe &amp; Bros.</b>	Trading	Main Str.	Colombo 11	621
<b>Saigu Saibo Meera Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Segoe Paridu Ismail Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Sesma Lebbe Avoo Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	621
<b>Seyadu Meera Lebbe Ismail Lebbe Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Sinne Meera Marikar Tamby</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622

<b>Sinne Tamby Lebbena Marikar</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622
<b>Tamby Pakier Bawa</b>	Trading	Main Street	Colombo 11	622

## Muslim Consuls

### Turkey & Persia

Name of Consul	Date of Appointment	End of Service	Country
HE Hussain Lebbe Marikar	7-Feb-1865	1890	Turkey
HE H.L.M. Abdul Majid Effendi	13-Mar-1891	1904	Turkey
HE Muhammad Ismail Muhammad Ali	25-Nov-1890	1928	Persia
Sir Muhammad Macan Markar, VC	30-Mar-1903	1914	Turkey
HE Ibrahim Didi Ibn Haji Ali Didi	19-Apr-1882	1914	Turkey

HE = His Excellency, VC = Vice Consul

## Business Establishments

### Muslim Business Establishments – Since 1820

Name of Establishment	Start	End	Address	Business Type
O.L.M.A.L.M. Alim & Sons	1820	1920	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cross Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Import of hardware & household items
S.M. Assena Marikar & Company	1840		6 & 14 China Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Import of hardware & household items
I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar & Company	1840		236 Main Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Import of iron, steel, metal, hardware, small arms, ammunition & electrical good
M.C. Joonoos & Company	1855	1928	12 Grand Orient Hotel, Colombo 1	Export of Jewelry & Gems
S.L. Naina-Marikar & Company	1859	1930	188 Keyzer Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Import of textiles & automobiles (1920)
O.L.M. Macan-Markar & Company	1860		Grand Orient Hotel, Galle Face Hotel, Hotel Taprobane, Galle Face Courts	Export of Jewellery & Gems
C.L. Marikar-Bawa & Sons	1869		90 Chatham Street, Fort, Colombo 1. Now moved to Colombo 4	Import of Diamonds & Silk, Export of Jewelry & Gems
Abdul Rahim & Sons	1872		43/44 Keyzer Street, Pettah, Colombo 11. Branches in Galle/Kandy	Import of household items, hardware, furniture & electrical goods
Abdul Hussain Jafferjee	1887	1910	184 Bankshall Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Commission Agents to foreign Companies
Abdul Latife & Company	1887		23/25 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cross Street, Pettah, Colombo 11	Import of household items
A.H. Hamid & Company	1886	1983	9/10 Bristol Building, Fort, Colombo 1	Import of Diamonds, Export of Pearls, Jewelry & Gems
N.D.H. Abdul Caffoor & Sons	1895		Gaffoor Building, Bristol Street, Colombo 1	Export of Gems, Pearls, & Jewelry, Import of Diamonds

## Legislative/State Council & Parliament Representation

### Muslim Members of the Legislative Councils of Ceylon – 1833-1931

Council Member Name	Start of Membership	End of Membership	Elected or Nominated
<a href="#">Hon. Muhammad Cassim Abdul Rahman</a>	1833	1899	Nominated
Hon. Ahmadu Lebbe Muhammad Sheriff	1833	1900	Nominated
<a href="#">Hon. Wapchi Marikar Abdul Rahman</a>	22-Sep-1900	1921	Nominated
<a href="#">Hon. Noordeen Hajjar Muhammad Abdul Cader</a>	25-Sep-1915	1931	Elected
Hon. S.R. Muhammad Sultan	2-May-1924	1927	Nominated
Hon. M.T. Akbar	2-May-1924	1927	Nominated to the Legislative Council
<a href="#">Hon. Tuan Branudeen Jayah</a>	1924	1927	Nominated to the Legislative Council
Sir Muhammad Macan-Markar	1924	1931	Elected to Legislative Council



### Muslim Members of the First State Council of Ceylon – 1931-1935

Council Member Name	Start of Membership	End of Membership	Elected or Nominated
Hon. Muhammad Khalid. Saldin	10-Mar-1931	1935	Nominated to the State Council
<a href="#">Sir Muhammad Macan-Markar</a> (Minister of Communications & Works)	1931	1924-1931	Elected to State Council

### Muslim Members of the Second State Council of Ceylon – Mar 17 1936-Jul 4 1947

Council Member Name	Start of Membership	End of Membership	Elected or Nominated
Dr. Muhammad Cassim Muhammad Kaleel (Colombo Central by Election July 1942)	10-Mar-1931	1935	Nominated to State Council
Sir Razik Fareed Abdul Rahman	10-Apr-1936	1947	Nominated to State Council
<a href="#">Hon. Tuan Branudeen Jayah</a>	1936	1947	Nominated to the Legislative Council

## Muslim Members of Parliament – 1947-1999

### 1947-1952

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
<a href="#">Hon. Tuan Branudeen Jayah</a> (Colombo Central - UNP) Resigned Feb 17 1950	COLOMBO CENTRAL	1947-1952	Elected
ARM Aboobucker		1947-1952	Elected
Abdul Aziz (Maskeliya) –UNP	MUTTUR	1947	Elected
MN Ebrahim – Independent	POTTUVIL	1947	Elected
HS Ismail – UNP	PUTTALAM	1947	Elected
Gate Mudaliyar MS Kariapper – UNP	KALMUNAI	1947	Elected
Mudaliyar A Sinne Lebbe - UNP	BATTICALOA	1947	Elected

### Elected to by Election subsequent to General Election – 1947

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
A Aziz	MASKELIYA	11.03.1950 - 1952	Elected
Dr. MCM Kaleel	COLOMBO CENTRAL	06.05.1950 - 1952	Elected

### 1952-1956

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
Sir Razik Fareed - Independent	COLOMBO CENTRAL (3)	1952-1956	Elected
Dr. MCM Kaleel - UNP	COLOMBO CENTRAL (2)	1952-1956	Elected
CAS Marikar	KADUGANNAWA (2)	1952-1956	Elected
MN Ebrahim – Independent	POTTUVIL	1952-1956	Elected
HS Ismail – UNP	PUTTALAM	1952-1956	Elected
AM Merza - Independent	KALMUNAI	1952-1956	Elected
MEH Muhammad Ali	MUTTUR (2)	1952-1956	Elected

### 1956-1960

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
Sir Razik Fareed - Independent	COLOMBO CENTRAL (2)	1956-1960	Elected
AH Macan Markar - Independent	KALKUDAH	1956-1960	Elected
CAS Marikar	KADUGANNAWA (1)	1956-1960	Elected
MM Mustapha - Independent	POTTUVIL	1956-1960	Elected

HS Ismail – UNP	PUTTALAM	1956-1960	Elected
Dr. MP Drahman		1956-1960	Nominated
MEH Muhammad Ali	MUTTUR	1956-1960	Elected
Gate Mudaliar MS Kariapper - FP	KALMUNAI	1956-1960	Elected

### 1960 March – 1960 July

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
M Abdul Bakeer Markar - UNP	BERUWELA	1960	Elected
AH Macan Markar - Independent	KALKUDAH	1960	Elected
CAS Marikar – SLFP/MEP	KADUGANNAWA (1)	1960	Elected
MA Abdul Majeed - Independent	POTTUVIL	1960	Elected
MIM Abdul Majeed - Independent	NINTAVUR	1960	Elected
ACS Hameed - UNP	AKURANA (2)	1960	Elected
MEH Muhammad Ali	MUTTUR (2)	1960	Elected
Gate Mudaliyar MS Kariapper - LPP	KALMUNAI	1960	Elected
AH Macan Markar - Independent	BATTICALOA (2)	1960	Elected
Dr. MCM Kaleel - UNP	COLOMBO CENTRAL	1960	Elected
SK Jafferjee		1960	Nominated
Dr. TB Jayah		1960	Nominated

### 1960 July - 1965

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
K Abdul Jabbar - SLFP	GALAGEDARA	1960-1965	Elected
AH Macan Markar - Independent	BATTICALOA (2)	1960-1965	Elected

<b>AL Abdul Majeed - SLFP</b>	MUTTUR (2)	1960-1965	Elected
<b>MA Abdul Majeed - Independent</b>	POTTUVIL	1960-1965	Elected
<b>MIM Abdul Majeed - Independent</b>	NINTAVUR	1960-1965	Elected
<b>ACS Hameed - UNP</b>	AKURANA (2)	1960-1965	Elected
<b>MC Ahamed - FP</b>	KALMUNAI	1960-1965	Elected
<b>IA Cader</b>	BERUWELA	1960-1965	Elected
<b>Sir Razik Fareed OBE - UNP</b>	COLOMBO CENTRAL	1960-1965	Elected
<b>Dr. MCM Kaleel - UNP</b>	COLOMBO CENTRAL (3)	1960-1965	Elected
<b>MHM Naina Marikar - UNP</b>	PUTTALAM	1960-1965	Elected
<b>B. Zahier Lye</b>		1960-1965	Nominated
<b>Dr. Badiudin Mahmud</b>		1960-1965	Nominated
<b>Dr. MP Drahman</b>		1960-1965	Nominated

### 1965-1970

<b>Council Member Name</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Period of Membership</b>	<b>Elected or Nominated</b>
<b>M Abdul Bakeer Markar - UNP</b>	<b>BERUWELA</b>	<b>1965-1970</b>	<b>Elected</b>
<b>M Falil Abdul Caffoor - UNP</b>	<b>COLOMBO CENTRAL</b>	<b>1965-1970</b>	<b>Elected</b>
<b>AL Abdul Majeed - UNP</b>	POTTUVIL	1965-1970	Elected
<b>MEH Muhammad Ali - FP</b>	<b>MUTTUR (1)</b>	<b>1965-1970</b>	<b>Elected</b>
<b>MM Mustapha - UNP</b>	LAGGALA	1965-1970	Elected
<b>ACS Hameed - UNP</b>	AKURANA (2)	1965-1970	Elected
<b>AL SinnaLebbe</b>	BATTICALOA (2)	1965-1970	Elected
<b>Gate Mudaliyar MS Kariapper - LPP</b>	KALMUNAI	1965-1970	Elected
<b>MHM Naina Marikar - UNP</b>	PUTTALAM	1965-1970	Elected

MH Mohamed - UNP	BORELLA	1965-1970	Elected
Sir Razik Fareed - UNP		1965-1970	Nominated
Mohamed Izadeen Mohamed QC - UNP		1965-1970	Nominated

### 1970-1977

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
IA Cader - SLFP	BERUWELA	1970-1977	Elected
M Falil Abdul Caffoor - UNP	COLOMBO CENTRAL (2)	1970-1977	Elected
AL Abdul Majeed - UNP	MUTTUR (1)	1970-1977	Elected
MA Abdul Majeed - UNP	POTTUVIL	1970-1977	Elected
MM Mustapha - UNP	NINTAVUR	1970-1977	Elected
ACS Hameed - UNP	AKURANA	1970-1977	Elected
SEM AssenKuddhoos - SLFP	PUTTALAM	1970-1977	Elected
MC Ahamed - SLFP	KALMUNAI	1970-1977	Elected
MHM Naina Marikar - UNP	PUTTALAM	9.10.1972-1977	Nominated
Raheem	MANNAR	25.2.1974-1977	Nominated
Dr. Badiudin Mahmud - SLFP		1970-1977	Nominated
Abdul Aziz		1970-1977	Nominated

### 1977-1986

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
M Abdul Bakeer Markar - UNP	BERUWELA (1)	1977-1986	Elected Resigned June 13 1988
Imthiaz Bakeer Markar - UNP	BERUWELA (1)	1977-1986	Nominated

			July 14 1988
Mohamed Jabir Abdul Cader - UNP	COLOMBO CENTRAL (2)		
M Haleem Ishak -	COLOMBO CENTRAL (3)	1977-1986	Elected
AM Mohamed Jalaldeen	POTTUVIL (1)	1977-1986	Elected
MA Abdul Majeed - UNP	SAMMANTHURAI	1977-1986	Elected
MEH Maharooof	MUTTUR	1977-1986	Elected
ACS Hameed - UNP	HARISPATTUWA	1977-1986	Elected
MH Mohamed - UNP	BORELLA	1977-1986	Elected
ML Ahamed Freeth d:Sep-10-1985	BATTICALOA (2)	1977-1986	Elected
MHM Naina Marikar - UNP	PUTTALAM	1977-1986	Elected
AR SinnaLebbe	BATTICALOA (2)	1977-1986	Nominated 25.10.1985
ML Marikar Aboosally	BALANGODA	1977-1986	Elected
ULM Farook	RUWANWELLA	1977-1986	Nominated
Abdul Razak Mansoor	KALMUNAI	1977-1986	Elected

### 1986-1994

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
ARM Abdul Cader	MAHANUWARA	1986-1994	Elected
Imthiaz Abdul Bakeer Markar - UNP	KALUTARA	1986-1994	Elected
Mohamed Jabir Abdul Cader - UNP	COLOMBO CENTRAL	1986-1994	Elected
M Haleem Ishak - SLFP	COLOMBO CENTRAL (3)	1986-1994	National List
Sed Ahmed Abdul Majeed - UNP	POLONNARUWA	1986-1994	Elected
AA Mohamed Abdul Majeed - UNP		1986-1994	National List

MEH MaharooF - UNP	TRINCOMALEE	1986-1994	Elected
ACS Hameed - UNP	MAHANUWARA	1986-1994	Elected
ML Marikar AbooSally - UNP	RATNAPURA	1986-1994	Elected
Sellathurai Abu Bakr - SLMC	VANNI	1986-1994	Elected
Mohamed Hassim Amit - UNP		1986-1994	National List
MHM Ashraff - SLMC	DIGAMADULLA	1986-1994	Elected
AHM Azwer - UNP		1986-1994	National List
Azeez Basheer Ameer	TRINCOMALEE	1986-1994	National List from 19 Jul 1989 Resigned 23 July 1990
Abdul Razak Mansoor		1986-1994	National List
nm Buhardeen - SLMC		1986-1994	National List
ULM Farook - UNP	KEGALLE	1986-1994	Elected
ML Alim Muhammad Hisbullah - SLMC	BATTICALOA	1986-1994	Elected
M Sham MaharooF - UNP	HAMBANTOTA	1986-1994	Elected from Jan 8 1990

### 1994 -1999

Council Member Name	Electorate	Period of Membership	Elected or Nominated
MLAM Hisbullah – SLMC	BATTICALOA	1994-1999	Elected
Seyed Ali Zahir Moulana – UNP	BATTICALOA	1994-1999	Elected
AHM Fowzie – PA	COLOMBO	1994-1999	Elected
MH Mohamed – UNP	COLOMBO	1994-1999	Elected
MHM Ashraff – SLMC	DIGAMADULLA	1994-1999	Elected
ULM Mohideen – SLMC	DIGAMADULLA	1994-1999	Elected



Dr. IM Ilyas - SLMC	JAFFNA	1994-1999	Elected
MAC Zafarullah - Independent	JAFFNA	1994-1999	Elected resigned 22 Aug 1994
Imthiaz Abdul Bakeer Markar - UNP	KALUTARA	1994-1999	Elected
ARM Abdul Cader - UNP	KANDY	1994-1999	Elected
ULM Farook - UNP	KEGALLE	1994-1999	Elected
M Kabir Hashim - UNP (in place of Jayatilleke Podinilame)	KEGALLE	1994-1999	Elected
MM Abdul Majeed - SLMC	TRINCOMALEE	1994-1999	Elected
MEH Maharroof - UNP	TRINCOMALEE	1994-1999	Elected
SSM Abu Bakr - SLMC	VANNI	1994-1999	Elected
Rauff Hakeem - PA		1994-1999	National List
Alavi Moulana - PA		1994-1999	National List
MM Zuhair - PA		1994-1999	National List
AHM Azwer - UNP		1994-1999	National List

## Colombo (Western Province) Municipal Council 1881-1941

Council Member Name	Start Membership	of	End Membership	of	Elected or Nominated
Maas Sodma Jayah Akbar	1881		1889		Nominated
Muhammad Ismail Muhammad Haniffa	1884		1900		Elected
M.L.M. Zainudeen	1901		1904		Elected
Peston Jee Khan	1904		1909		Nominated
H.K. Khan	1904		1912		Nominated
Noordeen Hajjar Muhammad Abdul Cader	1908		1938		Elected
P.D. Khan	1912		1913		Elected
B.F. Khan	1921		1922		Nominated
Adamjee Lukmanjee	1922		1929		Nominated
Sir Razik Fareed Abdul Rahman	1932		1937		Elected
	1942		1946		Elected
M. Mamujee	1936		1941		Nominated
F.G. Hussain	1936		1941		Elected
N.M.M. Ishak	1936		1941		Elected

## Kandy (Central Province) Municipal Council 1865-1940

Council Member Name	Start Membership	of	End Membership	of	Elected or Nominated
Siddi Lebbe Muhammad Cassim Marikar	1865		1882		Elected
P.T. Habibu Lebbe	1902		1906		Elected
Usoof Ismail	1923		1937		Nominated
M.A.S. Marikar	1937		1940		Elected

## Galle (Southern Province) Municipal Council 1882-1941

Council Member Name	Start Membership	of	End Membership	of	Elected or Nominated
Ismail Lebbe Marikar Mohideen Bawa	1882		1887		Elected
I.L.M. Abdul Cader	1887		1894		Elected
C.L.M. Abdul Karim	1894		1903		Elected
Magodon Ismail	1903		1906		Elected
Sir Muhammad Macan Markar	1906		1932		Nominated
Magodon Ismail	1932		1937		Elected
A.C. Muhammad	1934		1937		Nominated
A.I.H.A. Wahab	1935		1937		Nominated
A.C. Muhammad	1937		1940		Nominated
Magodon Ismail	1937		1941		Elected
A.I.H.A. Wahab	1937		1940		Elected

## Votes Polled at Elections

### Municipal Council Elections – Colombo Voters & Votes polled – 1885-1994

Year	Candidates	Elected	Nom.	Votes	% Voters	% Polled
1885	6 (S) 2 (T) 4 (M)	4 (S) 1 (T) 2 (M)	1 (M)	30,600 (S) 2,720 (T) 2,500 (M)	85.43 (S) 7.59 (T) 6.98 (M)	60 (S) 30 (T) 10 (M)
1900	15 (S) 2 (T) 3 (M)	8 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)		30,260 (S) 3,500 (T) 3,000 (M)	84.81 (S) 8.18 (T) 7.01 (M)	60 (S) 30 (T) 10 (M)
1904	9 (S) 2 (T) 3 (M)	7 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)	2 (M)	38,725 (S) 4,026 (T) 3,800 (M)	83.20 (S) 10.53 (T) 8.52 (M)	50 (S) 30 (T) 20 (M)
1908	10 (S) 2 (T) 2 (M)	6 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)	1 (M)	39,200 (S) 5,100 (T) 4,128 (M)	80.95 (S) 10.53 (T) 8.52 (M)	50 (S) 30 (T) 20 (M)
1916	10 (S) 3 (T) 3 (M)	8 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)	2 (M)	42,000 (S) 6,000 (T) 4,680 (M)	79.73 (S) 11.39 (T) 8.88 (M)	60 (S) 20 (T) 20 (M)
1920	15 (S) 3 (T) 3 (M)	7 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)	1 (M)	43,500 (S) 6,890 (T) 5,260 (M)	78.17 (S) 12.36 (T) 9.48 (M)	60 (S) 20 (T) 20 (M)
1924	10 (S) 3 (T) 3 (M)	7 (S) 1 (T) 1 (M)	1 (M)	44,026 (S) 7,120 (T) 5,860 (M)	77.24 (S) 12.49 (T) 10.27 (M)	77 (S) 15 (T) 8 (M)
1928	12 (S) 4 (T) 6 (M)	5 (S) 2 (T) 2 (M)	2 (M)	45,125 (S) 7,900 (T) 6,120 (M)	76.29 (S) 13.36 (T) 10.35 (M)	62 (S) 31 (T) 7 (M)
1932	10 (S) 3 (T) 3 (M)	5 (S) 2 (T) 3 (M)	1 (M)	65,280 (S) 8,056 (T) 8,160 (M)	80.10 (S) 9.88 (T) 10.02 (M)	59 (S) 29 (T) 12 (M)
1936	12 (S) 4 (T) 4 (M)	4 (S) 1 (T) 3 (M)	1 (M)	80,179 (S) 9,850 (T) 9,160 (M)	80.83 (S) 9.94 (T) 9.23 (M)	60 (S) 30 (T) 10 (M)
1940	10 (S) 3 (T) 4 (M)	5 (S) 2 (T) 3 (M)	1 (M)	95,268 (S) 10,850 (T) 10,125 (M)	81.96 (S) 9.33 (T) 8.71 (M)	58 (S) 32 (T) 10 (M)

1944	10 (S) 4 (T) 4 (M)	5 (S) 2 (T) 3 (M)	1 (M)	1,179,627 (S) 12,850 (T) 12,250 (M)	97.91 (S) 1.07 (T) 1.02 (M)	53 (S) 32 (T) 15 (M)
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### Galle – Candidates, Voters & Votes Polled 1882-1937

Year	Candidates	Elected	Nom.	Votes	% Voters	% Polled
1882	6 (S) 2 (M)	4 (S) 1 (M)		6,200 (S) 250 (T) 350 (M)	91.88 (S) 3.76 (T) 5.16 (M)	85.72 (S) 14.28 (M)
1885	8 (S) 2 (M)	4 (S) 1 (M)		6,400 (S) 300 (T) 500 (M)	88.89 (S) 4.17 (T) 6.94 (M)	85.72 (S) 14.28 (M)
1887	9 (S) 2 (M)	4 (S) 0 (M)		6,550 (S) 350 (T) 645 (M)	86.17 (S) 4.64 (T) 8.55 (M)	85.72 (S) 14.28 (M)
1891	8 (S) 2 (M)	4 (S) 0 (M)		6,970 (S) 370 (T) 720 (M)	86.48 (S) 4.59 (T) 8.93 (M)	85.72 (S) 14.28 (M)
1894	9 (S) 3 (M)	3 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,120 (S) 390 (T) 850 (M)	85.17 (S) 4.65 (T) 10.63 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1897	7 (S) 2 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,250 (S) 398 (T) 910 (M)	84.72 (S) 4.65 (T) 10.63 (M)	87.50 (S)
1901	7 (S) 2 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,350 (S) 410 (T) 1,120 (M)	82.77 (S) 4.62 (T) 12.61 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1903	7 (S) 2 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,410 (S) 450 (T) 1,130 (M)	82.42 (S) 5.01 (T) 12.57 (M)	87.50 (S)
1906	8 (S) 0 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,620 (S) 510 (T) 1,150 (M)	82.12 (S) 5.50 (T) 12.38 (M)	87.50 (S)
1908	8 (S) 0 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,620 (S) 510 (T) 1,150 (M)	82.12 (S) 5.50 (T) 12.38 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)

1911	10 (S) 0 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	7,720 (S) 530 (T) 1,215 (M)	82.06 (S) 5.63 (T) 12.31 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1914	10 (S) 0 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	8,025 (S) 550 (T) 1,420 (M)	80.29 (S) 5.50 (T) 14.20 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1917	10 (S) 2 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	8,650 (S) 560 (T) 1,650 (M)	79.65 (S) 5.60 (T) 15.19 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1920	11 (S) 2 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	9,920 (S) 650 (T) 1,850 (M)	79.42 (S) 5.21 (T) 15.37 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1923	10 (S) 4 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	10,200 (S) 950 (T) 2,028 (M)	82.12 (S) 5.50 (T) 12.38 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1926	12 (S) 5 (M)	3 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	11,100 (S) 1,100 (T) 2,450 (M)	75.77 (S) 7.50 (T) 16.72 (M)	87.50 (S) 12.50 (M)
1930	12 (S) 9 (M)	5 (S) 0 (M)	-1 (M)	20,200 (S) 2,600 (T) 3,760 (M)	76.23 (S) 9.81 (T) 13.86 (M)	90.00 (S) 10.00 (M)
1934	14 (S) 10 (M)	5 (S) 2 (M)		28,900 (S) 3,712 (T) 4,160 (M)	78.59 (S) 10.09 (T) 11.32 (M)	90.00 (S) 10.00 (M)
1937	14 (S) 10 (M)	5 (S) 2 (M)	-1 (M)	30,500 (S) 4,700 (T) 6,600 (M)	72.97 (S) 11.24 (T) 15.79 (M)	70.00 (S) 30.00 (M)

### Kandy – Candidates, Voters & Votes Polled 1902-1937

Year	Candidates	Elected	Nom.	Votes	% Voters	% Polled
1902	6 (S) 1 (M)	4(S) 1 (M)		20,500 (S) 4,400 (T) 2,500 (M)	74.82 (S) 16.06 (T) 9.12 (M)	83.35 (S) 16.65 (M)
1923	7 (S) 5 (M)	4(S) 1 (M)		45,200 (S) 7,200 (T) 5,600 (M)	77.93 (S) 12.41 (T) 9.66 (M)	85.78 (S) 14.22 (M)
1937	9 (S)	3(S)		116,142 (S)	83.65 (S)	85.71 (S)

	<b>6 (M)</b>	<b>2 (M)</b>		<b>12,500 (T)</b> <b>10,200 (M)</b>	<b>9.00 (T)</b> <b>7.35 (M)</b>	<b>14.29 (M)</b>
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S = Sinhalese, T = Tamil, M = Muslim

Courtesy The Colonial Office, London No.30/29/146, 30/29/141, Ceylon Blue Book  
& Ceylon Gazette

## **Commissioners appointed by the Government to draft the Mohammed Code of 1806**

- 1. Mamoenepoela Suleyma Lebbe Marikar**
- 2. Segu Ismail Lebbe Naina Marikar**
- 3. Oduma Lebbe Maestriar Shekadie Marikar** (grandfather of ILM Abdul Azeez)
- 4. Mukallam Assen Lebbe**
- 5. Segoe Mira Lebbe Oduma Lebbe Marikar**
- 6. Ibrahim Pulla Snne Lebbe**
- 7. Lebbe Marika Saray Lebbe Marikar**
- 8. Aghmadu Lebbe Segu Abdul Cader** (Interpreter)
- 9. Omar Naina Pulla Lebbe**
- 10. Kasie Lebbe Mamoe Naina Pulla**
- 11. Assen Meera Lebbe Maghmadoe Lebbe**
- 12. Audekana Pulla Ossena Lebbe** (father of Othman Hajjar and Consul Majeed)
- 13. Kasie Lebbe Segu Meera Lebbe**
- 14. Idroos Lebbe Sultan Kando**
- 15. Lebbe Marikar Omar Lebbe Marikar**
- 16. Lebbe Marikar Shamsu Lebbe Marikar**
- 17. Segu Mira Pulla Abubaker Lebbe Alvers**
- 18. Meera Lebbe Maestriar Shekadi Marikar** (ancestor of SDM Burhan)
- 19. Suleyma Lebbe Josboe Naina**
- 20. Suleyma Lebbe Pakkir Pulla**
- 21. Mimor Naina Pulla Shamsudeen Lebbe**
- 22. Aghmadu Lebbe Alie Marikar**
- 23. Lebbe Marikar Oduma Lebbe Marikar**
- 24. Lebbe kandu Seyadu**
- 25. Ossen Lebbe Kapitan Aghmadu Lebbe**
- 26. Madinah Lebbe Shekadi Marikar**
- 27. Muhammadu Kassim Aghmadu Lebbe**
- 28. Lebbe Naina Marikar Aghmadu Ali Marikar Kapitan**



The above list has been furnished by Sir Dr. Paul Peiris and is available for inspection at the Government Archives, Colombo.

## **Committee (Mathecham) responsible for building the Maradana Mosque in 1840:-1841**

Moors purchased more properties in Maradana and popularized the Mosque. The Headman system of the old had been extended to the Moors and they were all under a Head Moorman. Their Mosques and Cemeteries and other community issues were all under the jurisdiction of the Head Moorman as he was, to the Muslims, the Mufti or Qazi of their religion. As all Mosques were under the Head Moorman, the Maradana Mosque and New Moor Street Grand Mosque were also under the control of Oduma Lebbe Marikar, Head Moorman in 1818. Every Mosque had a set of separate Board (Mathicham) of Managers with a "Chief". In 1840 the Maradana Mosque was rebuilt.

At the time Oduma Lebbe Marikar Shaikh Abdul Cader Marikar, commonly known as Shekadi Marikar, having been appointed Mudaliyar of the Eastern Province in 1835, was at Trincomalee, training his son, Cassim Lebbe Marikar (Mudaliyar) (See AIL Marikar's statement, page 88, in the Souvenir of the MICH issued in 1965)

- 1. Mowlana Syed Abubakr**
- 2. Shamsudeen Lebbe Cassim Lebbe** (NDH Abdul Caffoor haji's grandfather)
- 3. Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar** (grand-uncle of SL Naina Marikar Haji)
- 4. Cassim Calefa Raja Levana Marikar** (brother of CKR Samsu Lebbe Marikar #52)
- 5. Sinne Lebbe Tamby Markar**
- 6. Sinne Tamby Cassim Lebbe Marikar**
- 7. Meera Lebbe Sinne Marikar**
- 8. Hajji Marikar Pitcha Thamby**
- 9. Shams Lebbe Shaikh Marikar**
- 10. Ibrahim Lebbe Abubakr Lebbe Marikar** (grand-uncle of MLM Reyal, former MMC)
- 11. Hajji Marikar Constable Meera Lebbe Marikar**
- 12. Sinne Lebbe Sinne Thamby**
- 13. Yousoof Lebbe Hajiar Thamby**
- 14. Muhammad Lebbe Shaikh Marikar**
- 15. Meera Lebbe Marikar Hassena Marikar**

16. **Othman Lebbe Yousoof Lebbe**
17. **Shamsudeen Lebbe Ahamed Lebbe** (brother of SL Cassim Lebbe #2)
18. **Idroos Lebbe Shamsudeen Lebbe**
19. **Omar Lebbe Sinna Marikar**
20. **Ahmed Lebbe Hassen Meera Lebbe**
21. **Hajji Marikar Sulaiman Lebbe**
22. **Shamsi Lebbe Marika Ahamed Lebbe Marikar** (grandfather of MCHM Rasheed, AHM Junaid, SLM Ahamed, SLM Zohar, SLMA Rahman)
23. **Sulaiman Lebbe Mathicham Sinna Marikar**
24. **Colanda Marikar Palli Adian**
25. **Coonge Muhammad Nagotha Coonge Moosa**
26. **Ahamed Lebbe Marikar Levana Marikar**
27. **Meera Lebbe Marikar Arasi Marikar**
28. **Naina Lebbe Muhandiram Muhammad Thamby**
29. **Thamby Candu Lebbe Katu Bawa**
30. **Kappu Odear Lebbe Cassim Lebbe Marikar** (great-grandfather of Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi)
31. **Kappu Odear Lebbe Shaiku Lebbe Marikar** (grandfather of OLM Faloon, AM Saleem, SDHM, Yousoof Hajjar, Mrs. NHM Abdul Cader-first bed, and Mrs. NM Zaheed)
32. **Conji Marikar Muhammad Lebbe, Notary**
33. **Aboo Lebbe Marikar Sinne Lebbe**
34. **Meera Lebbe Abdul Fatha**
35. **Aboo Lebbe Marikar Sinna Marikar**
36. **Shaikh Abdul Cader Marikar Idroos Lebbe Marikar** (father of ILM Abdul Azeez)
37. **Sinna Lebbe Saibo**
38. **Usoof Naina Ahmed Lebbe Marikar**
39. **Sheikh Meera Lebbe Raja Marikar**
40. **Naina Marikar Ismail Lebbe Marikar**
41. **Yousoof Lebbe Constable Saibo**

42. Sinne Lebbe Constable Packeer Bawa alias Muhallam Hassen Lebbe  
(ancestor of Muhammad Sameer bin haji Ismail Effendi)
43. Yousoof Lebbe Constable Mohideen Abdul Cader
44. Yousoof Lebbe Constable Lebbe
45. Ibrahim Lebbe Ahmed Lebbe Marikar
46. Omar Lebbe Ahmed Lebbe Marikar (grandfather of ILM Sathuk)
47. Mamuna Pulla Marikar
48. Sulaiman Lebbe Cader Saibo
49. Cader Pulla Uduman Nana
50. Sheikh Fareed Marikar Cader Mohideen
51. Uppapulla Packeer Thamby
52. Cassim Khalifa Raja Shamsu Lebbe Marikar (grandfather of LM Hasheem)
53. Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Vappuchan
54. Hassena Marikar Muhammad Thamby
55. Muhammad Burhan Shamsi Lebbe Marikar (grandfather of SDM Burhan)
56. Cader Marikar Bawa Saibo
57. Bawa Lebbe Ahamed Lebbe Marikar
58. Naina Lebbe Cassim Lebbe
59. Saibo Ahmed Lebbe Marikar
60. Cuppathamby Pir Cando (father of PCM Yousoof)
61. Yousoof Lebbe Omar Lebbe Marikar
62. Cuppathamby Ahmed Lebbe Marikar
63. Muhammad Thamby Katu Bawa
64. Shamsy Lebbe Alia Marikar
65. Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Uduman Lebbe Marikar
66. Colanda Marikar Sinna Lebbe Wapuchan
67. Packeer Thamby Constable Sinna Lebbe (great-grandfather of Muhammad Sameer)
68. Cader Lebbe Muhammad Thamby Marikar
69. Sinna Marikar Aboo Lebbe Marikar
70. Sinna Bapoo Assen Meera Lebbe
71. Packeer hamby Uduman Lebbe Marikar

**72. Packeer Bawa Minnar Marikar**

**73. Coonge Muhammad Nagotha Shaikh Fareed**

**74. Meera Lebbe Periya Thamby**

## **Members of the Congregation of the Maradana Mosque**

Their names appear among the lives of great men mentioned in the accounts herein; some of the names have been included in the title deed No.793 of 15-10-1842 Notary G W Stork and are found in as witnesses at marriages recorded by Khatheeb Sheikh Ismail Lebbe of the Grand Mosque, New Moor Street, Colombo 11.

**1. Mowlana Syed Abubakr Mowlana**

**2. Sulaiman Lebbe Naina Marikar**, grand uncle of SL Naina Marikar Haji. In 1842 he contributed a sum for the purchase of a property for the Maradana Mosque. His shop was known as No. 42. An account of his appeared in the Dickens "household Words" by John Capper in 1877. Witness at the marriage in 1835 and 1843, Items 48 & 264. See Item No.2 of Grand Mosque Congregation List.

**3. Shamsudeen Lebbe Cassim Lebbe**, son of Bahaudeen Samsudeen Lebbe and Grandfather of NDH Abdul Caffoor Haji

**4. Sinne Lebbe Tamby Markar**

**5. Cassim Caluvaa Haja Levana Marikar**, LM Hasheems fathers brother, brother of CKR Samsu Lebbe Marikar

**6. Ibrahim Lebbe Abubakr Lebbe Marikar**, father of Abu Bucker Lebbe Ibraheem Lebbe, President of the Maradana Mosque Committee of Management from 1908 to 1917. In 1842 he contributed money for the purchase of a property for the Mosque. He donated the bungalow for bathers (In the abandoned Howl Tank), Grand-Uncle of MLM Reyah, former MMC, see Item No.4 in the Grand Mosque Congregation List.

**7. Sinne Tamby Cassim Lebbe Marikar**

**8. Hajji Marikar Constable Meera Lebbe Marikar**, witness at marriage recorded at No.230

**9. Sinne Lebbe Sinne Thamby**

**10. Yousoof Lebbe Hajiar Thamby**

**11. Shamsudeen Lebbe Ahamed Lebbe**, brother of SL Cassim Lebbe, #3, above

**12. Meera Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar**

**13. Ajji Marikar Pitchey Thamby**

**14. Shamsi Lebbe Shaikh Marikar**

**15. Meera Lebbe Marikar Hassena Marikar**

**16. Uduma Lebbe Yousoof Lebbe**, father of Marikar Hajjar, great grandfather of Sir Razik Fareed

**17. Idroos Lebbe Shamsudeen Lebbe**

**18. Omar Lebbe Sinna Marikar**

**19. Hajji Marikar Sulaiman Lebbe**

**20. Sulaiman Lebbe Mathicham Sinna Marikar**

**21. Colanda Marikar Palli Adian**

**22. Ahamed Lebbe Marikar Levana Marikar**

**23. Meera Lebbe Marikar Arasi Marikar**

**24. Naina Lebbe Muhandiram Muhammad Thamby**

**25. Thamby Candu Lebbe Katu Bawa**

**26. Ahmed Lebbe Hassen Meera Lebbe**, commonly known as Ahmed Lebbe Thamby or Marikar, brother of Uduma Lebbe Marikar, father of OLM Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Alim. Contributed money for the purchase of a property for Maradana Mosque. Left a sum of money in his last will for the Mosque. See Item No.1 in the Grand Mosque Congregation List. Great grand uncle of WM Hassim, JP. Witness at the marriage of item No 166/1840 and 192/1841

**27. Shamsi Lebbe Ahmed Lebbe Marikar**, owned property opposite the Maradana Mosque and always inspected the Mosque on his visits to his houses. Contributed a sum of money for the purchase of a property adjoining the Mosque in 1842 in the name of the Khatheeb, Assen Lebbe Muhammad Abdul cader Muhalleem. Imported timber from Chittagong for the re-erection of the Mosque.

**28. Conge Muhammad Nagutha Conge Moosa**, witness at the marriage of item 87/1836

**29. Kappu Odear Lebbe Cassim Lebbe Marikar**, contributed to the purchase of a property for the Mosque, great-grandfather of Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi

**30. Kappu Odear Lebbe Shaiku Lebbe Marikar**, grandfather of OLM Faloon, AM Saleem, SDHM, Yousoof Hajjar, Mrs. NHM Abdul Cader-first bed, and Mrs. NM Zaheed, great grandfather of Jabir A Cader

**31. Conji Marikar Muhammad Lebbe, Notary**, Witness at the marriage item No.166/1840 & 214/1842.

- 32. Aboo Lebbe Marikar Sinne Marikar**
- 33. Aboo Lebbe Marikar Sinne Lebbe**
- 34. Meera Lebbe Abdul Fatha**, witness at marriage item No.107/1837.
- 35. Shaikh Abdul Cader Marikar Idroos Lebbe Marikar**, father of ILM Abdul Azeez, grandfather of Rashard A Azeez, great grandfather of Marzuk Burhan.
  
- 36. Sinna Lebbe Saibo**
- 37. Usoof Naina Ahmed Lebbe Marikar**
- 38. Meera Lebbe Periya Thamby**
- 39. Sheikh Meera Lebbe Raja Marikar**, witness at the marriage of item No. 289/1843
  
- 40. Naina Marikar Ismail Lebbe Marikar**
- 41. Yousoof Lebbe Constable Saibo**
- 42. Sinne Lebbe Constable Packeer Bawa alias Muhallam Hassen Lebbe**, great grandfather of Muhammad Sameer bin haji Ismail Effendi.
  
- 43. Yousoof Lebbe Constable Mohideen Abdul Cader**
- 44. Yousoof Lebbe Constable Lebbe**
- 45. Ibrahim Lebbe Ahmed Lebbe Marikar**
- 46. Omar Lebbe Ahmed Lebbe Marikar**, grandfather of ILM Sathuk.
- 47. Mamuna Pulla Marikar**
- 48. Sulaiman Lebbe Cader Saibo**
- 49. Cader Pulla Uduman Nana**
- 50. Sheikh Fareed Marikar Cader Mohideen**
- 51. Uppapulla Packeer Thamby**
- 52. Cassim Khalifa Raja Shamsu Lebbe Marikar**, grandfather of LM Hasheem, contributed for purchase of a property for the Mosque.
  
- 53. Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Wappichan**
- 54. Hassena Marikar Muhammad Thamby**
- 55. Muhammad Burhan Shamsi Lebbe Marikar**, grandfather of SDM Burhan, great grandfather of Marzuk Burhan.
  
- 56. Cader Marikar Bawa Saibo**



57. Bawa Lebbe Ahamed Lebbe Marikar
58. Naina Lebbe Cassim Lebbe
59. Saibo Ahmed Lebbe Marikar
60. Cuppathamby Pir Cando, father of PCM Yousoof.
61. Yousoof Lebbe Omar Lebbe Marikar
62. Cuppathamby Ahmed Lebbe Marikar
63. Muhammad Thamby Katu Bawa
64. Shamsy Lebbe Alia Marikar
65. Sheikh Ismail Lebbe Uduman Lebbe Marikar
66. Colanda Marikar Sinna Lebbe Wapichan
67. Packeer Thamby Constable Sinna Lebbe, great-grandfather of Muhammad Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi)
  
68. Cader Lebbe Muhammad Thamby Marikar
69. Sinna Marikar Aboo Lebbe Marikar
70. Sinna Bapoo Assen Meera Lebbe
71. Packeer hamby Uduman Lebbe Marikar
72. Packeer Bawa Minnar Marikar
73. Coonge Muhammad Nagotha Shaikh Fareed

## Contributions of the Members of the Grand Mosque, Colombo, for purchase of land extensions in 1855

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Ahmed Lebbe Hassen Meera Lebbe<br>(commonly known as Ahamed Lebbe Tamby or Marikar, great grand uncle of WM Hassim JP<br>(See item No.25 of Maradana Mosque Members In 1840)   | StP 73-0s-0d |
| 2. Slema Lebbe Naina Marikar, uncle of Naina Marikar Haji. (See Item No.2 of the Maradana Mosque Members in 1840)   | StP 5-0s-0d  |
| 3. Hadji Marikar Meera Lebbe Marikar  | StP 5-0s-0d  |
| 4. Ibrahim Lebbe Aboobucker Lebbe Marikar<br>(See Item No.6 of the Maradana Mosque Members in 1840)   | StP 3-0s-0d  |
| 5. Seyyed Meera Lebbe Packeer Thamby  | StP 3-0s-0d  |
| 6. Kaseem Bhai Muhammad Ismail  | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 7. Naina Marikar Sulaiman Lebbe   | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 8. Cunji Marikar cader Muhammad Saibo   | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 9. Sinne Lebbe Saibo  | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 10. Idroos Lebbe Shamsi Lebbe   | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 11. Usooboo Lebbe Idroos Lebbe Marikar<br>(he had donated immovable property in Pettah to the Grand Mosque. Father of ILM Noordeen Hadjjar & ILMH Mohideen Hadjjar. Noordeen and Mohideen were Trustees of the Grand Mosque. Mohidden built an extension to the Mosque, at his expense and it was named "Mohideen Hadjjar Building" in 1895/97. In 1900, Noordeen Hadjjar built the Madrasatul Hameedia School At his expense. He also built another building at Hultsdorf Street on his own land and donated it to the Mosque. He managed the school and financed it, with the Public contributing a small sum. Haji Noordeen Haji Jalaldeen, son of Noordeen Hajjar, was a Trustee of the Mosque. Haji Ghouse Mohideen, son of Mohideen Hadjjar, Was the Trustee in 1967. He is also Noorul Naima Naina Marikar's maternal grandfather. | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 12. Oduma Lebbe Marikar Sultan Marikar  | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 13. Sinne Thamby Avoo Lebbe Marikar   | StP 2-0s-0d  |
| 14. Ahmed Lebbe Meera Lebbe Marikar   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 15. Usooboo Lebbe Omer Lebbe Marikar  | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 16. Sego Lebbe Haji Marikar   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 17. Sahib Dore Hassen Meera Lebbe   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 18. Naina Lebbe Muhammad Thamby   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 19. Meera Lebbe Marikar Periya Thamby   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 20. Kamaldeen Madar   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 21. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Naina Marikar   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 22. Seema Lebbe Shekady Marikar   | StP 1-0s-0d  |
| 23. Katu Bawa Madena Marikar  | StP 1-0s-0d  |

- (Grandfather of CLM Saleem Haji)
24. Subscriptions collected at Madana Marikar's shop StP 1-0s-0d
  25. Haji Marikar Packeer Bawa StP 1-0s-0d
  26. Kappodear Lebbe Avoo Lebbe Marikar StP 1-0s-0d  
 (great grandfather of MHM Dhahlan. See Item No.29  
 & 30 of the Maradana Mosque Members in 1940. Brother  
 of KL Cassim Lebbe Marikar and KL Segoo Lebbe. He had  
 no sons. His oldest daughter's grandson is MHM Dhahlan.  
 KL Segoo Lebbe's descendants are M Jabir A Cader, SDHM  
 Yusuf Haji, MM Saleem, Mrs NM Zaheed & ARM Basheer)
  27. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Lebbena Marikar StP 1-0s-0d
  28. Loothandu Madar Saibo StP 0-10s-0d
  29. Muhammad Lebbe Marikar Slema Lebbe StP 0-10s-0d  
 (father of SL Naina Marikar Hadjjar and SL Haji Muhammad.  
 Pasternal grandfather of Lady Noor Naima Macan Markar)
  30. Saibo Mapulla Sulaima Lebbe StP 0-10s-0d
  31. Isaboo Constable Sesma Lebbe StP 0-10s-0d
  32. Muhammad Thamby Assen Lebbe StP 0-10s-0d
  33. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Oduma Lebbe Marikar StP 0-10s-0d
  34. Kalinga Rawther Mohideen Pitche StP 0-2s-0d  
 (KLM Segoo Lebbe was the father of Omer Lebbe,  
 Colombo mapula of 45 Church Street, Galle)

Extracted from the documents of Muhammad sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi, Great Grandson of Kappa Odear Lebbe Cassim Lebbe Marikar, referred to in Item No.26 above

1960: By Deed No.8545 dated 1-11-1855, of John Driebergs, NP, bought for the extension of the New Moor Street burial ground, the rear land of Omer Lebbe Marikar Uduma Lebbe Marikar, for Sterling Pounds (StP) 130-0s-0d. He contributed StP 73 and the balance was collected from the members of the congregation.

StP = Sterling Pounds

## **The Members of the Colombo Muslim Educational Society in 1895**

- 1. Yousoof Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar Haji** (Ancestor of Farooq Saleem, MHM Yousoof, MHA Gaffoor, IM Uzair, and grand-uncle of Sir Razik Fareed)
- 2. Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar** (father of Hon. WM Abdul Rahuman and grandfather of Sir Razik Fareed)
- 3. M.I.M. Haniffa** (father of MHM Shamsudeen)
- 4. S. L. Mahmood Hajjar** (father of MHM Yousoof)
- 5. P.B. Muhammad Lebbe Marikar**
- 6. O.L.M. Ahamed Lebbe Marikar Alim** (father-in-law of WM Hassim JP, and grandfather of Mrs. Raliya Umma Sameer nee Noordeen, & A.I. Mohideen CCS)
- 7. A.L.M. Uduma Lebbe Marikar** (father of OLM Mohideen)
- 8. S.M. Ismail Lebbe Marikar**
- 9. O.L.M. Sulaiman Lebbe**
- 10. A.L.M. Abdul Rahman Haji** (father of ARHA Majeed)
- 11. C.M. Zainudeen**
- 12. O.L.M.M.C. Marikar** (father of MCM Wazeer)
- 13. Yousoof Lebbe Marikar Haji** (grandfather of Sir Razik Fareed & MCHM Rasheed)
- 14. A.L.M. Sinne Lebbe Marikar Haji**
- 15. A.T. Amirdeen** (grandfather of Saleem Abubacker)
- 16. Ibrahim bin Ahamed** (father of Lady Razik Fareed)
- 17. Sahib Dorai Haji Ismail Lebbe Marikar Alim** (father of Mohamed Sameer)
- 18. S.L. Cassim Lebbe Marikar**

## **Managing Committee of the Maradana Mosque in 1900**

- 1. Seyed Abdul Raheem Mowlana**
- 2. Yousoof Lebbe Sinne Lebbe Marikar Hajjar**
- 3. Arasi Marikar Wapchi Marikar** (grandfather of Sir Razik Fareed)
- 4. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Oduma Lebbe Marikar**
- 5. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Idroos Lebbe Marikar** (grandfather of WM Hassim JP)
- 6. Cassim Lebbe Sheikh Abdul Cader Marikar** (grandfather of MCM Zacky)
- 7. Cassim Lebbe Marika Abdul Jabbar** (father f AJM Waleed)
- 8. Mohideen Abdul Cader Zainudeen**
- 9. Sinne Marikar Levana Marikar Hajjar**
- 10. Slaiman Lebbe Noohu Lebbe** (grandfather of MUM Saleem)
- 11. Thamby Mustapha Lebbe**
- 12. Khateeb Wapchi Marikar Meera Lebbe**
- 13. Idroos Lebbe Marikar Abdul Azeez** (father of Rashard Azeez)
- 14. Arasi Marikar Muhammad Lebbe Marikar** (grandfather of Mrs. S.L.Abdul Hadi)

## Muslim Educational Society contributions for the extension of the first Madrasa

1. O.L.M.A.L.M. Alim (grandfather of A Mohideen CCS)	Rs. 300.00
2. S.L. Naina Marikar Hajjar	Rs. 250.00
3. C.M. Meera Lebbe Marikar	Rs. 50.00
4. S.L.M. Abu Salih Hajie	Rs. 138.00
5. H.M. Abdul Rahman Bass	Rs. 250.00
6. A.L.M. Meera Lebbe Marikar	Rs. 34.65
7. A.R. Hashim Haji (father of HHM Hassan)	Rs. 44.00
8. Muhallam I.L.M. Ahmed Lebbe Bass	Rs. 169.50
9. M.L. Samsudeen Bass	Rs. 53.00
10. M.L.M. Abul Cassim	<u>Rs. 120.21</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>Rs.1,409.36</u></b>

Since the total collection was too little, it was spent in purchasing furniture. The one-storeyed extension was built at a cost of Rs. 10,000.00 and Wapchi Marikar defrayed the cost himself, according to the Annual Report.

On March 17, 1907, a meeting of the Educational Society was held, and subscription was received as follows:-

The following sums were subscribed to build Nos. 105 to 121, Darley Road:-

1. N.D.H. Abdul Caffoor	Rs. 2,500.00
2. S.L.M. Mahmood Hajjar	Rs. 2,000.00
3. S.L. Naina Marikar Hajie	Rs. 2,000.00
4. I.L.M. Muhammad Meera Lebbe Marikar	Rs. 2,000.00
5. O.L.M. Ahmed Lebbe Marikar Alim (grandfather of Al Mohideen CCS)	Rs. 1,000.00
6. I.L.M. Noordeen Hajjar	Rs. 1,000.00
7. Muhammad Macan Markar Haji Effendi (later MLC, Sir, Senator MMC)	Rs. 1,000.00
8. S.M. Hashim & A.M. Hamid	Rs. 500.00
9. S.M. Hajie Cassim	Rs. 250.00
10. N.D.H. Abdul Careem	Rs. 250.00
11. A.L.M. Shamsi Lebbe Marikar Haji (father of SLMHA Rahman)	<u>Rs. 250.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>Rs. 12,750.00</u></b>

## Population Statistics of Sri Lanka Malays by District

DISTRICT	VOLUME	% of Population SL
Colombo	22,233	0.3
Gampaha	8,675	0.6
Kalutara	762	0.1
Kandy	2,755	0.3
Matale	574	0.2
Nuwara-Eliya	1,136	0.2
Galle	186	
Matara	79	
Hambantota	4,455	0.1
Jaffna	72	
Mannar	35	
Vavuniya	34	
Mullaitivu	19	
Batticaloa	46	
Amparai	168	
Trincomalee	831	0.3
Kurunegala	1,259	0.1
Puttalam	954	0.2
Anuradhapura	338	0.1
Polonnaruwa	109	
Badulla	1,419	0.2
Monaragala	193	0.1
Ratnapura	412	0.1
Kegalle	229	
SRI LANKA	45,963	0.3

## Malay Population increase from 1881 to 1981

YEAR	POPULATION OF MALAYS
1881	8,900
1891	10,100
1901	11,900
1911	13,000
1921	13,400
1931	16,000
1946	22,500
1953	25,400
1963	33,400
1971	43,500
1981	47,000



## **Sri Lankan Muslims**

### **Alphabetical Directory of Sri Lankan Muslim Professionals**

#### **ACCOUNTING, BUSINESS & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

##### Names

Abdul Cader, M.S.	Rahaman, M.Z.
Abdul Wahab, S.M.	Noordeen, A.S.A
Abdullah S. Muhammad	Raheman A. Hathy
Ahamed D. Sufi-Ismail	Rasheed, Muhammad Rizvi
Ahamed Hussain, M.J.	Reyaldeen, M.I.L.M.
Ahmed Faiz Nizar (UK)	Rizvi Wahid (New Zealand)
Ahmed Firoze Sameer	Rumy Muhammad
Ali Azeez, M. Ali	Rushdy Dhahlan
Anzar, M.Z.M.	Saheed, A.N.
Anzari, T.M.	Saldin, B.D.K.
Azmy Nizar	Sally, M.Z.V.
Farook, A.M.	Sheriff, M., (Mrs.)
Farook, S.S., (Mrs.)	Sheriff, M.H.
Jiffrey, M.S.M.	Siraj, Muhammad
Muhammad Ramiz Ziard	Thowfeek, M.S.M.
Muhammad Reyaz Mehular	Uthuman, C.M.M.
Muhammad Rizvi Rawoof	Wahid, M.I.
Muhammad, M Rumi	Zarook, S. M. M.
Muhseen, H.I.	Zavahir M. F.
Muhsin, M.V.	Zubair M. M. A.
Nizam, M.Y.M.	Zulficar A.M. Thahir
Nizar, M.S., (Mrs.)	Zuvair F. R.
Noordeen, Ahmed	

#### **AUCTIONEERS & BROKERS**

##### Names

Haleem Ghouse  
Haniffa, A.M.  
Hussain, W.G.  
Mawzoon, M.I.M.  
Muhammad Faizal Faleel  
Thowfeek, H.L.M.

#### **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

##### Names

Barie, Azard  
Issadeen , Ahmed Fazal  
Malhar, Muhammad  
Marzook, Shiraz  
Mackeen, Zulfickar

Preena, R H.  
Rasheed , Muhammad Ejaz  
Razick, Rifki  
Sameer, Muhammad Fazli Hussain  
Sabry , Muhammad S.M. Ali  
Shafi, Zakraf  
ZainulAbdeen , Muhammad

## **ENGINEERING, SURVEYORS & LEVELLERS, ARCHITECTS**

Names

Alahudeen Ansar, K.	Saleem, M.A.Q.
Aziez, M.I.	Sameer, Ahmed Farook
Baharie, M.I.	Sameer, Muhammad Ismail
Barrie, A.G.A.	Sameer, Muhammad Thahir
Burah, T.A.	Sirajudeen, M.M.
Drahaman, W.N.	Thajudeen, C.M.
Farook, M.S.A.	Ubaidullah, Z.A.
Farook, M.R.M.	Yousoof, M.S.M.
Fauzan, M.S.M.	Zareena Salam, S., (Miss)
Ghazzali Raheem	
Hakeem, M.A.	
Hussain, M.Y.M.	
Ismail, H.M.	
Ismail Marikar	
Lye, B. R. X.	
Macky Hassan, M	
Marzook M. S. M.	
Muhajireen, N.I., (Miss)	
Muhammad M. Mohideen	
Muhammad Junaid Muhammad Mohideen	
Muhammad Waleed, M.Z	
Mukthar Marikar	
Munas, M.H.M.	
Murath, M.M.	
Nizar, M Jizvi	
Omar K. Raheem	
Rafeek, F.M.R.	
Rafeek S. Mufeez	
Rifthi, M.Z.M.	
Rishard, I.M.	

## **JOURNALISTS**

Name

Afriha Jaward (Miss)	Muhammadthamby, A.
Allama Ousmand	Munthasir, F.M., (Mrs.)
Ameen Hussain	Muthaliph, M.F., (Mrs.)

Ameen, N.M.	Nilam, M.A.M.
Amith, B.M.	Noorul Ayen Najmul Hussain
Ashroff, M.J.M.	Ramzy, A.K.M.
Ayub, M.S.M.	Rasheed Muhammad Hafeel
Azhar, M.P.M.	Rasooldeen, M.C. (Saudi Arabia)
Deen, T.M. (USA)	Razik, M.M.
Fairoos, F.M.	Rizvi, M.D.M.
Latheef Farook	Sa'adi Thowfeek
Fathima Faariesz, (Miss)	Sheriffdeen, T.L.
Fouzul Hassan, M.S.	Siddiq Kariappar
Firoze Sameer	Thawfeek, M M
Siddiq Ghouse, M M	Thajudeen, M.J.M.
Hafiz Marikar	Thassim, M
Halaldeen, Akbar (Saudi Arabia)	Thimsy Ghaffoor, (Miss)
Hamza Haniffa	Zacky Jabbar
Hilmy Muhammad	Zain fazil, M.S.
Hussain, M.Z.	Zanita Careem, (Mrs.)
Ismail, B.M.	Zarook, M.J.M.
Javed Mansoor	
Junaideen, T.I.	
Kamardeen, M.I.	
Lafir, R.N., (Mrs.)	
Macan-Markar, A.M.	
Mansoor, M.S.M.	
Marleen, M.M.M.	
Marzook, M.Z.M.	

## LAW

### Names

Abdul M.I.M.	Azad, A.R.M.	Farook, M.L.M.A.	Mohideen, Y.M.P.	Naym, M.S.
Abdul Cader, A.M.M.S.	Azees, M.I.	Farook, Q.S.A.M.	Moosajee, A.S.	Nazar
Abdul Cader, M.	Azeez, M.A.	Khaleel, A.R.M.	Muhammad A.B.M.	Fathima, S.
Abdul Hadhi	Azeez, M.C.A.	Laffar, M.T.M.	Muhammad, A.C.H.	Nazeer, M.
Abdul Hakeem	Azoor, T.K.	Laffir, S.R.	Muhammad, D.M.	Buhary, A.
Abdul Kalam, M.M.	Badurdeen, A.M.	Lafir, T.M.	Muhammad, F.N., (Mrs.)	
Abdul Manaf, T.L.	Bafiq, M.T.M.	Lathif, N.M.S.M.A.	Muhammad Mackie, A.M.	
Abdul Raheem, K.R.M.	Bahaudeen, A.N.	Magdon-Ismail, Z.	Muhammad M.B. Ifthikhar	
Abdul Razzak, A.S.M.	Bakeer Markar, Imthiaz	Maharroof, M.M.	Muhammad, R.A.	
Abdul Samad, S.M.H.	Barqir, M.A.M.	Maharroof, S.H.M.	Muhammad, Imthiyas M.S.	
Aboosaheed, M.S.	Barre, A.R.H.	Maimoona, A.L.S., (Mrs.)	Muhammad Iqbal, M.	
Aboosally, M.A.	Bishrul Ameen, N.M.M.	Majeed, U.L.A.	Muhammad, I.M.Y.	
Abrew, K.R.K.	Buhari, M.A., Colonel	Mansoor, M.A.	Muhammad Ishar, M.I.	
Abuthahir, M.F.	Buhari, N	Mansoor, M.J.	Muhammad, J.M.	

Adamaly, M.	Burhan, M.N.	Mansoor, M.R.	Muhammad Bazeer, Syed M
Adam Lebbe, M.I.	Cader, S.A.	Marikar, D.J.S.	Muhammad Kamil, M.S.
Ahamed Fathima, N.	Careem, T.H.	Marikar, H.R.	Muhammad Rauf, A.M.
Ahamed Hussain	Cassim, M.J.K.	Marikar, M.	Muhammad, S.M.A.
Ahamed, K.M.B.	Deen Wahid, G.	Markhani, M.	Muhammad, S.M.S.
Ahmed Rummy, M.	Deen Wahid, F.	Marleen, A.A.M.	Muhammad, Y.M.P.
Ali Sabry, S.A.C.	Doole, T.S.	Marsoof Saleem	Muhammad Zarook, A.R.L.
Ameen Abdul H.G.	Esufali, A.H.	Marzook, A.H.M.	Muneer, M.C.M.
Ameen Hussain, Z.A.	Esufali, M.A.H.	Marzook, A.R.	Munsoor, M.E.A.R.
Ameen, M.L.M.	Faaiz Ameer, M.	Masood, A.C.M.A.	Musafer, N.M.
Ameen, S. M.M.	Faisal, M.A.M.	Masood, Rinza	Musafer, S.R.
Amith, M.H.	Faiz, M.Y.M.	Mawjooth, M.I.M.	Musthafa, Muhammad Faiz
Anees, A.I.M.	Faleel, S.A.M.	Milfer, M.S.M.	Muthar, M.S.M.
Anoozar, M.F.	Fareed, M.M.M.	Miskin, M.F.	Muzney, M.J.M.
Ashraff, M.H.M.	Farhan, M.T.A.	Mohideen, S.F.	Naufal Abdul Rahuman
Atham Lebbe, M.F.	Farook, A.A.M.	Mohideen, U.L.M.	Nawaz, A.N.M.D.

## MEDICAL

### Names

Abdeen, A.Z., Dr.	Bastamiar	Lebbe	Hamid, M.S.M., Dr.	Jameel, F.M., Dr.
Abdul Aleem, M.M., Dr.	Marikar ML, Dr.		(Mrs.)	
Abdul Cader, F.H., Dr.	Begum, A.L.M., Dr.		Hamza Sulaiman, Dr.	Jamion, M.P.C., Dr.
Abdul Cader, M.H.M., Dr.	(Miss)			
Abdul Ghaffoor, A.L., Dr.	Cassim, K.M.A., Dr.		Haniffa, A.R., Dr.	Jiffrey, M.T.M., Dr.
Abdul Majeed, S.H., Dr.	Dawood, M.F., Dr.		Haniffa, N.A.S.A., Dr.	Junaid, M., Dr.
Abdul Rahman, M.F.S., Dr.	Deen, K.I., Dr.		Haniffa, Z.M., Dr.	Kaleel M.C.M., Dr. 1900-1994
Abdul Rakeesthu, M.A., Dr.	Deen, M.F.O., Dr.		Harid, S.H., Dr. (Miss)	Kaleel, S.H.M., Dr.
Abdullah, M.T., Dr.	Doray, A.B.C., Dr.		Haris Fuard, Dr.	Kamal Magdon-Ismail Dr.
Adham Lebbe, D.L., Dr.	Drahaman, Akram, Dr		Hasad, M.A.C., Dr.	K Irshaard Mahmud Dr
Adli Muhammad, Dr.	Drahaman, R.S., Dr		Hashim, N.M.A., Dr.	Kareem, S.H.A., Dr.
Ahmed Mohideen, Dr.	Drahaman, S.S., Dr.		Hassan, I.W., Dr.	Lafir, M.F.O., Dr.
Ahmed Sivardeen, Dr.	Elias, Dr. (Miss)		Hassanar, T.M., Dr. (Miss)	Lameer, M.Z., Dr.
	Fahim, M.M.M., Dr.		Hazari, A.H., Dr.	Macky Samsudeen Ismail, Dr.
	Fahmy Kaleel, Dr. :		Hilali Noordeen, Dr.	Mahamooth, Z., Dr.

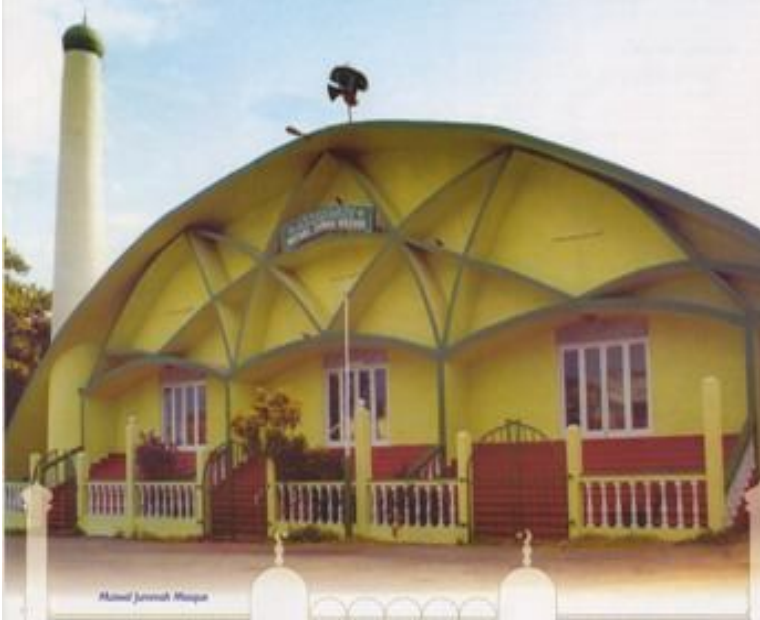
Akbar, S.F.L., Dr.	Faris, Z.M., Dr.	Himaz Marzook, Dr.:	Mahboob, B.M., Dr.
Alaudeen, A.K., Dr.	Farook Sikkander, Dr.	Hussain A.H.M., Dr.	Mahmood A.R., Dr.
Ali Faizal Hussain., Dr.	Farouk, N.M.M., Dr.	Hussain Sirri Cassim Dr.	Mamujee, S.A., Dr.
Amath, V.M.M., Dr.	Fathima Honeya Dr. :	Hussain, S.N., Dr. (Miss)	Mansoor, A.R.M., Dr.
Ameen, M.M., Dr.	Fazalabbas, T., Dr.	Hyderally, H.A.T., Dr.	Masnavi, M.H.M., Dr.
Ameena Hassendeen, Dr.	Fazleali, M., Dr.	Ibrahim, M.T., Dr.	Minna Marikar Bastamiar, Dr.
Ameer, M.S.A., Dr.	Fazli A Mowjood, Dr.	Ilyas, M.H.M., Dr.	Misbah, S.A., Dr.
Amjad Careem Haseeb, Dr.	Fazy, A.H.M., Dr.	Iqbal, A.M.M., Dr.	Mohideen, A.H.M., Dr.
Ansari Ameer Dr.	Fazy, S.N., Dr. (Miss)	Ismail, M.S., Dr.	Mohideen Abdul Rahman, Dr.
Ansari Hassen, Dr.	Feizal M.R.M., Dr.	Ismail, T.N., Dr.	Mohideen Hassan, Dr.
Anver, R.A., Dr.	Feizal Muhammad Dr.:	Ismail, W., Dr. (Mrs.)	Mohideen Rahman, Dr.
Arifa, A.H., Dr. (Miss)	Feizal Waffarn, Dr. :	Izzadeen, M., Dr.	Mubarak, M.I.M., Dr
Asad, M.N.N., Dr.	Firazath Hussain, Dr.	Jabir S.M., Dr.(Jr)	Mubarak, M.J.M., Dr.
Ashraff Ziali Sivardeen, Dr	Fowzia Nizar, Dr.	Jabir S.M., Dr.	Mufthia Mackeen, Dr.
Ashraff, S.M., Dr.	Fuard, M.H., Dr.	Jaffer H.M., Dr. (Unani)	Muhammad, M.F., Dr.
Azeez, A.R.M., Dr.	Ghouzul Ameer M.S. Dr.	Jaffer I.A., Dr.	Muhammad Ajward, M.B., Dr.
Badurdeen, M.R.	Hameed, M.S.A., Dr.	Jameel, A.L.M., Dr.	Muhammad Ansari Hassan, Dr.
Muhammad Bhoj, Dr.	Rahim, S.Z., Dr. (Miss)	Sheriffdeen, A.H., Dr.	
Muhammad Buhary Faizer, Dr.	Rahuman, M.A.K., Dr.	Shifaya Haniffa, Dr.	
Muhammad Farook, N.M.M., Dr.	Ramzeen M.S.M., Dr.:	Shifaya, N.S., Dr. (Mrs.)	
Muhammad Fazli Nizar Dr.	Rashad, S.L.M., Dr., (Unani)	Shoaib Ghouse, Dr.	
Muhammad H Rasheed, Dr.	Rashard, Dr.	Siddique, M.A.M., Dr.	
Muhammad Lariff Idroos, Dr.	Rasheed, A., Dr.	Sulaiman A.C.M., Dr.	
Muhammad Maharooof Ismail, Dr.	Rasheed, M.H.A., Dr.	Sulaiman, M.S., Dr.	
Muhammad Naalir Haniffa, Dr.	Refai, M.S.M., Dr.	Sulaiman, M.Z.C., Dr.	
Muhammad Naas Haniffa, Dr:	Rifdi Deen Dr. A.J.:	Sulaiman Wahid, Dr.	
Muhammad Nazeer, A.L., Dr.	Rizvi, M.M., Dr.	Sultan, M.A., Dr.	
Muhammad S Ozeer, Dr.	Rizvi Zanoon, Dr.:	U Habeeba R. Rauf, Dr. (Mrs.)	
Muhuseen, M.B.L.P.M., Dr.	Sadiq, M.N.M., Dr.	Wahid, S.M.A., Dr.	
Muhseen, Irshard, Dr.	Saheed, A.H., Dr.	Zackroof, A.C.M., Dr.	
Mukhthar, M.M., Dr.	Saheed, M.M., Dr.	Zafarulla, M.Y.M., Dr.	
Munsir Meeran Haniffa, Dr.	Saibo, M.M., Dr., (Miss)	Zain Abdul Cader, Dr.	
Munsir Meeran, Dr.	Saldin, M.K. Dr.	Zarook A.R.M.S. Dr.	

Nafick Burhan Dr.	Saleem, F.H., Dr., (Miss)	Zeenath Zياما Sivardeen, Dr.
Murshid, M.N.M., Dr.	Samad Ismail, A., Dr.	Zeeniya, M.N.F., Dr. (Miss)
Najumdeen, N.L.M., Dr.	Samahin, A.M., Dr.	Zohara Wahab, Dr.
Namoos Aboo Haniffa , Dr.	Sandy Musafar, Dr.	Zubair Aboobucker, Dr.
Nawaz Kaleel, Dr.	Saud Hameed, Dr. + Shoiba:	Zubair Sulaiman, Dr.
Nawaz, Muhammad, Dr.	Seyed Ahamed, S.O., Dr.	
Nazli Zainab, Dr.	Shafi Hassan, Dr.	
Niyas, F.N.M., Dr. (Miss)	Shabdeen, M.M., Dr.	
Nizar, Dr. M Fazli	Shahabdeen, J.M., Dr.	
Nizar, Dr. Hisham	Shafi, N.J.R., Dr.	
Nizar, Dr. Raslaan	Shahul Hameed, Dr.	
Noordeen, B., Dr., (Miss)	Shaikady Marikar OLM, Dr.	
Pallie, W., Dr.	Shakoor, S.F., Dr., (Miss)	
Periya Mudaliyar Marikar, Dr.	Shamsudeen, F.N., Dr. (Miss)	
Peroos, Muhammad Jabir M.	Shanaz Haniffa, Dr.	
Preena, D.A.H., Dr.	Sheik, M., Dr.	
Preena, N S (MBBS)	Sheriff, M.H.Rizvi., Dr.	

## **MOSQUES IN COLOMBO**

# Sri Lanka - Heritage Calendar

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



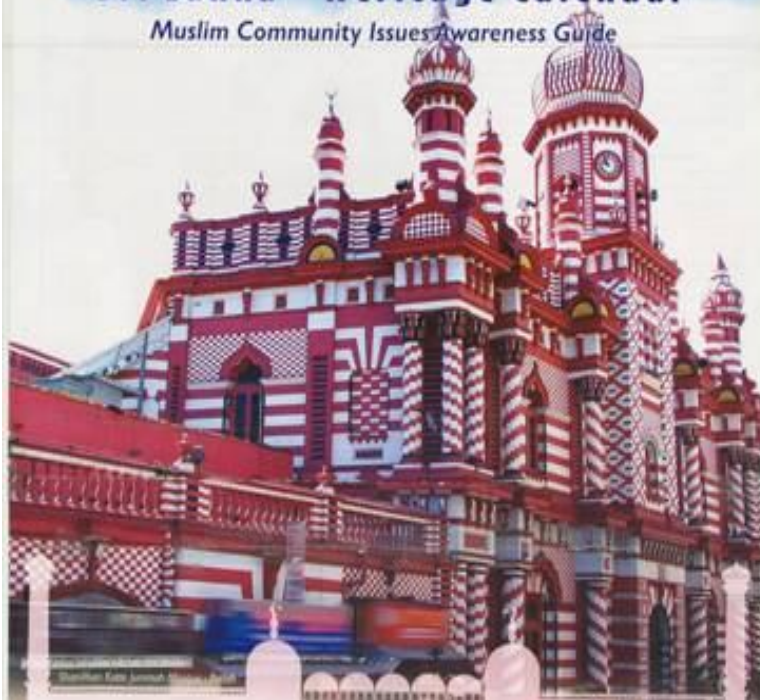
Masjid Jamek Mosque

## Mosques of Sri Lanka

Intiaz Mubain  
18914, Howbeck Road, Colombo 5.  
Tel: 2504010 Email: [creator794@hotmail.com](mailto:creator794@hotmail.com)

# Sri Lanka - Heritage Calendar

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



Masjid-e-Farooq

## Mosques of Sri Lanka

Intiaz Mubain  
18914, Howbeck Road, Colombo 5.  
Tel: 2504010 Email: [creator794@hotmail.com](mailto:creator794@hotmail.com)

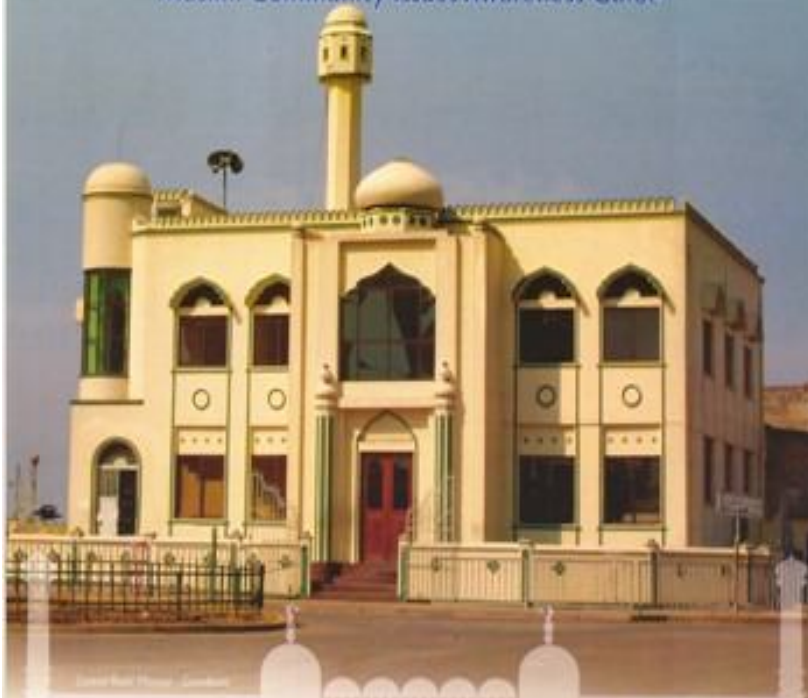
**Mutuwal Mosque, Colombo 15  
the Pettah, Colombo 11**

**Memon Mosque in**



# Sri Lanka - Heritage Calendar

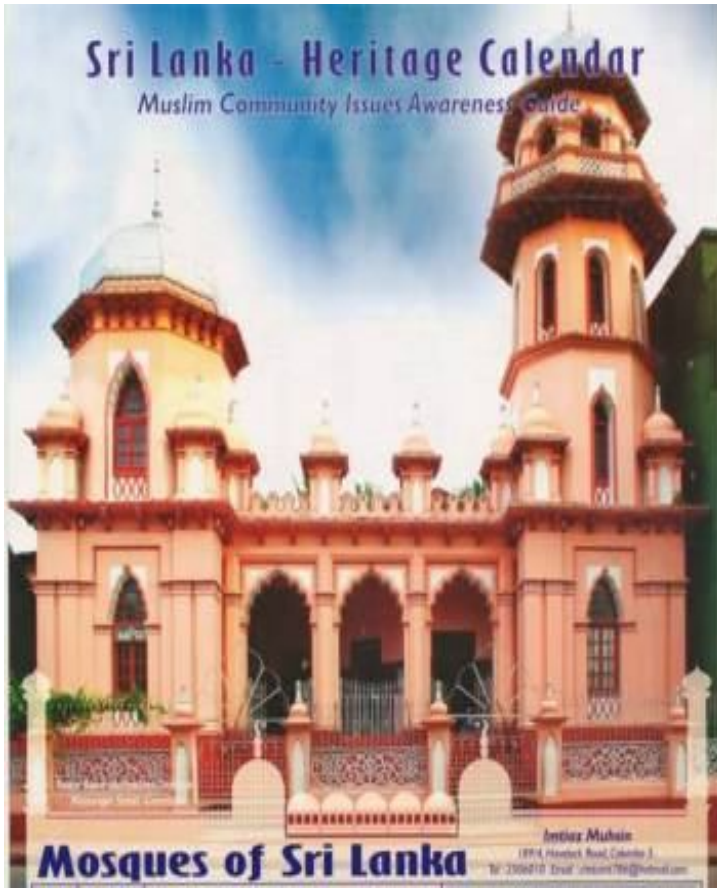
*Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide*



## **Mosques of Sri Lanka**

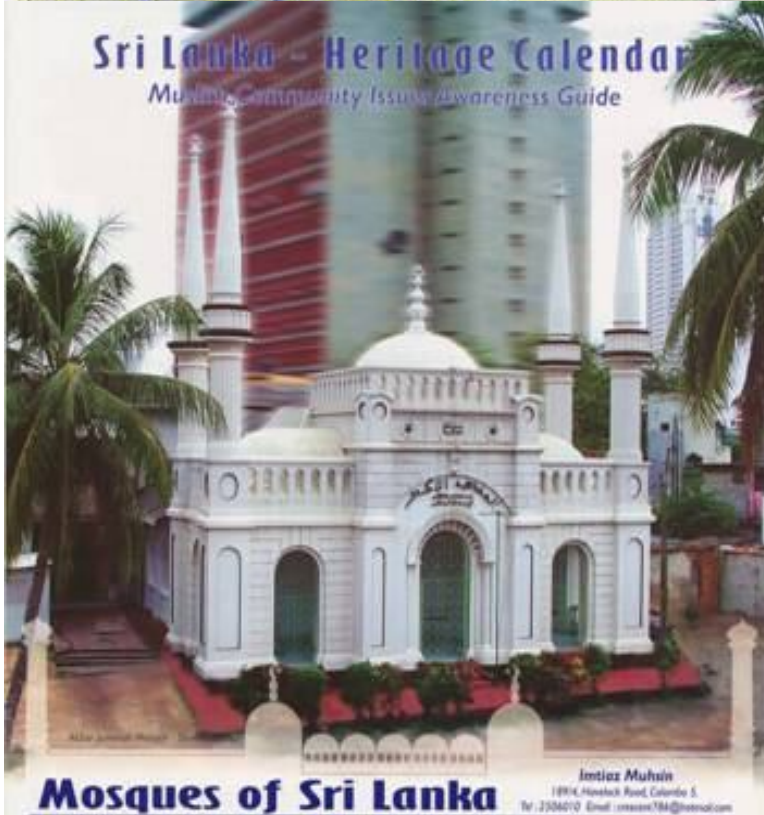
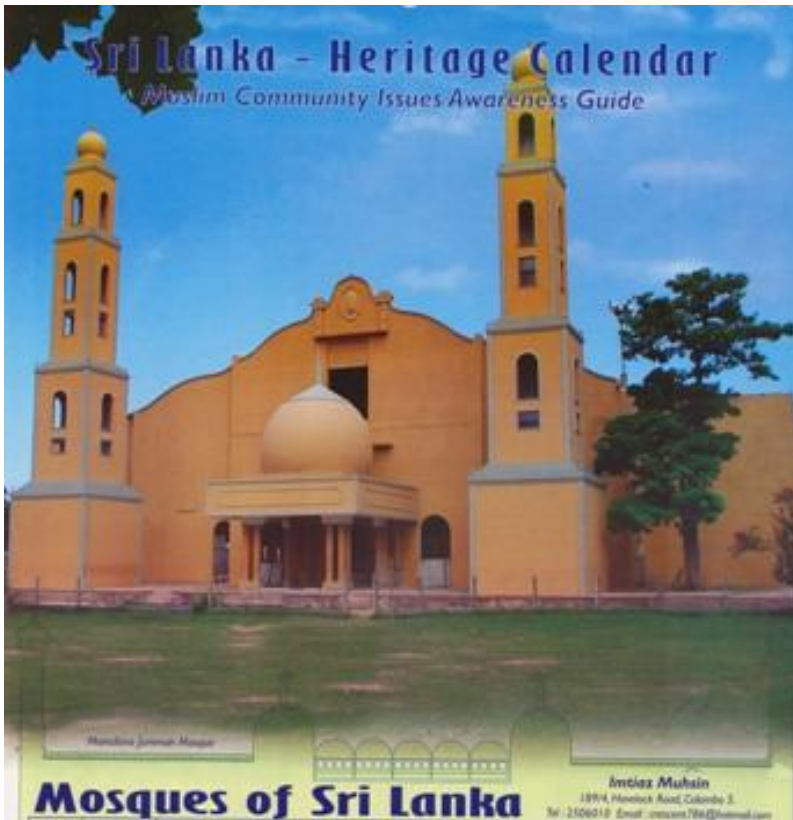
**Imtiaz Muhsin**

1814, Howbeck Road, Colombo 3.  
Tel : 2386010 Email : [imam20784@hotmail.com](mailto:imam20784@hotmail.com)



**Grandpass Mosque, Colombo 14  
Mosque, Colombo 12**

**Messenger Street**

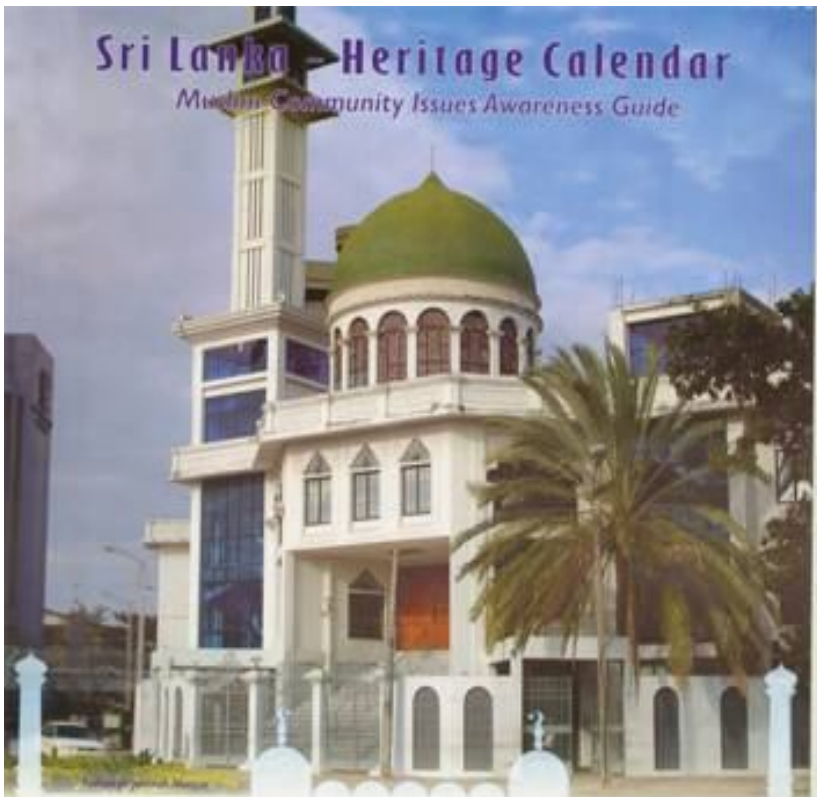


**Maradana Mosque, Colombo 10**  
**Slave Island, Colombo 2**

**Wekande Mosque,**

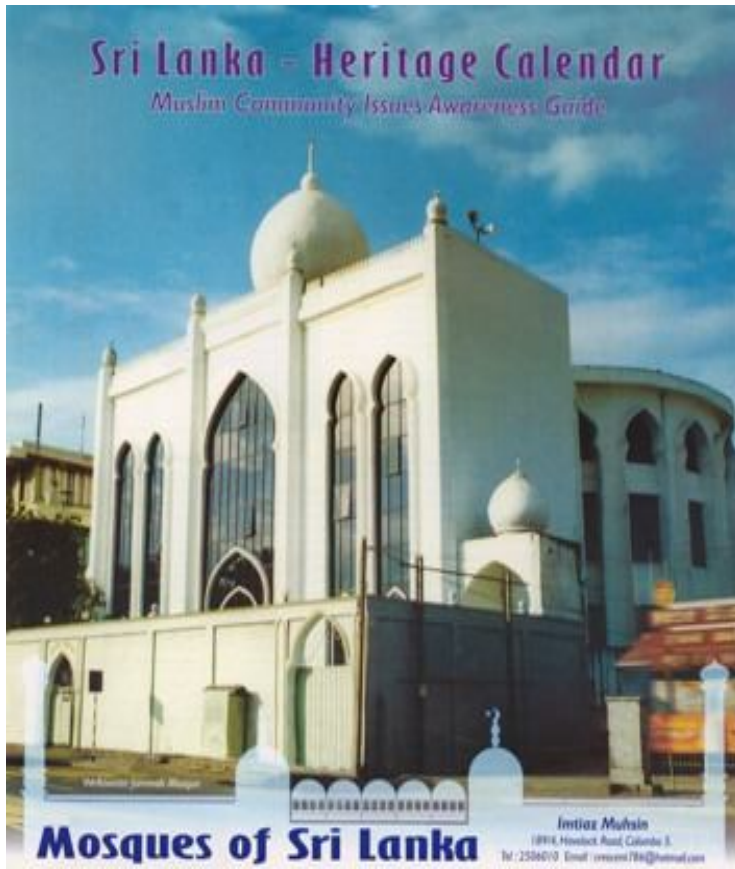
# Sri Lanka Heritage Calendar

*Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide*



## **Mosques of Sri Lanka**

**Intiaz Muhsin**  
189/4, Havelock Road, Colombo 3.  
Tel: 2506018 Email: [iamuhsin78@gmail.com](mailto:iamuhsin78@gmail.com)



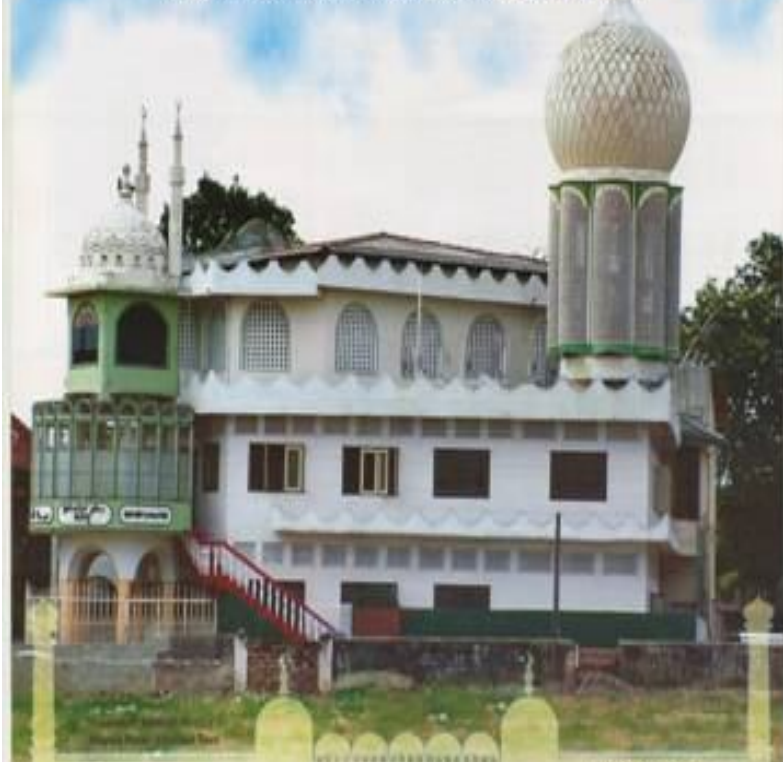
**Kollupitiya Mosque, Colombo 3**  
**Mosque, Colombo 6**

**Wellawatte**



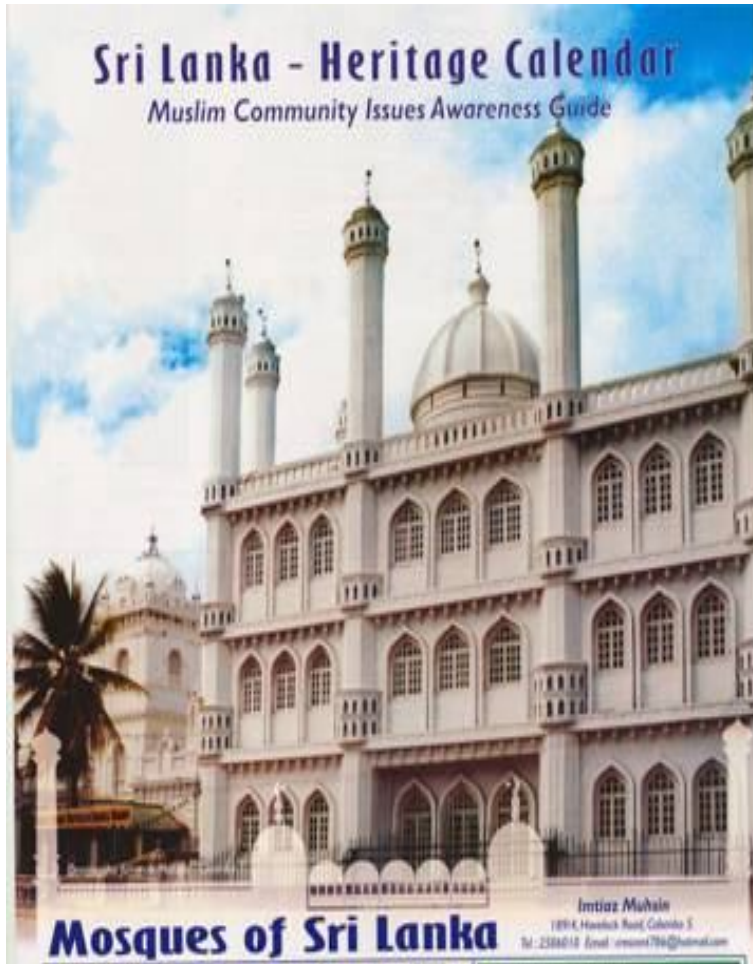
# Sri Lanka - Heritage Calendar

*Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide*



## Mosques of Sri Lanka

**Intiaz Muhsin**  
129/4, Havelock Road, Colombo 3  
Tel: 23366012 Email: [imhsin784@hotmail.com](mailto:imhsin784@hotmail.com)



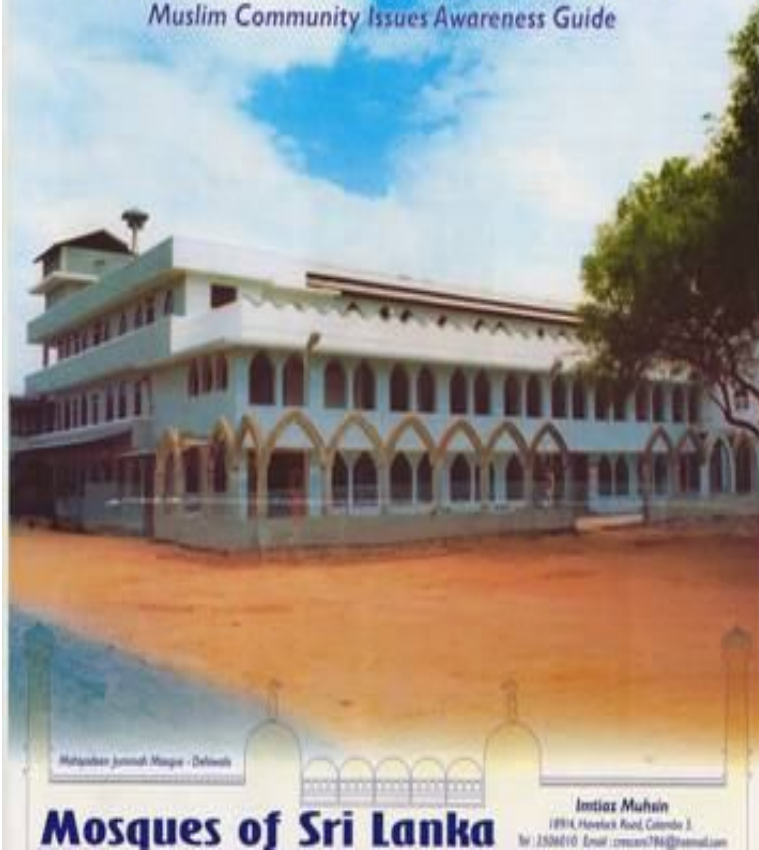
**Mayura Place Mosque  
Mosque,  
Havelock Town, Colombo 6  
Gardens, Colombo 7**

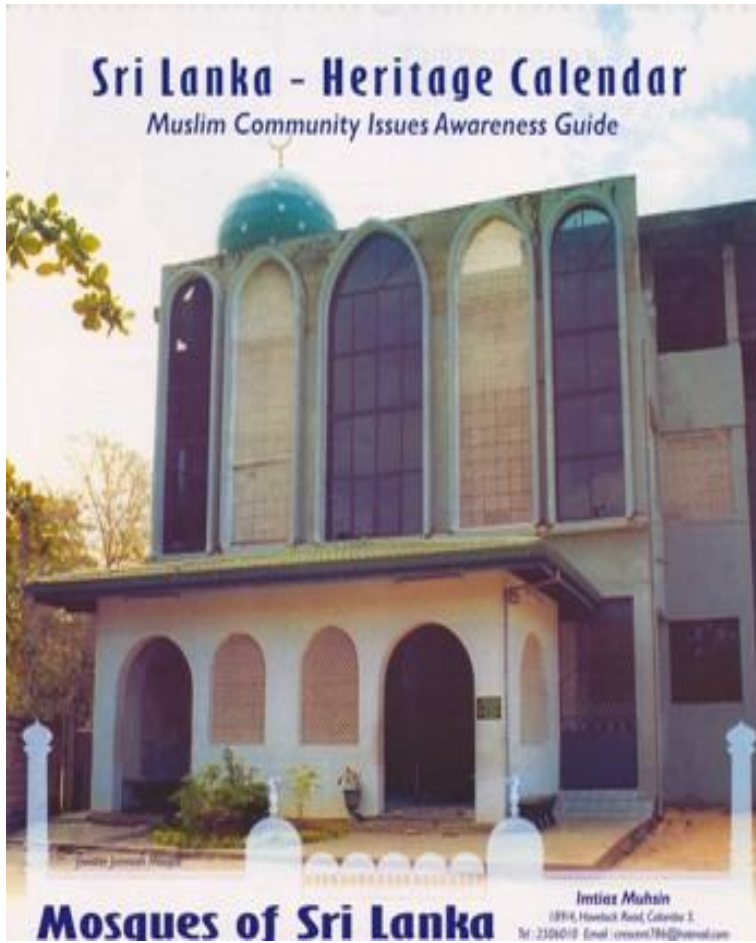
**Devatagaha  
Cinnamon**



# Sri Lanka - Heritage Calendar

*Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide*

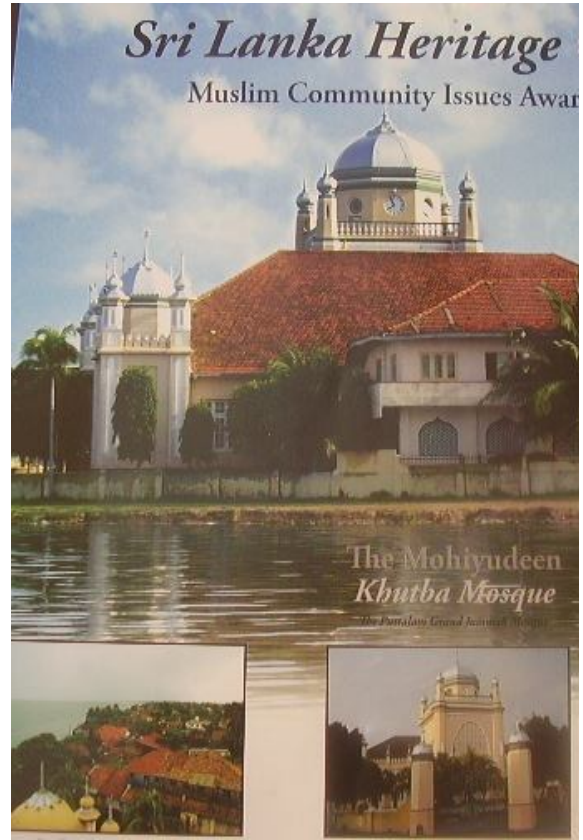




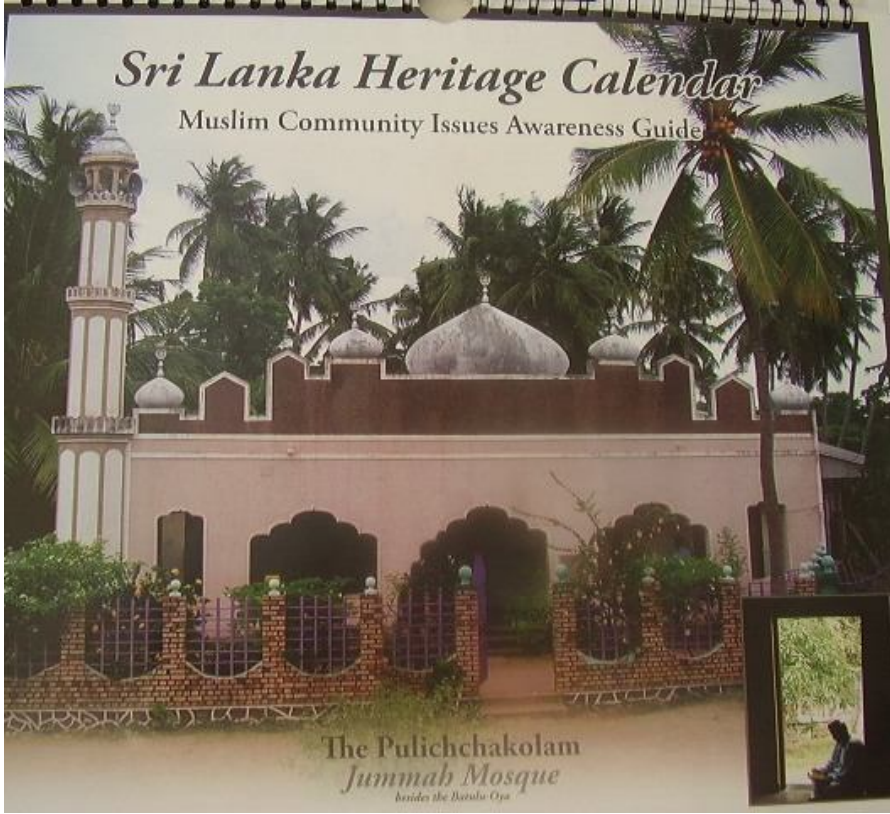
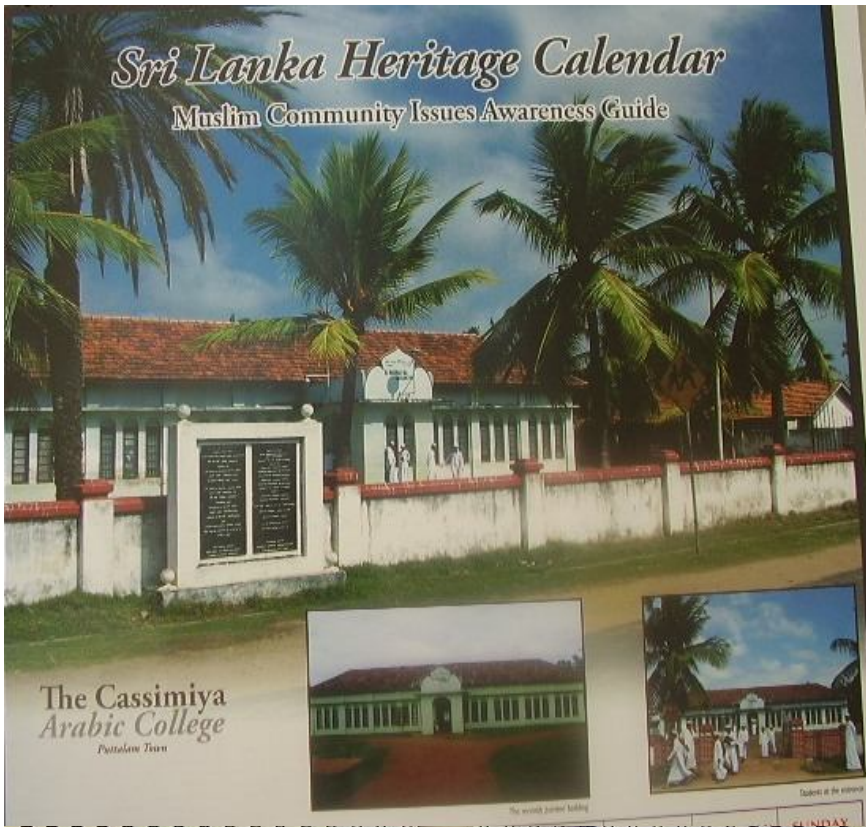
**Dehiwela Mosque**  
**Slave Island, Colombo 2**

**Jawatte Mosque,**

# MOSQUES IN SRI LANKA

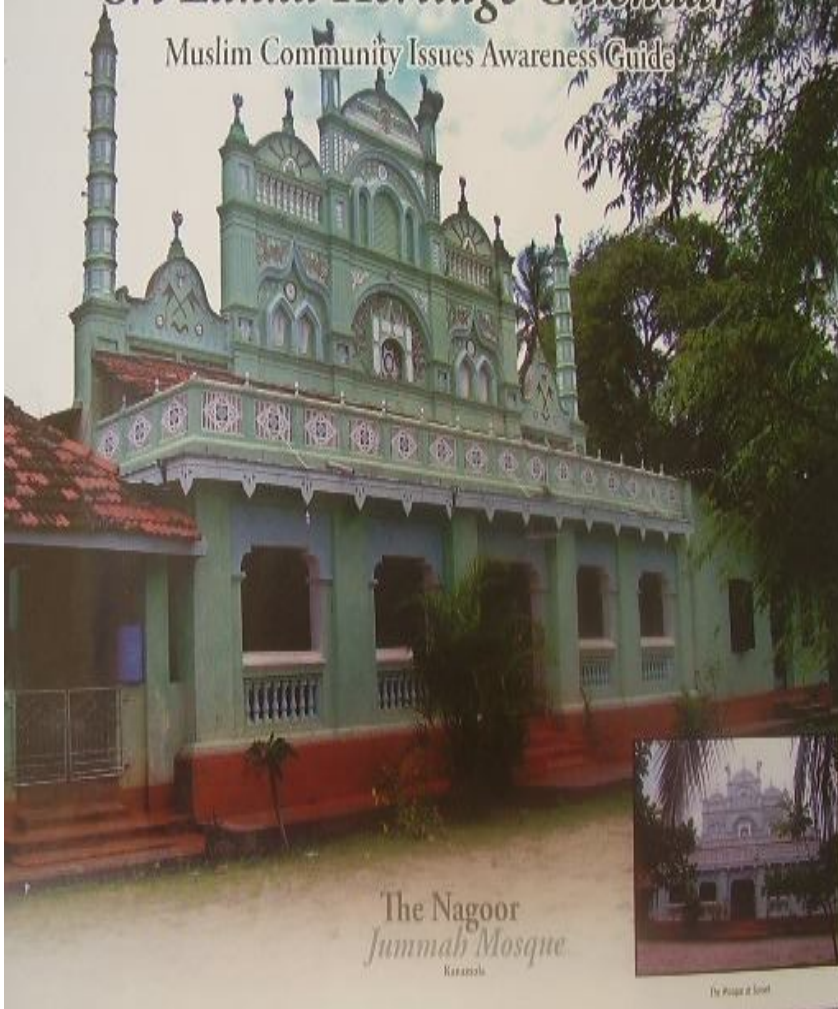






# *Sri Lanka Heritage Calendar*

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



The Nagoor  
*Jummah Mosque*  
Korambala



The Mosque at Korambala

# Sri Lanka Heritage Calendar

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



The Mahabera Jami'ah Mosque - Palitotaholam



The interior of the mosque at night



The facade of the mosque



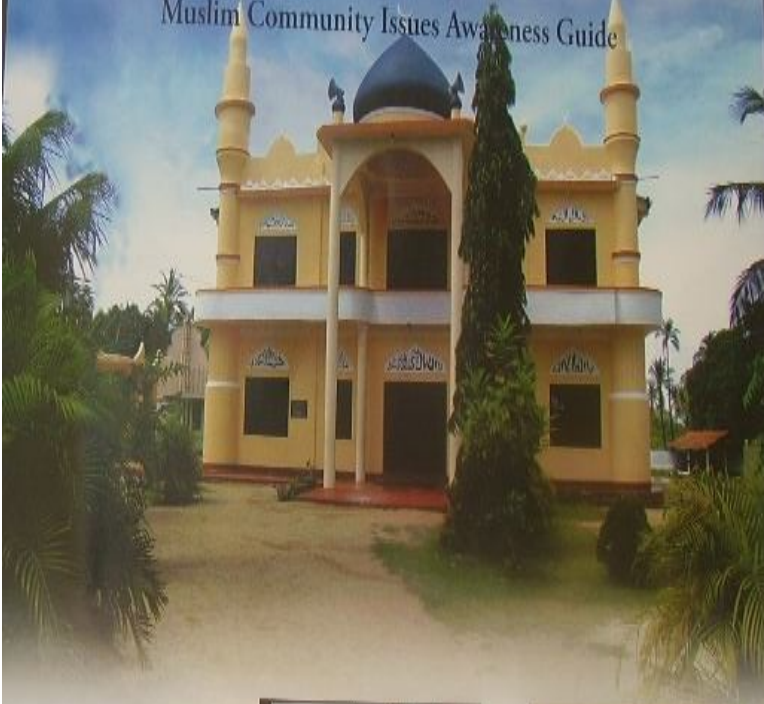
The interior of the mosque during the day

SUNDAY



# Sri Lanka Heritage Calendar

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



Abu Bakr  
Jummah Mosque  
Nuwara-Eliya



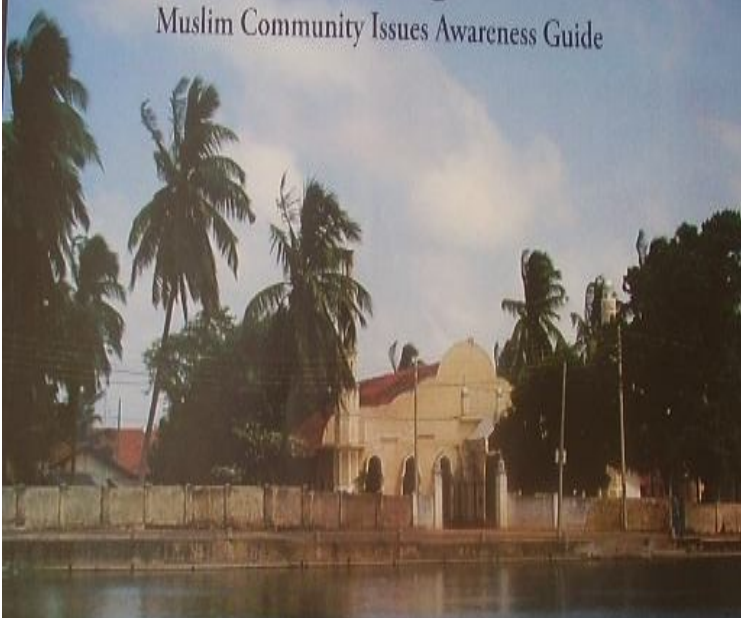
The Mosque during construction



The prayer room

# *Sri Lanka Heritage Calendar*

Muslim Community Issues Awareness Guide



Another view of Masjid ul Baqa

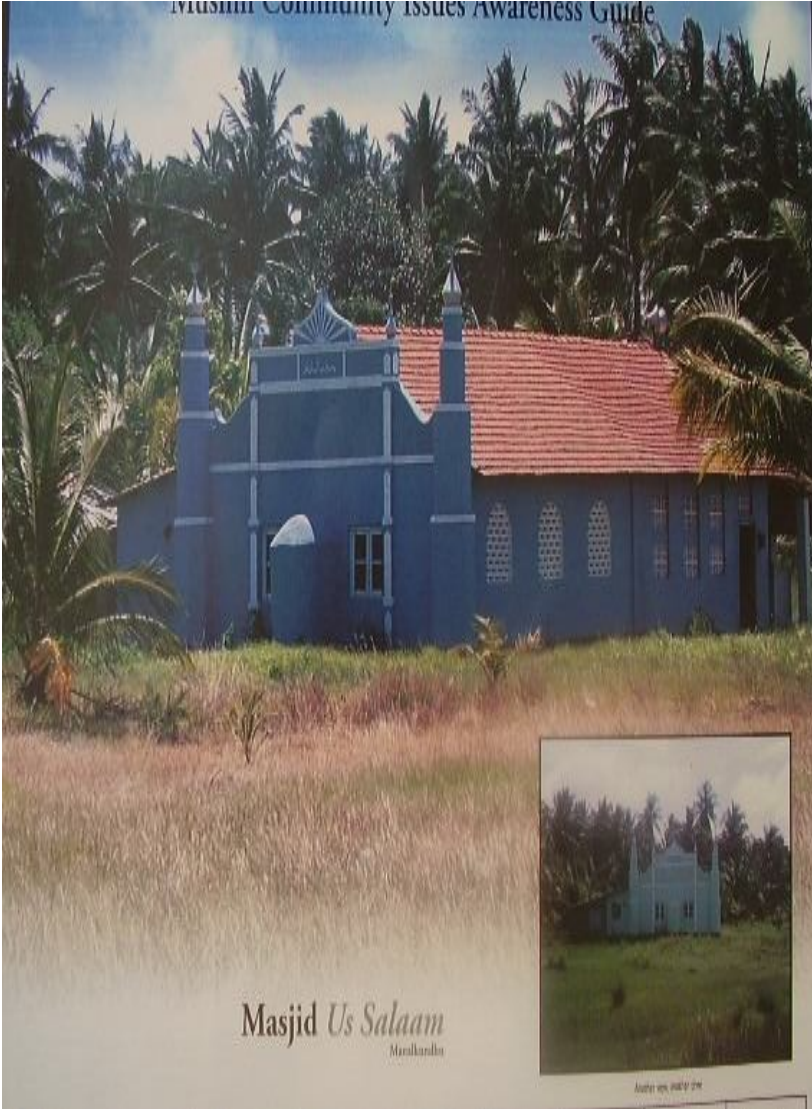


Ducks enjoying their bath at Islamia Pond in Puttalam

*Masjid Ul Baqa*

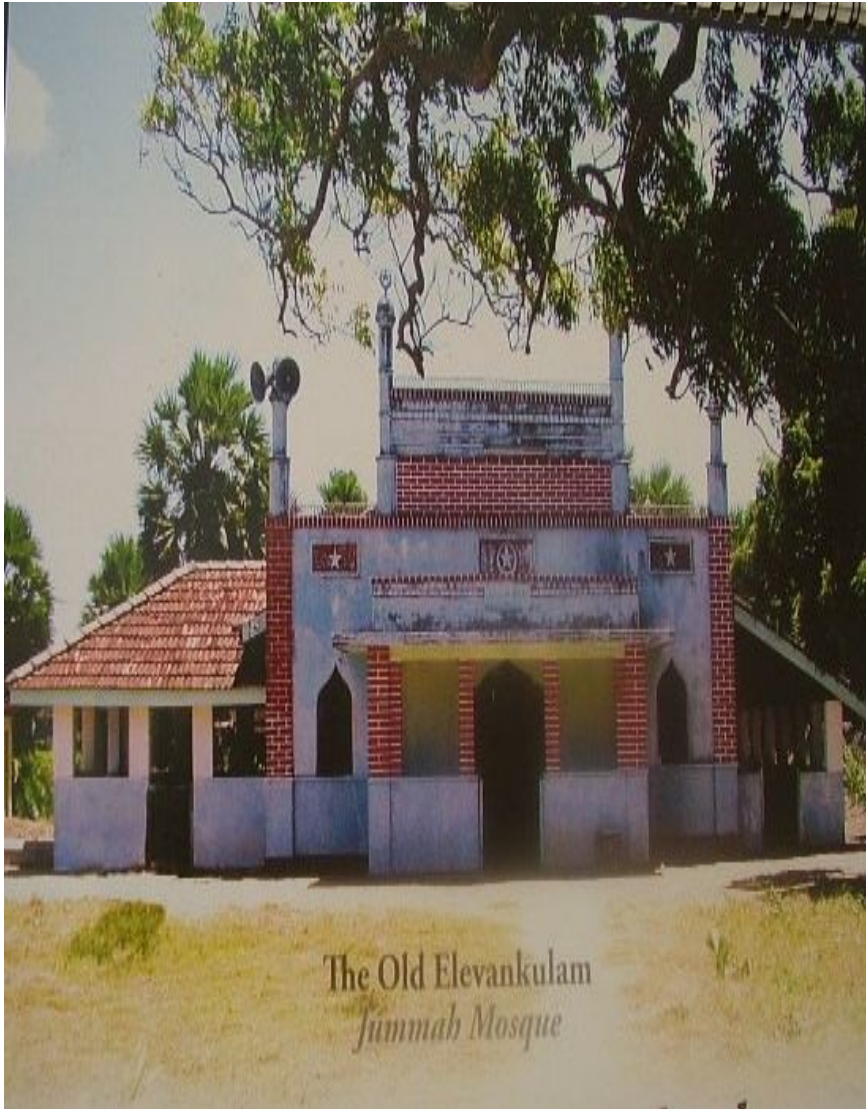
Puttalam



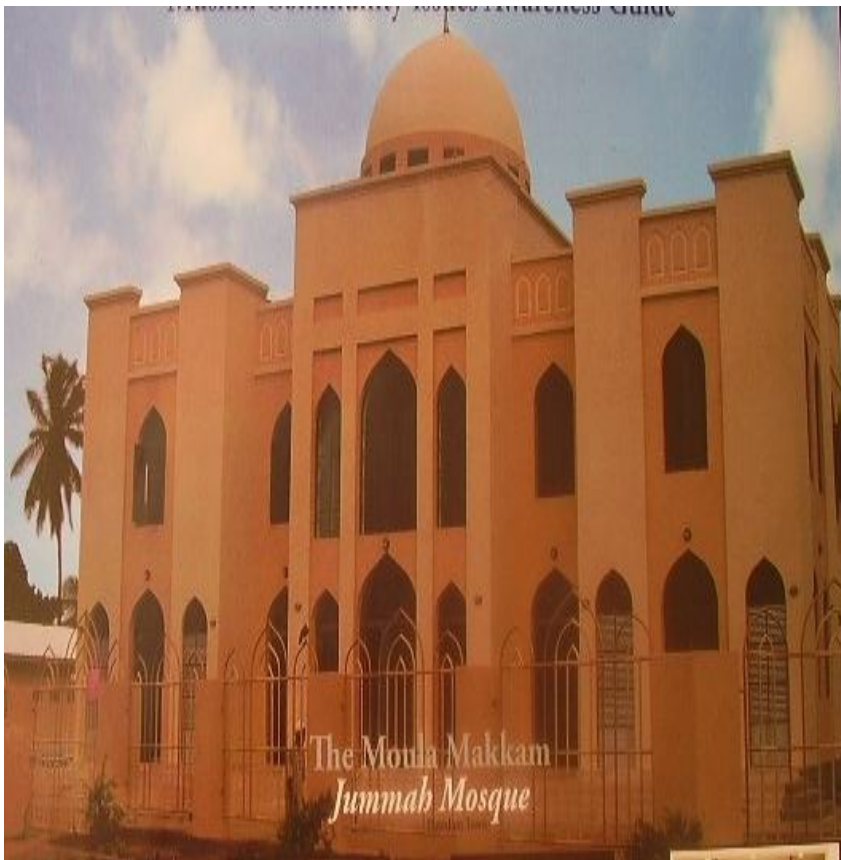


*Masjid Us Salaam*  
Marikanda

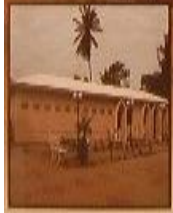
Masjid us Salaam



The Old Elevankulam  
*Jummah Mosque*



The Moulana Makkam  
Jummah Mosque



Camp of Makkah



The grand entrance to the Mosque



A glimpse of inside, including the women



Women Masjid



The New Mohideen  
*Jumrah Mosque*





**MATARA MASJID**

**MARADANA MASJID**

## Muslims and Politics in Sri Lanka

For decades before independence, Muslim political leaders, with a few exceptions, hailed from wealthy business families within the elite Colombo circles who had been trading with the Colonial rulers successfully. In the post independent era these leaders and others from similar elitist backgrounds remained dominant, almost exclusively controlling the political agenda for the whole community. Largely organized along the lines of social service groups, viz; The All Ceylon Muslim League, The All Ceylon Moors Association, The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home, these elites courted the support of local Muslim leaders in the Muslim majority areas of the Eastern Province by supplying them with finance, social services and patronage sources which allowed them to succeed in being elected to parliament. By enlisting national Muslim support in this way, the Colombo elite built up a political base which it offered to the national Sinhalese parties. The Muslim elite groups, were, in the twentieth century more aligned with the capitalist styled United National Party (UNP) rather than the vociferous, radical and vehement social parties that were emerging during the post independent period. Being traders and businessmen it was more so to their benefit to tag along with a party that was supposed to have stood for free market economics and less regulatory restrictions.

Whatever their alliances, the Muslim elite groups were always forced to align themselves to one or more of the national Sinhala parties in order to be a part and parcel of the governing elite during and after the General Elections. In many cases these elite Muslim groups were, in some ways, forced to support national policies which largely contradicted the interests and aspirations of many of their populous. Most notably many of the Muslim elite leaders supported the "Sinhala Only" policy that emerged in the fifties even though a large majority of Muslims in Sri Lanka were Tamil speaking.

No doubt the close ties that the Muslim elite leadership had with the then rulers of the nation gave them any advantages in seeking to fulfill their religious and social needs. They were successful in securing legislation for the Muslims Mosques and Charitable Trusts (Wakfs) of 1956, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act 13 of 1951, specifically aimed at safeguarding the religious and cultural life of the Muslims. Other provisions, such as the declaration of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) birthday as a public holiday conferred national recognition to Islam. Secondly, the elite group, particularly through the valiant efforts of people like Dr. T B Jayah, Sir Razik Fareed, and later Dr. Badiudin Mahmud, significantly improved the dismal state of Muslim education in the Island. In those times most Muslim families feared the proselytization of non Muslim religious schools in the country and thereby preferred to home school or simply send their children to take over their business establishments based on whatever they were able to learn from home and the bazaar. The creation of Muslim teacher training colleges, the establishment of a category of Muslim Government Schools, and the teaching of Arabic and Islamic Civilization, within these schools, all shared the dual purpose of the elites. On one hand these developments significantly improved the aggregate educational achievements of the community. On the other hand, such provisions also strengthened the sense of a common Muslim identity, the building blocks of the elites access to political power.

The success of the Muslim elite leadership in extracting such benefits for the community reflects the importance the many Sinhalese parties attached to the political support extended by the Muslim elite. Equally, it mirrors the nature of the demands made by the Muslim elite even though these demands never infringed on the rights and privileges of the majority community.

By the 1980's the claim of the Muslim elite groups for the political support of the entire country was being called into question for two essential reasons. One, the elite struggled to maintain the allegiance of the Eastern Province Muslims through its traditional channels of patronage as the communal violence in the east shifted towards them and their people. Eastern Province Muslim expectations of these elite leaders to provide them with security and a peaceful existence on their traditional homeland was not seen forthcoming as was the previous patronage of finance, cultural, religious and social services. Secondly, socio-economic changes within the south-western Muslim communities gave rise to a class whose concerns extended to beyond those of the Muslim elite leadership of old. This was the beginning of the demise of the power wielded by this Muslim elite leadership which had stood tall and successful for many decades before.

For the south-western Muslims, the economic policies of the 1950's, 1960's and much of the 1970's, challenged their traditional economic trading riches and privileges which they had enjoyed since the Colonial eras. In particular, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the several governments that it led from 1956 to 1965 and 1970 to 1977, shifted economic policy away from the private sector to a system of industrialization involving a significant public sector involvement. While this broad shift of the economy into one of a Socialistic nature affected private business ventures in general, specific acts of legislation such as the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment (CWE) directly targeted particular sectors in which the Muslims had been dominant for decades before. While Muslims were being slowly displaced from their traditional riches, state legislation and nationalization policies provided opportunities for the majority Sinhalese community to enter into trade and commerce, two areas which they were not fully involved in nor had the acumen to be part of since Colonial times. The majority Sinhalese community, were, mainly concentrating on farming and produce, mostly, in the interior of the island while the Muslim Community traded along the coastlines.

In contrast to the economic policies of the 1950's and 1960's, and most of the 1970's the post 1977 economic liberalization expanded the sphere of economic activities available to the free market and business oriented Muslim community. Embracing the recommendations of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the then UNP Government discarded exchange control regulations and public sector industrialization and, instead, sought to encourage growth through the development of both the private and export sectors. The resulting new business opportunities in import-export trade benefited not only large Muslim businesses who had weathered the earlier decades, but also smaller Muslim entrepreneurs breaking into trade and commerce for the very first time. The liberalization of the laws allowing Sri Lankans to work overseas, in combination with the establishment of diplomatic relations with many Arab countries, enabled hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans to seek employment in the new oil rich Middle East. Not surprisingly the Sri Lankan Muslim community took immediate advantage of this opportunity more so than any other community, mainly because they were not intimidated or discouraged by the lack of western style freedom, movement and the intermingling of sexes in many of these Arab nations, based on their strict culture and religion. It has been recorded that Muslims, comprising around 7.6% of the total population of the Island, comprised almost 20% of the migrating labor. The commonality of religion and some aspects of Muslim culture between the Arabs and the Sri Lankan Muslims was certainly a keen factor in this equation. Non Muslims, even if offered lucrative employment in the Middle Eastern region, had some reservations in accepting

these jobs for better prospects, on account of the restrictive nature of the lifestyle in this region.

It was sometime during this juncture, too, that the Muslim community started breaking free from the shackles of restrictive educational opportunities imposed by their own families for fear of conversion to other faiths by the missionary schools, and started venturing boldly and even very successfully into the professions. Well placed Muslim educationalists came forward to redress the long standing inadequacies in the educational development of the Muslims. Particularly due to the enthusiasm and resourcefulness of Dr. Badiudin Mahmud, Minister of Education from 1960 to 1963 and again from 1970 to 1977, the number of Muslim Schools as well as the number of Muslim Teachers soared in the 1960's and 1970's.

Although the Muslim presence and impact in business remains significant, even today, the many difficulties faced by Muslim businessmen in the 1950's and 1960's and even most of the 1970's, encouraged many to no longer regard the path to prosperity as one involving business, trade and moving into the shoes of their forefathers. The message the Muslim community had taken from previous decades was that their livelihood in business was dependent on the policy of the government. Muslim business families began to consider professional education as an important element of success, both, in terms of unlocking new opportunities and also of maintaining competitiveness amongst the enlarged number of business rivals who were all flocking towards technology and innovation and a totally new way of carrying on their businesses in an ever changing global economy. In a survey carried out by Samarasinghe and Davood involving fifty one large Muslim businessmen found that only 17% were indifferent to their children's education while 75% of those surveyed expected their children to become involved in business, but only after obtaining a proper education. Around 10% of those surveyed hoped that their children would enter the professions.

While most Muslim students had to be content with the admission that they received from the various public, private and missionary schools in the Island the recent advent of private international schools has also been a great opportunity for the more affluent within the community to seek a better education, especially in the English Medium. The involvement of Muslim females in the sphere of education, in recent decades, has also been another great stride in the development of the community. Muslims have also been involved, very successfully, in sports and other activities within the school and club scenario. The Sri Lanka Cricket team boasts of many prominent and well performing Muslims while the Rugby Football scene across the schools and clubs has a large number of successful Muslim participants. School and Club cricket have also been patronized well by the community in the recent past.

Recent surveys have shown a significant increase in the Muslim presence in the category of Professionals, Teachers, and Government Employees and a steady decrease in the Muslim involvement in the areas of Labor and Agriculture. Muslim social service organizations, clubs and youth groups have struggled hard to promote the improvement of the educational levels of the community amongst, both, males and females.

These new trends within the Muslim community in Sri Lanka have, no doubt, lifted the level of the people within society to a great degree. However, politically the community does not seem to have any sensible direction as most of the so called Muslim political leaders are torn between the various political parties that have been in existence since independence. The emergence of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), which raised its



head in the Eastern Province subsequent to the difficulties and hardships suffered by the people in this region in the aftermath of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict that has been on-going for the past 25 years or more. In previous times separate groups of Muslim Members of Parliament aligned themselves to the two main parties and thereby secured themselves sufficient seats in order to represent their community even if the party manifesto's were poles apart. In recent times, however, the system of governance in Sri Lanka has slowly, yet steadily, moved away from the conservative system of Socialism to a more free market Capitalist structure in keeping with the trends in the region and also macros the Globe.

One of the very significant factors related to the Muslim community is that they have always stood very closely with the majority Sinhalese community in ascertaining the unity of the nation and never seeking to support separatist claims by the Tamil community based on their own demands and aspirations. While this has put the community at loggerheads with the Tamil minority community it has always shown the nationalistic fervor of the Muslims as a genuine Sri Lankan group rather than an alien entity. Certain sections of the Sinhala and Tamil nationalistic movements have tried, in vain, to classify the Muslims as migrants rather than sons of the soil. This attempt has always been futile as, if we go back in time then all the three main communities in Sri Lanka should be classified as migrants since none of them were sons of the soil excepting, perhaps, the aboriginal Veddah's of Mahiyangana. One great comforting feature is that the large majority of Sinhalese people in the Island do accept and treat the Muslims as sons of the soil who have contributed equally to the development and progress of the nation throughout history.

## The Ahadiya Movement in Ceylon

by Ifthikhar Aziz

The Ahadiya School's Movement was started way back in December 1951 - 52 years ago.

My late Father, **Marhoom M.H.Abdul Aziz** was an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Ceylon and had, by the Grace of Almighty Allah, a very lucrative practice. In early 1951, he was approached by a Muslim couple from Galle to seek ways and means of getting their only daughter back into the family-fold, in spite of the fact that she had eloped with a non-Muslim. Now, this was a much respected, conventional and fairly religious Muslim family from Galle and this incident created such a rumpus at that time that it was causing them great pain of mind and utter humiliation, not only because she had eloped with a non-Muslim but also because he happened to be a person doing a menial job - a postman, if I can remember right..

Attempts to get the girl back failed and they had to have the couple hauled before the Courts and while my late Father was questioning the girl why she resorted to this course of action and whether she was aware that it was "haram" to not only elope but also marry a non-Muslim man unless of course, he accepts the religion of Islam, the girl said that she was not aware of any such restrictions nor was she conversant with the basic tenets of Islam. He was able to get the girl to repent, change her mind and revert back to her parents, by the Grace and Mercy of Almighty Allah, but this incident set him thinking.

He was worried that most of the problems faced by our community then - and upon reflection, even now in my view - was due to a lack of knowledge of the basics of Islam.

He was convinced that a start must be made to impart the basic teachings from a tender age to our little Muslim brothers and sisters and with this in mind, he invited a few Ulemas, led by the late Moulavi Lafir Alim from Galle, professionals like late District Judge A.M. Ameen, late Proctor A.H.L.A. Saleem, Barrister A.L.M. Hashim and others to join him in this task of starting Sunday Schools for Muslim children.

The first such school was started in Talapitiya, Galle, his birth place in December 1951 and followed soon by a similar Ahadiya School at the Bambalapitiya Mosque. A few other such Ahadiya schools sprang up within the next three years and were running smoothly until 2nd August 1954 ( 4th day of Dhul Haj ), it was the Will of the Creator that my beloved Father's soul be re-called back to Him, at a relatively young age of 44 "Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajioon". He was a perfectly fit and healthy person who exercised himself regularly and with no previous ailments but as we believe, the Almighty Knows best and His Will prevails.

By the Grace of the Almighty, the Ahadiya School's Movement has grown by leaps and bounds and is to be found in almost every part of the island. It is supported by a very dedicated band of committed social workers and is recognized by the Government of Sri Lanka as a credible Institution of Islamic learning.

The Movement owns a large block of land which housed a vibrant Ahadiya Academy which provided higher learning and Vocational Training activities but somehow, this has fallen back and it would be good if you can identify some organization or

philanthropist/s who may be interested in re-kindling this Institute. It is a 50 acre block of land based in Kulliyapitiya, close to Kurunegala.

Until his demise about an year ago (2002), Haji A.H.L.A.Saleem was the President of the Ceylon Islamic Instructions Society, which is the controlling body of the Ahadiya School's Movement. At present, my brother Shibly heads the Movement.

## **Ayesha Siddeeqa Educational Institute**

**A Ladies Centered Community Development Project Registered at the Ministry of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs Supervised by Hisbul Islam Trust (Incorporated by act, of Parliament No 7 of 1992) - Mawanella, Sri Lanka**

### **AT A GLANCE**

Established on 05.06.2001 – 12 th R.Awwal 1422

### **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT :**

Consists of 14 members

### **STAFF AND THE STUDENTS**

Number of students at present	87
Number of students in 2006	150-250
Full time Lecturers	05
Part time Lecturers	20

### **CURRICULUM**

Diploma in Modern & Islamic Studies  
Higher Diploma in Modern & Islamic Studies  
Special Studies in Shareeah

### **SUBJECTS**

Tajweed, Hifl, Tafseer, Hadees, Fiqh, Seerah, Aqeeda, Islamic History, Islamic Sociology, Islamic Teachings on social welfare, Islamic Culture (A/L), Home Economics (A/L), English, Sinhala, IT, Life skills, Health Education, HRD

### **SPECIAL TRAININGS**

Year 1	First Aid, Sewing ,Yoga
Year 2	Cookery , Interior decoration , Art
Year 3	Islamic Pre-School Teacher Training
Year 4	Patient Management /Social Service and Da'wa Training

### **THE GRADUATES WE PRODUCE**

1. Islamic mothers who are blessing to the family as teachers and guides to their children.
2. Mothers with knowledge and training in child care who discharge their duties towards their family while maintaining cordial relationships.
3. Housewives with knowledge and training in Cookery, Sewing, Interior Decoration First Aid, Patient Management and Cottage Industries etc.
4. Life Partners who are capable of managing the family budget economically and maintaining Islamic environment at home, bringing happiness and peace to the family.
5. Da'iyas who are models in Preaching & Practicing Islam .

6. Pre-school teachers with knowledge of teaching Arabic language and Islamic culture.
7. Graduates who are keen and qualified to follow Higher studies.

#### **OTHER PROJECTS OF ASEI**

1. Conducting ASEI courses externally for girls.
2. Muslim Ladies Bai'tul maal fund for the welfare of the Ladies.
3. A library for ladies with modern facilities.
4. Forum to moulaviyas and ladies Arabic graduates.
5. Women's get together, religious discourses, guidance , family counseling and Health and Social service.

#### **Distinguished Guests who Visited ASEI**

Dr. Salih Abdullah, Prof. Islamic Law ,Imam Mohammed University Saudi Arabia,  
Dr. Abdun Naser, Al-Helaly King Khalid Hospital Jeddah,  
Hon. Minister Rawf Hakeem, Hon.  
Minister Kabeer Hashim,  
Dr. Saleem UNO Expert,  
H.E. Faiz Mustafa Ambassador of Srilanka in U.K,  
Dr. Ziyad ,Director Tea Research Institute,  
Dr. Raees MD (Pediatrician),  
Sh. Seyyed Alavi IT Consultant / Abu Dhabi,  
Bro. Imran – IT Consultant / Saudi Arabia  
Bro. Idrees Malaysia.

## Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (Inc) - MICH

### History

Since its inauguration in the year 1944, The MICH has an impressive and enviable record of work both to the community and the country over a period of half a century. In fact the organization is now in its 63rd Year. Its resolve and determination to work with greater vigour and enthusiasm in the years ahead remain undaunted.

Two priority projects, one for the development of the Women's Students Hostel at Wellawatte exclusively for Muslim girls coming from very poor and distant homes to pursue higher studies in Colombo. This building construction is completed and will increase the accommodation from the earlier 30 to 300. This building has reception halls in its 4th and 5th floors which would be given on hire for weddings and other functions. The other project completed is the expansion of the Lady Fareed Home for Elders at Makola, to meet the increasing demand. The MICH thanks everyone who has given their unstinted support to make these prime and urgent projects a reality.

The Moors' Islamic Cultural Home was inaugurated in 1944 by some leading, dedicated, service oriented Muslims who decided to form an association to promote educational, social and cultural activities. The Muslims of Ceylon needed an institution to deal with religious matters, education, economic and the social aspects of the Moor community.

With this goal, the MICH set out to become the premier service organization to help the Muslims of this country and amongst other objectives they undertook the study of the history, customs, traditions and habits of Ceylon Moors and the promotion of Islamic Culture and Religion. The M.I.C.H has been a focal point of religious, intellectual, social, educational and cultural activities. The contribution made in all these fields has been of immense value to the Sri Lankan community.

The inaugural meeting of the Home was held on 2nd August 1944 at No.5 Second Cross Street Colombo 11. At this meeting Sir Razik Fareed a highly respected leader of the Muslim community of that time was elected as President of the MICH. The other Office Bearers elected as Vice Presidents were Messrs. M.H.M. Sulaiman, A.R.M. Ameen, M.B. Mohamed, W.M. Abdul Jabbar, Y.M. Naina Marikar, W.M. Hassim, A.M. Hamid, A.M.M. Haji AbdulCader, M.S. Marikar Bawa, M.H.M. Shamsudeen, A.R.M. Mukthar, M. Falil Cafoor, A.H.M. Ismail, N.M.M. Haniffa, Dr. M.C.M. Kaleel and, Dr. S.M. Jabir. The Hony. Secretaries were M/s. A.H. Macan Markar, A.I.L. Marikar & A.L.M. Lafir. The Hony. Treasurers were M/s. A.H. Macan Markar & M.L.M. Ghouse. At this meeting a draft constitution was discussed and adopted.

A Bill for incorporation of the M.I.C.H was moved in the State Council by Mr. A.R.A. Razik (Sir Razik Fareed) and seconded by Honourable George E. de Silva.

In moving the first reading of the Bill, Sir Razik Fareed mentioned in Parliament that the "Moors in Sri Lanka have suffered in the matter of religion, and economically, educationally and socially too by want of an institution of this nature, an institution similar to those of other communities here which they established for themselves years ago. This institution sets out to achieve the great objects enumerated in the bill. It is an institution founded on the model of the Jemiyathul Subhanul Muslimeen of Egypt, and of other

great centres of Islamic thought and culture. The object in view is to provide a cultural centre worthy of Islam.

The other founding members were Messers W.M.Hashim, A. H. Macan Markar, A.I.L.Marikar, and A.L.M Lafir.

## Events

- This Home was duly incorporated by an Act of Parliament No.44 .on 19th Oct.1946.
- The Ordinance of incorporation set out the objects of the Home as follows.
- The study and promotion of Islamic culture and religion.
- To research and study the history, customs, traditions and habits of the Ceylon Moors.
- To promote a spirit of fellowship among the members and the inculcation in them of the principles of service to the community and the country.
- The promotion of the cultural, moral, social and economic welfare of the island.
- The provision of facilities for recreation.
- The establishment and maintenance of a hostel for students, a guest house for visitors and a restaurant for the convenience of its members and other persons approved by the Board of Trustees.
- The construction and maintenance of a suite of rooms which are to be let for weddings and other social functions.
- This Home guided by these objectives has carried out a number of projects for the welfare of the Muslim community.

In 1946 the MICH shifted its headquarters to" Pasha Villa "in Dematagoda Road, Colombo 9.

The Institution was incorporated by an Ordinance in the Parliament of Ceylon to house itself in the same year by Sir Razik Fareed. At present the Dematagoda premises has 2 large 3 storied structures where the main service oriented projects are conducted. In this building there is a hostel for senior students who are following University, Tertiary and Secondary education.

## Activities

- A students' Library and Reading Room is available for school going children.
- A study hall for the benefit of the children in the area.
- Quran reading classes
- A Montessori School for poor children living in the area.

- Typing classes, and
- Dress Making classes are held for girls.

In 1948 an allotment of land for a suitable site in Fort was sought from Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, then leader of the Senate by the President of the Home Sir Razik Fareed. After some years of struggle, this site was released in March 1961.

Today the Home owns an impressive building in the heart of Fort in Colombo in addition to the sprawling premises in Dematagoda and this building at No. 27, Bristol Street, Fort was ceremonially declared opened by Hon. Dudley Senanayake MP, Prime Minister of Ceylon on 30th May 1965.

In 1983 the Home acquired a property with a house on 23 perches extent of land at No.7 Lily Avenue, Wellawatte to start a Women's Hostel for university girls.

The MICH has contributed towards the upliftment of the Muslims by pursuing programmes for the development and progress of the community.

The Home manages the Lady Fareed Home for the Elders in Makola for male and female Elders A Girls Hostel in Wellawatte, provides accommodation for girls living in distant places to pursue further studies in Colombo. This is managed by the Women's Bureau. Classes are conducted in Sewing, Embroidery and Knitting.

At their activities centre at Pasha Villa Dematagoda the main service oriented projects are conducted. The Technical Training Institute opened in July 1974 has courses for both males and females, and Classes are conducted in Motor Mechanism, Electricity, English Typewriting, Dress Making and many other vocational courses.

In their impressive five storied premises in Fort the Home has its headquarters, and conducts all social functions, receiving and entertaining foreign dignitaries conducting seminars and similar activities. And the rest of the space in this building has been rented out to Govt.Depts, which brings in the main income to run the affairs of the Home.

In 1958 the M.I.C.H launched on its project to translate the Holy Quran into Sinhala, as the existing Tamil and English translations reached only a few.

The translation of the Holy Quran was started in 1958, to reach out to the greater majority of the Sri Lankan population, especially the younger generation studying in the Sinhala medium.

This work was handled by a team of experts and included the late Mr. Pinoris Wickremasinghe, who was connected with the compilation of the Sinhala Dictionary. He was assisted by Muslim theologians. A great deal of scrutiny and research went into the translation which took 26 years to complete.

After the translation of the Holy Quran was completed the MICH in 1994 decided to translate the Hadith from the Sahih Al Bukhari into Sinhala to make it possible for those who conversant in the Sinhala Language to be able to read and understand the Hadith. The translation of the Hadith was entrusted to Mr. Milton Jayasuriya. The first volume was released for distribution in 1998, and the second volume followed. The work on the translation of the third volume is now being done.



The MICH, in the recent past, has completed two major projects for development and expansion. The Women's Hostel in Lily Avenue an old single storied building which was purchased in 1983 and was accommodating around 30 was developed to a modern six-storied building. Entire two floors of this building is reserved to accommodate Muslim Girls visiting Colombo from outstation and rural areas of the country to pursue their higher studies. It is expected to provide accommodation to 300 such students at a subsidized rate amidst Islamic Environment. The rest of the structured with an Islamic Library, a Prayer Hall, A VIP Lounge, an Auditorium and Reception Halls in the top two floors to conduct social and other functions.

The construction of this new building which cost around Rs. 70 Million was commenced with the initial contribution of US \$ 200,000/- by Her Highness Sheika Fatima Bint Mubarak, wife of His Highness Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan the late President of UAE. His Excellency Saeed Ali Al Nowais, then Ambassador of UAE in Sri Lanka was instrumental in obtaining this generous donation for this building. The UAE Red Crescent also provided a further sum of US \$ 100,000/- to complete this work.

This magnificent building has been named as, " Her Highness Sheikha Fatima Building" and was declared opened at a grand ceremony by Hon. W.J.M. Lokubandara MP, Speaker of Sri Lanka Parliament and His Excellency Mahmood Mohammed Al-Mahmood, Ambassador of UAE amidst a large gathering of distinguished people on 17th December 2007.

The other project was the Expansion of the Lady Fareed Home for Elders, at Makola, approximately 10 km from the city of Colombo. The land and a building was donated by lady Ameena Fareed wife of the Founder President Sir Razzik Fareed and an Elders Home had been maintained since 1957 which was declared opened by Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, GCMG, KCVO, KBE, KStJ, then Governor-General of Ceylon. There were about 18 inmates in the Home before the expansion.

This Home was expanded by the construction of a new modern building in order to increase the intake to at least 100 destitute elders – both males and females. This building was a generous gift of Alhaj Eliyas Abdul Kareem, Chairman EAM Maliban Group of Companies and a well-known philanthropist in memory of his late parents. The ceremonial opening of the new building was held under the patronage of the noble donor amidst a large gathering on 2nd September 2007. It is hoped that this project will meet the demands of a growing number of destitute Elders and provide better facilities for the older members of the community in their evening of their life.

The MICH prints a Desk Diary every year. This Diary, which was first printed in 1948 and carries a wealth of information of importance to the Muslims.

A souvenir is printed every 5 years to maintain in print and picture a record of the activities of the Home. The last issue was published in the year 2004.

Many important publications too have been printed and published from time to time. These publications reflect the history and culture of the Moors in Sri Lanka from their first contact with the island over 2000 years ago, to the most recent contributions to Sri Lankan life.

From its inception the M.I.C.H has in many ways added to the cultural richness of Sri Lankan life. It has shown how an organization like this can blend into the social life of the

country.

The Home has played an active role in promoting peace, harmony and goodwill among all Sri Lankans.

## Founders



**Sir**

**Razik**

**Fareed**

Sir Razik Fareed began his public career as a member of the Municipal Council of Colombo. Subsequently he was a member of the state council, a Member of Parliament, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, High Commissioner in Pakistan, amongst other public postings. In all these capacities he distinguished himself and did his country proud. In his diverse career, sir Razik Fareed's greatest contribution was in the field of education. He was a pioneer of Muslim education and saw to it that government Muslim schools were established in different parts of the country.

Sir Razik Fareed was a great philanthropist. He donated valuable land which he owned in Bambalapitiya for the establishment Muslim Ladies College, a school which survives and prospers to this day. A significant feature of his political life was that he realized that Sri Lanka must continue to exist and flourish as a single nation without any form of division. At the inaugural meeting of the MICH held on 2nd August 1944, Sir Razik Fareed was elected as President of the MICH. A bill for the incorporation of the MICH was moved in the State Council by Sir Razik Fareed to safeguard the assets of the home. In moving the first reading of the bill, Sir Razik Fareed mentioned in parliament that the "Moors in Sri Lanka have suffered in the matter of religion, economically, educationally and socially by want of an institution of this nature. An institution similar to those of other communities here which they established for themselves years ago."



**W.M.**

**Hashim-**

**J.P.-**

Born on the 6th of January 1880. He was a merchant, educationist, a leader and a philanthropist. In the field of education W.M.Hashim supported financially the Darusalam Maha Vidyalaya in Maligawatte fulfilling his dream to provide education to the poorest among Muslims in the city.W.M.Hashim worked hard to raise the standard of education at Zahira College. He was deeply interested in the aspirations for the political, educational, social and cultural advancement of the Muslims. In 1934/35 the General Committee of the Moor' Association was held with Sir Macan Markar in the chair. A board of supporters were elected to raise funds. W.M. Hashm readily agreed to be one of them and remained a most loyal founder and Vice President until his death. He was also a founder member of the MICH. W.M. Hashim possessed a gift of giving to

the needy and the poor. He contributed generously to Musilm Ladies College and was a benign benefactor.



**A.I.L.**

**Marikkar**

A.I.L. Marikkar was born on 10th August 1907. He had his early education at Hameedia School and later shifted to Wesley College. He was employed in his fathers business. On 2nd August 1944, along with the other founding fathers, a few leading Moors, met and founded the MICH and A.I.L. Marikkar was one of them. From the inception in 1944 til his demise in 4/1 92 he was Hony Jt Secretary for a period of 48 years- a record in any association or society. On the initiative of A.I.L. Marikkar a scheme for training Hafiz was implemented. A.I.L. Marikkar has authored many books individually and with A.H. Macan Markar and A.L.M. Lafir. He was a rare example of a dedicated secretary who without hesitation, set out to work for his community. Apart from his literary pursuits he helped many worthy and charitable causes. He was a Scholar, Master of written words, very simple but very active person. The London based Guinness Book of Records has opened a file for his exemplary service and contributions made in respect of Islamic Culture in Sri Lanka.



**A.L.M.**

**Lafir-**

He was educated at Wesley College. He was a founder of the All Ceylon Moors Association. He was one of the founder members of the MICH and in 1944 and was the secretary. In 1947 he took the post of administrative secretary until he resigned in 1979. He remained an active member of the board of trustees, loyal and dedicated. He was also the secretary of the Ceylon Muslim Educational Society and the Serendib Sufi Study Circle and Assistant Secretary to the Ceylon University Mosque Association.



**A.H.**

**Macan**

**Markar-**

He was educated at Royal College and later at Cambridge where he obtained his economic tripos. He qualified as a barrister at law and was a member of the Inner Temple. He was a founding father of the Moors Islamic Cultural Home and he was elected Jt Secretary and Treasurer from its inauguration on the 2nd August 1944. He played a major role in acquiring the site for the present building at "Pasha Villa" Dematagoad and the Ladies Hostel at Lily Avenue, Wellawatte. Towards the translation of the Holy Quran into Sinhala, which took 23 years to complete, his personal concern

and devotion was evident. He disliked publicity brought a sense of true dedication to the members of the MICH.



### **MICH Building In Fort**

The Fort building is a five storeyed structure situated at 27, Bristol Street, Colombo 1. On a request made by Sir Razik Fareed to Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, this land was donated by the state for the purpose of constructing a building to house the MICH. The consecration ceremony for the building was held on the 6th of October 1961 by His Excellency Syed Abdul Qadir Al Gailani, Ambassador for Iraq in Ceylon. Of special significance is the Morisco Spanish Horse Shoe arches depicting designs in Islamic art of Arabic calligraphy designating the attributes of Allah drawn by artist Mr. M.N.A. Azeez. The work on the dome also has Arabic Calligraphy.

### **Publications**

- Translation of the Holy Quran into Sinhala
- Translation of the Sahih Al Bukhari. This translation will consist of 9 volumes. The 1st volume was released in 1998 and the 2nd volume too is available. The printing of the 3rd volume in progress.
- "Glimpses of the Past of the Moors of Sri Lanka" by A.I.L Marikar, A.H. Macan Markar.
- "The Ethnology of the Moors of Ceylon" by I.L.M Abdul Aziz.
- "Katha Muthu " Part 111 translated from " Anecdotes of Islam " by Dr.M.M.Uvais.
- "Names of Ceylon Moors, Malays and other Muslims" Extracted from the Fergusons Ceylon Directory of 1876.
- "Nam Munnoar". Tamil translation by M.C.M.Zahir of "Biographical Sketches of Ceylon Moors, Malays and other Muslims" by Muhammed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi.
- "Nid'ul Quran" (The call of Al Quran) by A.I.L Marikar.
- "Genealogical Tables of Sri Lanka Moors, Malays and other Muslims by A.I.L. Marikar, A.H. Macan Makar, and A.L.M Lafir.
- "First Teachings of Islam" by His Eminence Abdul Aleem Siddiq Khadri and M.I.M Haniffa, translated into Sinhala by Mrs. Rupa Banduwardena
- "Personages of the Past (Sri Lanka Moors, Malays and other Muslims)" by Mohammed Sameer bin Haji Ismail Effendi.

- "Sri Lanka Yonaka Vangsa Kathava" by Premachandra Alwis -a Sinhala translation of "Ethnology of the Ceylon Moors" by I.L.M Abdul Aziz.

Moors' Islamic Cultural Home (MICH)

## **Beyond our Fondest Dreams**

by **Ahmed Hussain Macan Markar**, Hon Joint Secretary MICH - 1944-1965

published in the MICH Souvenir I of 1944-65

In the twenty one years since the inaugural meeting at Hijat Depot, No 5 Second Cross Street, Colombo 11, on 2nd August 1944 (12 Sha'ban 1363H), when the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home was founded and the first set of office-bearers elected, it has been the divine hand of Providence that has guided its destinies through many a vicissitude, culminating in the events of today.

Though the necessity for a multi-purpose all island institution, non-political in character, which could serve the Muslims in particular and the country in general and the need for a permanent head-quarters from which it could operate had often been mooted, nothing tangible did ever take place. It was a chance remark made by the late Proctor ACM Abdul Cader at a meeting of the All Ceylon Muslim Political Conference convened at his residence, "Muirburn", Turret Road, by Sir Mohammed Macan Markar when derogatory reference was made to the Moors' Association head-quarters at 5, Second Cross Street, as "a potty little place", that galvanized Sir Razik Fareed (then Mr. ARA Razik) into action. Sir Razik accepted the challenge and with characteristic generosity offered to donate a quarter acre of land in Baseline Road for a building for the Moors' movement. An appeal for funds was simultaneously made in the Annual Ranazan Calendar published by the Moors' Association. The response was immediate. The first donation of Rs 31.50 coming from Mr & Mrs AIL Marikar was followed by a donation of Rs 5,000 from Mr ARM Mukthar with which an account was opened with the Bank of Ceylon (City Office). The fund grew with the importunity and solicitude shown by a Committee led by Sir Razik Fareed and comprising Messrs WM Hassim, AIL Marikar, ALM Lafir, AH Macan Markar and MFA Jawad, with the assistance when occasion demanded others.

Our objective at the outset was a limited one and our target was one of Rs 50,000 with which to build a modest Home on the land donated by Sir Razik. We had for the purpose marked ten persons from each of whom a donation of Rs 5,000 was expected. While some of those whom we sanguinely expected did default, there were others whom we had not counted upon, but who unhesitatingly filled the breach and thus saved the project from collapse in its embryonic stage. The others in addition to Mr Mukthar who rescued the movement from a premature end with donations of Rs 5,000 each were Mr MHM Munas, Mr LMM Uvais, Messrs OLM Macan Markar, Mr WM Hassim, Mr SE Cader Mohideen, Messrs MHM Shumsudeen and Sulaiman, and Mr MI Abdul Rasool; all of whom showed implicit faith in the success of the scheme, though there was nothing tangible to be seen. Curiously enough our begging mission on behalf of the building fund gave us a rare insight into the many facets of human nature. In many cases our judgment proved fallacious and in cases where we expected good response, we faced rebuffs but miraculously ample recompense came from hitherto undreamt sources.

With the gradual expansion of the Building Fund, the need for placing the Institution on a sound legal footing, to safeguard its assets, resulted in its Incorporation under a Bill piloted by Sir Razik in the State Council which was to become Ordinance No 46 of 1946.

The offer to the Home of a larger extent of ten acres land in Maligawatte with its wider vistas for the future was accepted and the land originally offered by Sir Razik was released and in lieu a cash donation of its market value was made by him. However, when on further consideration the Maligawatte site was found unsuitable, our perspicacious Joint Secretary Mr AIL Marikar, took the initiative in endeavoring to obtain a grant of a block of Crown land in the Fort. Sir Razik Fareed, with customary zeal, sponsored a motion for this purpose in the Senate on 25th May 1948 and this was ably seconded by Mr RFS De Mel, the then Mayor of Colombo. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the Leader in the Senate, most graciously accepted the motion on behalf of the Government.

In the meantime temporary accommodation for the Home to carry on its activities was founded at "Pasha Villa", Dematagoda Road - the ancestral home of Mr HARA Majeed, who leased it to us in spite of other better offers. The Home continues to function there through its Standing Committee and five departmental Committees, viz Religious, Literary, Housing, Social & Recreational, and Social & Economic Welfare, subject to the over-riding powers of the Board of Trustees, one-third of whose members are elected annually. Mr AM Hamid was the first Chairman of the Religious Committee and Mr SM Ismail of the Literary Committee, both of whom, though senior in age, displayed a keenness and enthusiasm relatively lacking among our young ones of today. Mr ARM Saleem as the Chairman of the Housing Committee with Mr R Bin Hassan as lieutenant were a tower of strength in providing the necessary amenities for the large number of student hostellers there, while Mr SL Mohammed's advice for the optimum utilization of room space proved valuable. Mr MY Mushood as Chairman of the Social & Recreational Committee with the enthusiasm of Mr ARM Saleem was instrumental in building up a talented team of billiards and snooker players that the Home invariably remained Inter Club Champions for several years and besides turned out the All India and All Ceylon Champion Mr MJM Lafir. [who, later went on to win the World Billiard Championship]

Among our religious activities, a sustained endeavor was made, since 1949, to overcome the dearth of "Hafiz" by organizing an Annual Al Quran Memory Recital Contest, and, happily this has resulted in the turn out of two Hafiz - Moulavi MA Abdul Rahman and Moulavi MIM Hassanar.

With the transition to Sinhala as our official language in 1956, the need for the translation of Al Qur'an into Sinhala became imperative so that our progeny who would be acquiring proficiency in the language will find no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the Holy Book. The translation work is progressing steadily under a competent team consisting of Mr P Wickremasinghe (Chairman), Moulavi MACA Lafir, Moulavi AHM Fassy, and Moulavi MI Abdul Hameed as calligraphist with assistance of annual grants from the Department of Cultural Affairs.

On the cultural side, researches are being undertaken to trace archeological evidence of early settlement of Arabs in Ceylon, while lectures by eminent scholars are arranged from time to time.

In our endeavor to augment the Building Fund, further spasmodic visits to pester would-be donors slowly helped to swell our funds and to hit the five lakh target, which included

a munificent donation of Rs 50,000 from the Asia Foundation. This enabled us to complete the ferro-concrete five-storey structure.

Looking back, all governments from Rt Hon. DS Senanayake's to Mrs Sirimavo BNandaranaike's have been benignant to this institution. The Home has always received the unfailing courtesy of all officers in the various Government departments and the Municipality, all of whom we have persistently worried and, without whose cooperation and assistance, nothing could ever be done.

At this milestone in the Home's journey towards its cherished goal we can do no better than re-iterate the eternal truth - "All Praise is due to Allah and none else besides Him. May Allah Guide this institution and its members on the Right Path for the greater good of the community and the country."

### **Hon. Jt Secretaries' Report presented at the formal opening of MICH Building at Fort on May 30, 1965**

by **A I L Marikar**, Hon Joint Secretary MICH

published in the MICH Souvenir I of 1944-65

We of this Institution bid all of you a warm welcome. We greet you for your participation in our cultural celebration.

Culture, being intellectual development, rescues man from insular thinking and elevates him to the eminence of a wider vision with a deeper meaning of life. Religion is the source of culture and from it has flowed wisdom and virtue. Buddhism, with its mission of Maitriya, Hinduism, with its assertion of Ahimsa, Christianity, with its creed of Charity and Islam, with its fabric of Fraternity, serve man to turn him away from the track of transgression.

Lanka, the blessed isle of ours, where these four great cultures exist, has survived the onslaught of materialism. It is therefore in the fitness of things that cultural institutions, in this age of space survey, should rise up to keep alive the flickering flame of Spiritualism by effective diffusion of their messages of goodwill in a spirit of tolerance and understanding.

The culture of Islam is of no lesser value in this grand spiritual effort to save this world from material conflict. The Prophet of Islam (sal) gave a fresh impetus to knowledge, when he said, "Knowledge is the remedy to the infirmities of ignorance and a comforting beacon in the night of justice." In a world then sunk in the abyss of darkness, it shed the light of learning and enriched it in thought and endeavor. For centuries the Moors of Spain were in the van of civilization. Europe - nay the world - drew inspiration from the Universities of Alhambra, Baghdad, and Cordova. Its impact on civilization was such, that in the spheres of Art and Architecture, Chemistry and Communications, Justice and Jurisprudence, Medicine and Mathematics, Philology and Philosophy, and the like, Muslims led the World. Arab and Persian scholars like Averros and Avicenna, Al Ghazzali and Al Rumi, left legacies of learning for knowledge to grow and flourish everywhere. The astronomer Poet Omar Khayyam, who measured Time and left his famous Rubaiyyat, and the Emperor Shah Jehan, who immortalized his beloved Mumtaz in his poem and marble in the Taj Mahal, were but inheritors of this Culture.

As heirs to such a heritage, we could not remain unaffected. This Home was thus inspired and conceived in 1944 by a few of us. Action was steadfastly pursued. The Constitution of the Home was incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1946 and an assurance for the allotment for a suitable site in Fort for the purpose was obtained in 1948 from Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, then Leader of the Senate, on a motion of our President, Sir Razik Fareed, which was seconded by the then Senator, Mayor RFS de Mel, both of whom are happily in our midst today. After some years of struggle, this site was ultimately released to the Home in March 1961. On the coincidental arrival, at the time, of HE Seyed Abdul Qadir Gilanee, the Ambassador for Iraq in both Pakistan and Ceylon, the site was visited by him on October 6, 1961. Construction work by our diligent contractor, ACM Fuard, commenced on the blue prints and supervision of our Hon Architect and Engineer, MB Baseran, BSc (Engineering). Cost so far has exceeded six and a half lakhs of Rupees and we have, yet, four more storeys to complete. Funds were collected locally during a period of years from both the rich and the poor, so that this Home could be the result of a combined effort and not that of the privileged few. While thanking all donors - both large and small - with equal sincerity, we cannot but mention the grand gift made in 1957 of Rs 50,000 of the benevolent body that helps laudable causes, without any strings, in many an Asian land - the Asia Foundation. The tablets just unveiled seek to acknowledge to a possible extent, gifts of donors and to recognize service rendered.

The Constitution of this Home precludes politics, true to its cultural character. Its membership is open to all, regardless of creed or community. To mould ourselves in the Islamic way of life, the Home provides students approved Muslim readers in Tamil and a Catechism on the First Teachings of Islam in English and Sinhala. Annual contests of memory Recital of Qur'an are held. Literary activities include a Free Night School for the study of Sinhala for all classes of children in Dematagoda, where the Home functions as at date. A hostelry for outstation students provide cheap lodging with a Library and all possible amenities. A free Wedding Home for residents of the locality and the Lady Fareed Home for the Aged function as separate units under the auspices of the Home. Wrestling, Billiards and indoor games make up the recreational activities.

In the pursuit of its ideals, the Home, aided in part by the Department of Cultural Affairs, undertook the unique and sacred task, at considerable cost of money, time and labor, of translating Al Qur'an - the fount of Islamic Culture - into Sinhala, with Mr Pinoris Wickremasinghe, a Sinhalese scholar competent in Arabic, as the Head of the Translation Team of Moulavi's. Of its thirty parts, eight parts have been published and work continues uninterruptedly. It is mainly meant to serve Muslims of the future who will have to study Sinhala. In their pages will be found Wisdom and Virtue, and Purpose and Pursuit in the search for Truth. We had the honor of presenting the first copy of Part I, when published, to the then Head of the Government, Hon Ms Sirimavo Bandaranaike. In keeping with this gesture of goodwill I shall now pause for a while, to enable one of my brother Secretaries, AH Macan Markar, to make a gift, on behalf of the Muslims of Ceylon, of the eight completed parts of the Holy Scripture to the Hon Prime Minister, Mr Dudley Senanayake.

In the intellectual sphere, from the membership of this Home, have emerged men like Dr MU Sultan Bawa, PhD (London), Professor of Chemistry, Dr MA Macan Markar, MD MRCP, Professor of Medicine, both of the University of Ceylon, and Dr AMM Mackeen, MA PhD, Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies in the University of Malaya. On the recreational side, our young MJM Lafir brought fame to Ceylon, as the All-India Champion in Snooker, while securing third place in the World Championship.



We have only reached a milestone in our progress and have yet a long way to go. The structure, as you see, is but embellished with its blemishes, but it will have to rise up without delay, to be truly symbolic of its culture and to more effectively function as a bulwark of democracy. We shall need aid and assistance in many ways and feel confident that this call will receive generous response. We gratefully acknowledge the support this institution received from the Government that functioned during the period. We publicly thank our Vice Presidents, the Board of Trustees, the Chairmen and members of the various Committees, and our members and well-wishers for their valuable support and co-operation. Posterity will remember them with appreciation. regretfully not one of the Muslim States to whom we made frantic appeals were made ever to come to our assistance.

This movement needed exemplary leadership for its success. It needed a leader, who would grab an idea with both hands and grapple its problems with grit, a leader who would foot a bill whenever in need and foot many a mile to find the means to meet more, and a leader who would sacrifice leisure for the pleasure of service. This Home found such a leader in our President, Sir Razik Fareed. He needs no introduction. Many are his benefactions and many are his services to his country and community. Suffice it for us to refer to but one such of his munificence to the cause of Muslim female education. He, unhesitatingly, gifted valuable land and buildings worth lakhs of Rupees to house the only Muslim Ladies College in the island. This Home is but a dream of his that has come true. His interest to this Home, we know, is so near his heart that one need not feel surprised if he sometime, someday, gives effect to what may be lurking in his mind, to make a bountiful benefaction for the future of this Home. We thank you, Mr President, for your able leadership and active support in all our efforts.

On behalf of this Home, we thank you Hon Prime Minister for your gracious participation in our cultural event. It is our sincere hope that budded as you were, like the lotus, you shall for long blossom as the amaranth exuding the aroma of amity among the people of Lanka. We thank you, Sir Oliver - the Peer without a Peer - for your long association with us and our aspirations. We thank you, Mr RFS de Mel - a friend we cannot forget - for your interest in our Home.

Finally, we pray the Almighty Allah that this institution shall grow up in stature, in keeping with the aspirations of similar sister institutions, as an Instrument of Peace and Fraternity and as a center radiating harmony and goodwill to help build a united and devoted Ceylonese nation to make little Ceylon big in the eyes and ears of the World. To this high task, the members of this Institution pledge their dedication.

### **Presidential Address of Sir Razik Fareed, MP at the formal opening of MICH Building in the Fort**

published in the MICH Souvenir I of 1944-65

I am grateful to you all for so kindly responding to our invitation on this occasion - an occasion of great joy to us when shared with your participation to the greater glory of Lanka.

The Report of the Hon Joint Secretaries just presented before you seeks to portray, with becoming brevity, the history of the Moors' Islamic Cultural Home. To this Report, I would like to add some observations of my own. The question of providing a suitable Crown site

in the Colombo Fort was settled at the time of the Government of the late Rt Hon DS Senanayake, when our Prime Minister was the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. It is therefore most gratifying that the formal opening of this building today should become associated with the participation of the Premier - the worthy son of a worthy father - the Hon Dudley Senanayake.

It is at the same time most heartening that some of the Architects of our Independence and a true friend of this Home - Sir Oliver Goonetilleke - should have come back to Ceylon in time to take his own part in our celebration.

When I look around and see the galaxy in this grand assembly of guests of all communities and creeds of Mother Lanka mingling together in a common cause, if I may say so, I realize the strength of cultural ties that can weld diversity in unity by its silken cord of spiritual value over evanescent materialism. It is indeed a comforting thought to reflect on the soothing influence in the nature of a cultural balm over the infirmities of erring man that contribute to bitterness and rancor; racial animosity and social inequality. In this company, I miss two of our ardent supporters - the late Sir Mohammed Macan Markar and the late WM Hassim, who have passed away and would have been happy to be with us today, had they lived. But their loss, to some extent, has been compensated by the active co-operation of their children towards the progress of the Home.

This Home seeks to provide opportunities of service to our youth because the future is theirs. This Home shall give them facilities for their training to become well equipped in life to take their due place as useful citizens of Lanka. Towards this end, a new department for the promotion of Youth Movement will soon be added on to the activities of the Home.

The island needs the close co-operation of all creeds and communities to develop its resources with patriotic zeal and, if the need be, with sacrifice. This must transcend all other considerations. Let me therefore appeal to all right thinking citizens to sink all differences in the national interest and strive to make Ceylon a happier place to live and die for. I exhort my fellow compatriots to remember what the Prophet of Islam meant when he said, "Patriotism is part of Faith."

This building is still incomplete. Four more storeys have yet to be completed without delay for the Home to function with full vigor and enthusiasm. Foundations like the Asia Foundation should further give us a helping hand. I shall refer to my Muslim brothers and sisters to the parable cited in Al Qur'an (Sura Al Baqara, Chapter 2 Verse 261) which reads thus:-

"The likeness of those who spend their wealth in the cause of God is that of a grain of corn which produces seven ears and in each ear a hundred grains; and God multiplies for whom He Pleases; God is Bountiful; Wise."

Can I make a more stirring appeal?

I endorse the thanks expressed in the Report of the Secretaries to all office bearers, members, donors, and well-wishers for their support and express my sincere gratitude to each one of them.

The Honorary Joint Secretaries pay me a handsome tribute. If at all I had rendered some service, it was part of my duty as President. They also express the hope of a benefaction from me to the Home. I shall remember this.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not publicly acknowledge the immense work that the Hon Joint Secretaries and Treasurers, throughout an unbroken period of twenty-one years since its inception, have ungrudgingly rendered to the Home at considerable sacrifice. Like me, they too have grown with the institution. Posterity will remember them with gratitude. I thank you Secretaries most sincerely.

I do not wish to speak at length, because all of us are eager to hear our Premier Guest - the hope of a United Lanka - address us.

I shall therefore conclude with prayers to Almighty Allah that this institution shall in the years to come shine as a bastion of democracy and grow up as a Center fostering devotion to the cause of Peace and Fraternity towards the national integration of all the people of Lanka.

Peace be with you all!

Assalamu Alaikum!

### **Hon Dudley Senanayake's Speech at the formal opening of MICH Building in the Fort - May 30 1965**

published in the MICH Souvenir I of 1944-65

Mr President, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, Hon Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

After the lengthy and very illuminating report you have heard and the encouraging exhortation by the President, I wonder whether many words from me are necessary on this occasion. But, however, it behoves me on an unusual and historic occasion such as this to express some of the ideas with regard to cultural developments which are uppermost in my mind. But, before I do so, I must express my gratitude to the organizers of this function for so kindly inviting me to be present on this occasion and gifting me not only with a Sinhalese version of the Qur'an but a gold medal as well. You might have delayed the gold medal for some time after you have tested how I have got on with the Qur'an. When that medal was pinned on me my thoughts went back to my school days which was the last occasion I received a gold medal. But, however, I am most grateful for the unexpected gift.

As the President mentioned to you, this Moors' Islamic Cultural Home has a long history; it has endeavored well; its struggle has been for many years - after twenty-one years of struggle, it has now come of age. The initial endeavors were made as long as 1944. In 1947 and onwards I happened to be the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and I well remember discussions the President had about the allocation of this site. I am glad that I was able to be of service on that occasion and I am glad to see this building, although not completed. When completed, I can see the potentialities of a building such as this and an institute of this nature.

Muslim culture needs no introduction from anybody. Right through the long history, right through the pages of history, Muslim culture has left a deep impression throughout the world - Europe as well as Asia. Today too we know the tremendous impact Muslim culture and Muslim thought have on world affairs. In our country, we are well aware of the part played not only by Muslim culture and religion but by that community in the development of this country; particularly, the trading activities of Ceylon, and, therefore, we are beholden to that community for the tremendous service it has rendered this country. In fact, when we think of the long history for the fruition of this project - namely this building, I am rather amazed, because unity of purpose has been a distinguishing feature of the Muslim community of Ceylon. I think they set an example to the rest of us all. Unity, I suppose, follows from the fact of the stress they embark on any venture, the wholehearted support of the community is generally forthcoming and I have no doubt, ere long, we will see the completion of this building.

In Ceylon, I am sorry to say, that the respect for the cultures and religions of the different communities that inhabit this land has not been too conspicuous in the recent years. Our parlous state today in very many activities in which we should have forged ahead in the recent years is entirely due to the lack of this understanding and harmony among the different communities and religions that call this country their home. I do hope that era is over and we realize that true democracy cannot exist in a country without the rights and the religions and the cultures of all who call this land their home, have their rightful and proper place. That is another fact of democracy that people seem to forget and I do hope that any endeavor to thrive and build up movements based on division and hatred will meet with the fate, the disastrous fate that such objectives rightly deserve. When we think of religions, surely we are not deluded when we realize that religion, whatever religion it may be, was never meant to divide, but unite mankind. What are the cardinal principles of all religions? I think, unity, mutual respect, brotherhood. They are, in one way or another, enshrined in the noble principles of all religions, but for some unaccountable reason religion that was meant to unite has been prostituted, I say, for the purpose of division.

Look at the world! Look at the tension prevailing today in this world! Sometimes one can be amazed at the lopsided developments that have taken place in the world today during the century.

We have, on the one hand, the marvelous achievements of science. Consider the state of the country at the beginning of the century? In these Sixty odd years, let us consider the tremendous that had taken place. I do not think that if you look back upon the known history of mankind that in such a short period such vast changes ever took place. The main contributory factor, undoubtedly, has been the advancement of science. Science and its developments have played a great part in bringing about this tremendous change but through no fault of science some of these developments, some of these advances, are being used today not for the uplift of mankind or its betterment but for the possible destruction of the very human species. That tragedy well awaits the world. Specialists and scientists better informed than ourselves have well predicted that gloomy and dismal future if another world conflagration were to take place. Now, the triumphal marvels of science have been accompanied by a weakening of spiritual values. That is also an undoubted fact; a characteristic of this century. This weakening of spiritual values, I feel, has been the result - for want of a better word - of the arrogance of science. Man began to think that with the advancement of scientific knowledge, religious ideas were not necessary. Primitive religion started with the ignorance of the phenomena of life. Therefore, various objects such as fire and those whose existence

could not be explained were worshipped. But since science proceeds to explain the nature of all these phenomena, there has arisen a concept that religion would not be necessary. But, alas, science is reverting to the idea that there are things beyond the pale of science for an explanation. We are departing, again, from the purely materialistic concept and we are beginning to feel that spiritual value must play a prominent part in the civilization and cultures of all people. It is only that realization which can relegate science to its proper place and religion allotted its proper place. Once religion throughout the world regains that place, I am sure, the world will be a much happier place than it is today.

I do hope and have no doubt that your institution that has been opened today will play the much needed part it has to play in the resurgence of our nation in moulding the different religions and races. I understand that you have not confined your doors to only those of your religion. Your doors are open to all and may those not of your religion who enter into these portals realize the value and the impact your religion makes on this country and the world in general.

I wish you well and I wish the speedy completion of the building.

## MICH Office Bearers 1944 to date

<b>Presidents</b>	Sir Razik Fareed MP, OBE [1944-1984] MA Careem MA LLM (Cantab) [1984-92]	AAM Marleen (Attorney at Law) [1992-]
<b>Vice Presidents</b>	MCM Abdul Cader [1964-1965] Sir Abdul WM Ameer [1961-] M Nowfal Barry [1995-] MA Careem MA LLM (Cantab) [1954-] MHM Dhahlan [1969-1993] MLM Fauz [1981-] MI Azhar Ghouse [1977-1994] Rasheed Bin Hassen JP [1966-1998] WM Hassim JP [1944-1960] SMM Hussain [1980-] AJM Jabir [1959-] SM Jabir JP [1963-] M Nowfal Jabir [1964-] Mohideen Jalaldeen, [1966-1970] ALM Lafir [1963-1965] M Nilam Mansoor JP [1995-] AV Macan Markar [1945-1952] Mohammed Macan Markar [1964-] AMA Maruzook [1959-1964] MH Mohamed MP [1980-] SC Mohammed JP [1963-1996] SL Mohamed JP [1959-]	M Mazahim Mohideen JP [1982-1997] ARM Mukthar [1944-] MHM Munas [1945-1968] MIM Naleem Hajjar JP [1963-] MA Nawaz [1981-1995] Major AMM Nazick ED [1995-] SMA Raheman JPUM [1954-1965] MUM Rasheed [1981-] MI Abdul Rasool [1945-1948] AHLA Saleem [1963-2001] ARM Saleem [1958-1967] OLMM Salieh, MHM Shamsudeen [1944-1954] SAC Shums [1954-] MU Sufi-Ismail [1970-1994] MHM Sulaiman [1944-1945] OHM Sulaiman [1946-1950] ARM Thassim OBE [1954-1963] MR Thassim [1982-] LMM Uvais [1945-1986] MHM Yousoof [1969-] M Zain JP MMC [1964-1992]
<b>Hon Jt Secretaries</b>	M Nowfal Barry JP [] MHM Kamil [1948-1987] Omar Z Kamil JP MMC Mayor of Colombo [1987-] ALM Lafir [1944-1947]	AIL Marikar [1944-1992] AH Macan Markar [1944-1985] MS Moujood [1985-] MA Nawaz [1992-]
<b>Hon Treasurers</b>	MI Azhar Ghouse [1987-] MLM Ghouse [1944-1947] AH Macan Markar [1944-1985]	MHM Kamil [1947-1987] M Alavi Sherriffdeen [1987-1993] OLMM Salieh [] MU Sufi-Ismail [1994-]
<b>B o a r d  o f  T r u s t e e s</b>	AC Abdeen [1946-1958] ACM Abdul Bari [1951-1970] BL Abdul Bari [1946-1947] ACM Abdul Cader [1946-1951] Mansoor Abdul Cader [1950-1979] MCM Abdul Cader [1946-1965] Razeen Abdul Cader [1946-1950] SMH Abdul Hafeel [1946-] MAM Abdul Hassan JP [1946-] AM Aboobucker [1956-1977] ARAM Aboobucker MP [1946-1975] MLM Ahmed JP [1946-1977] Zem Zem Akbar [1978-] AHG Ameen [] MHM Ameen [1956-] MHM Ameen [1982-] AWM Ameer [1954-] MM Bishrul Ansary [1965-] AJM Anver [1952-] MSM Anver [1946-1950]	M Nilam Mansoor [1980-] SDM Mansoor [1946-] MSL Marikar [1947-1965] A Cader Markar [1978-] AAM Marleen [1981-] AMA Maruzook [1950-1964] FMH Marzook [1981-] MFH Marzook [] AJM Mashood, [1959-1982] ASA Mawahib [1979-] MA Rauff Misbah [1952-] ACH Mohammed [1946-1946] AF Mohammed [1946-1973] HG Mohammed [1982-] Haji Saleh Mohammed [1956-1968] KMNS Mohammed [1946-1968] LS Mohammed [1946-1960] MB Mohammed [1946-1959] MNS Mohammed [1946-1958]

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IM Asanoon [1946-1978]  
 MSM Ashroff [1950-]  
 M Bayazid Azeez []  
 M Nowfel Barry [1975-1995]  
 M Marzook Burhan [1970-]  
 HA Cabeer [1946-1973]  
 HLMA Cader [1958-1972]  
 IA Cader, Deputy Speaker [1957-1979]  
 MCA Cader [] MNM Cader []  
 M Naizer Cader []  
 M Razik Cader [1957-]  
 SMA Caffoor [1948-]  
 MA Careem MA (Cantab) [1946-]  
 M Hussain Careem JPUM [1946-1975]  
 M Mansoor S Deen JP [1981-]  
 SAI Deen [1946-1968]  
 MHM Dhahlan [1958-]  
 AMM Faiz [1962-1975]  
 MA Farih Fauz [1974-]  
 MRH Faruj [] MLM Fouz [1972-]  
 AN Ghouse [1977-]  
 MB Mohammed Ghouse [1958-2002]  
 M Falih Ghouse [1980-]  
 MI Azhar Ghouse MMC [1958-]  
 MMM Ghouse [1946-1948]  
 MLM Ghouse [1946-1955]  
 M Ziard Ghouse []  
 SHF Ghouse [1981-]  
 TMI Ghouse []  
 AH Ghouzul Ameen [1978-]  
 Dr MS Ghouzul Ameer [1946-1965]  
 S Halimdeen [1946-1953]  
 MIM Hamdoon [1946-1965]  
 AAMS Hameed []  
 AM Hamid MRAS (CB) [1946-1952]  
 ALM Haniffa (Qadhi) [1946-1953]  
 M Hamavi Haniffa [1971-]  
 AAMS Hameed [1981-]  
 MIM Haniffa MBE JP [1957-1958]  
 M Nawaz Hashim [1979-1982]  
 M Fazari Hassan [1980-]  
 M Sulaiman Hassim []  
 Dr M Mohideen Hassan  
 [1946-1972] MMA Hassen [1964-]  
 M Macky Hassen []  
 M Thowfeeq Hassen [1978-]  
 Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC [1946-1996]  
 M Thyfoor M Hassim [1960-1982]  
 M Sulaiman Hassim [1946-]  
 MM Ibrahim MP [1946-1965]  
 M Thowfeek Idroos [1946-1973]  
 M Halim Ishak []  
 HS Ismail MBE, ex Speaker [1946-1974]  
 MH Ismail [1957-1973]  
 MI Bin Ismail [1957-1965]  
 MKM Ismail [1950-]  
 MSM Ismail [1956-1976]  
 M Riyaz Ismail [1975-]

M Nizam Mohammed [1981-]  
 SC Mohammed [1963-]  
 SL Mohammed JP [1946-]  
 SMH Mohammed Abdullah JP [1954-1958]  
 AC Mohammedo OBE JP [1946-1965]  
 HM Mohideen [1946-1970]  
 M Fuard Mohideen JP []  
 M Hussain Mohideen [1973-]  
 MHM Mohideen [1956-1980]  
 M J Mohideen []  
 M Mazahim Mohideen [1978-]  
 SE Cader Mohideen [1946-1951]  
 MIH Mohinudeen [1952-1965]  
 MSM Moujood [1970-]  
 SAS Alavi Moulana JP [1963-]  
 Rajakaruna Vaidyatileke Muhamdiram  
 Sheikh Muhammad Udayar [1944-1967]  
 HI Muhseen []  
 M Thowfeek Mukthar [1973-]  
 MYM Mushood [1946-1951]  
 MN Naina Marikar BSc (Eng) [1951-1965]  
 MS Naina Marikar [1946-1950]  
 MIM Nalim JP [1963-]  
 MLM Nawaz []  
 Major AMM Nazick [1979-1995]  
 ILM Nilam [1970-]  
 Dr M Fazli Nizar []  
 AWM Noor Hameem [1956-1970]  
 SLM Osman [1972-1976]  
 I Faizal Qassim [1977-]  
 HASM Raffiudeen [1948-]  
 MHM Raffiudeen [1963-]  
 SMA Raheman [1946-]  
 M Mohideen Rajabdeen []  
 MF Ramiz JP [1973-1978]  
 WLHM Ramiz Alim [1948-1972]  
 SMA Raschid JP [1951-]  
 MUM Rasheed [1965-]  
 AHM Razick [1979]  
 MHM Razick []  
 SMS Sabireen [1958-1968]  
 MHM Saheed [1981-]  
 CMM Sahid [1946-1965]  
 AHLA Saleem [1959-2001]  
 ARM Saleem [1946-]  
 M Rifath Saleem [1975-]  
 M Faizal Salieh []  
 OLMM Salieh [1946-]  
 CMM Salih [1946-1965]  
 AMM Salman (Attorney at Law) [1964-]  
 AWM Sameem [1956-]  
 Mohammed Sameer  
 bin Haji Ismail Effendi [1946-1972]  
 B Ansar Samsudeen [1980-]  
 MM Shafi JP [1946-]  
 MM Shahul Hameed [1977-]  
 M Aamir Sheriff JP [1963-]  
 M Fowzie Sheriff [1959-]

<b>B o a r d  o f  T r u s t e e s</b>	SM Ismail, [1946-1951] ACA Jabbar [1968-] AJM Jabir [1950-] Nowfel S Jabir [1964-] SM Jabir JP [1963-] KS Jailabdeen [1946-1979] Mohideen Jalaldeen [1954-] YA Jamaldeen [1946-1950] MHA Jameel [1956-1975] MFA Jaward [1946-1964] ABAC Jiffrey [1965-] M Fazal Jiffry [1977-] M Haniffa Joonoos [1956-1959] MN Junaid [1976-] MHM Kamil [1946-] Omar Z Kamil, Mayor of Colombo [1977-] MMM Khalid [1973-1979] YM Khalid [1946-1958] Ahmed A Kuthdoos [1958-] MJM Lafir [1970-1981] Mecci Macan Markar [1968-] Mohammed Macan Markar [1964-] MI Macan Markar [1956-] CMM Maharooof [1946-1965] MHM Maharooof JPUM [1970-] MC Abdul Malick [1978-] MBM Mansoor [1981-]	M Alavi Sherriffdeen [1970-1987] SAC Shums [1954-] M Mackie Sufi-Ismail [1971-] MU Sufi-Ismail [1970-] MMM Sulaiman [1946-1978] AM Mubarak Thaha [1946-1978] M Farook Thahir [1980-] ARM Thassim Kathi [1946-1965] ARM Thassim OBE [1954-1963] MR Thassim [1981-] Nismee Thassim [1978-] AAM Thowfeek [1951-1979] MKM Uvais [1965-] MA Wadood [1967-] ILM Waffa JP [1975-] Dr ARM Waffarn [1966-1967] PM Yousoof [1946-1970] MSM Yousuf [] MHM Yusoof [1965-] MHM Yusuf [1946-] M Rizvi Zaheed [] M Zain MMC JP [1964-] ARM Zarook [1946-1974] Feroze R Zubair [1981-] MM Zubair [1975-]
<b>Hony Auditors</b>	AA Latiff & Company AI Macan Markar FCA (Eng) A Raheman A Hathy FCA (Eng)	
<b>Life Members</b>	MSM Ashroff, MAM Abdul Hassen JP , Rasheed Bin Hassen JP, AJM Jabir, SDM Mansoor, MIM Naleem Hajjar JP, M Fawzy Sheriff, MHM Yusuf,	



## **MICH Women's Section**

An event of significant importance to the community was the inauguration of the MICH Women's Section, on the initiatives taken by MI Azhar Ghouse, Chairman of the Economic & Welfare Community, and the rest of the members of this committee. At a historic meeting held on May 16 1975 the MICH Women's Section came to life. The spontaneous response of the women of the community at the inaugural meeting revealed the anguish and fervor that they had in their hearts for the participation and contribution to the development of the community. Mrs Fouz Nazick, wife of Major AMM Nazick, was elected as the inaugural President and Mrs Noor Abu Haniffa was elected inaugural Secretary. The draft constitution was discussed and debated, clause by clause, and adopted at the meeting.

MA Careem, who was acting for the President of the MICH, at the meeting outlined the aims and objectives of the MICH Women's Section, which, he stated, would operate independently under the supervision of the Chairman of the Economic & Social Welfare Committee. Mr Azhar Ghouse explained the new section in greater detail.

The Women's Section participated in a well attended reception to Begum Nusrath Bhutto, wife of His Excellency Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan, that was organized jointly with the Sri Lanka Women's Conference, on Dec 17, 1975. The address of Approbation was read by Mrs Fouz Nazick, President, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Mrs Chandra de Soysa, Chairman of the Sri Lanka Women's Conference.

Another joint reception was held on Aug 16 1976, together with the Muslim Women's Organization of Sri Lanka, chaired by Mrs Badiudin Mahmud, when a reception was accorded to Her Excellency Madame Jehan Sadat, wife of President Anwar Sadat of the Arab Republic of Egypt. A welcome song, at this reception, was sung by the girls of Clifton Girls' School. Mrs Fouz Nazick, President, made the address of Approbation. Madame Sadat responded with an inspiring speech in English which evoked spontaneous acclamation from the large gathering of over 400 participants. Mrs Rasheeda Mohideen, President of the Ceylon Moor Ladies Union, proposed the vote of thanks. Madame Ismail Fahmy, wife of the Egyptian Foreign Minister and Madame Atef El Nawawi, wife of the Egyptian Ambassador were notable attendees at the occasion.

Funds for the activities of the Women's Section came in, initially, in the form of a donation of Rs 8,5-- from Begum Nusrath Bhutto on Dec 17, 1975, and a handsome sum of US \$13,500 from His Excellency Anwar Sadat, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The Women's Section felicitated the Egyptian Ambassador, HE Muhammad Atef El Nawawy and Madame Nawawy to a buffet dinner on Sep 15, 1976 prior to their departure to Egypt from Sri Lanka after completion of their tenure. Sir Razik Fareed commented on the wonderful relationship that had prevailed between the Ambassador and the Sri Lankan Muslim community, and, in particular with the MICH. The MICH presented the Ambassador and his wife with gifts and the diplomat presented the Home with a complete compendium of forty-four records of the thirty sections (Jooz) of Al Qur'an.

The Women's Section have also been involved in assisting the Home in sending housemaids to good homes in Kuwait.

## MICH Chairmen of Committee's 1944 to date

<b>Social &amp; Recreational Committee</b>	
1946 to 1951	MYM Mashood
1951 to 1956	AJM Jabir
1956 to 1957	ARM Saleem
1957 to 1966	MSM Ashroff
1966 to 1968	AMM Faiz
1968 to 1974	MA Nawaz
1974 to 1977	MU Sufitolsmail
1977 to 1979	M Alavi Sherriffdeen
1979 to 1980	Ahmed Athas Kuthdoos
1980 to 1983	MA Nawaz
1983 to 1985	Omer Zuraik Kamil, JP MMC Mayor of Colombo
1985 to 1987	M Nilam Mansoor
1987 to 1989	B Ansar Shamsudeen
1989 to 1991	M Nilam Mansoor
1991 to 1993	B Ansar Shamsudeen
1993 to 1994	M Nilam Mansoor
1994	M Nilam Mansoor JP
1995 to 1996	B Ansar Samsudeen
1997 to 1998	M Nilam Mansoor
1999	B Ansar Samsudeen
2000 to	M Nilam Mansoor

<b>Economic &amp; Social Welfare Committee</b>	
1947 & 1948	Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC
1948 & 1949	CMM Maharooof MMC
1949 & 1950	MFA Jaward
1950 to 1957	AMA Maruzook
1957 to 1959	ALM Lafir JP
1959 to 1962	MI Azhar Ghouse MMC
1962 to 1966	Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC
1966 and 1967	MHM Dhahlan
1967 to 1972	Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC
1972 to 1974	AMM Faiz
1974 to 1977	MI Azhar Ghouse
1977 to 1979	MLM Fauz
1979 to 1980	MHM Dhahlan

<b>Community Welfare &amp; Youth Affairs Committee</b>	
1981 to 1982	M Riyaz Ismail
1982 to 1984	M Nowfal Barry
1984 to 1986	M Nizam Mohammed
1986 to 1988	Omer Zuraik Kamil JP MMC Mayor of Colombo
1988 to 1989	M Nowfal Barry
1989 to 1991	M Nizam Mohammed
1991 to 1992	M Nowfal Barry
1992 to 1993	AHG Ameen
1994 to 1995	M Nowfal Barry
1996 to 1997	TMI Ghouse
1998 to 1999	M Riaz Ismail
1999 to	M Nowfal Barry

<b>Literary Committee</b>	
1946 to 1950	SM Ismail
1950 to 1956	MA Careem MA (Cantab)
1956 to 1966	SMA Raschid JP
1966 to 1974	MI Azhar Ghouse
1974 to 1976	MS Moujood
1976 to 1978	M Marzook Burhan
1978 to 1981	M Fazal Jiffry
1981 to 1983	AHM Razik
1983 to 1985	AHG Ameen
1985 to 1987	AHM Razik
1987 to 1989	MBM Ghouse
1989 to 1991	M Thowfeeq Hassen
1991 and 1992	MA Nawaz
1992 to 1993	M Fazal Jiffry
1994 to 1995	AHG Ameen
1996	M Mihinudeen Rajabdeen
1997	AHG Ameen
1998 to 1999	M Thowfeek Hassen
1999 to	M Fazal Jiffry

<b>Da'wa &amp; Religious Committee</b>	
1946 to 1951	AM Hamid MRAS (CB)
1951 to 1956	ARM Saleem
1956 to 1959	SL Mohammed
1959 to 1960	MHA Jameel
1960 to 1964	SL Mohammed
1964 to 1965	AMM Salman
1965 to 1973	Qari WHM Ramiz Alim
1973 to 1976	MHM Dhahlan JP
1976 to 1978	MF Ramiz JP
1978 to 1980	M Hussain Mohideen
1980 to 1982	M Nawaz Hashim
1982 to 1984	M Thowfeek Hassen
1984 to 1986	MUM Rasheed
1986 to 1988	M Thowfeek Hassen
1988 to 1990	MHM Dhahlan JP
1990 to 1993	MU Sufi-Ismail
1993 to 1994	MNM Cader
1994 to 1995	MNM Cader
1995 to 1996	SC Mohammed
1997	MNM Cader
1998-1999	ABAC Jiffry
1999 to	MNM Cader

<b>Housing Committee</b>	
1946 to 1951	ARM Saleem
1951 to 1959	Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC
1959 to 1960	SL Mohamed
1960 to 1962	Rasheed Bin Hassen JP MMC
1962 to 1964	M Fawzy Sheriff
1964 to 1969	SC Mohammed JP
1969 to 1971	M Fawzy Sheriff
1971 to 1973	ACA Jabbar
1973 to 1976	M Fawzi Sheriff
1976 to 1978	MA Nawaz
1978 to 1980	M Fawzy Sheriff
1980 to 1982	M Marzook Burhan JP
1982 to 1983	MBM Mansoor
1983 to 1985	AH Macan Markar
1985 to 1987	M Mansoor S Deen JP
1987 to 1989	M Nilam Mansoor JP
1989 to 1991	B Ansar Samsudeen
1991 to 1993	M Nilam Mansoor JP
1993 to 1994	B Ansar Samsudeen
1994	B Ansar Samsudeen
1995 to 1996	M Nilam Mansoor
1997 to 1998	B Ansar Samsudeen
1999	M Nilam Mansoor
1999 to	B Ansar Samsudeen

**Finance & Administration Committee**

1973 to 1974	MI Hamavi Haniffa
1974 to 1975	AMM Faiz
1975 to 1977	Ahmed Athas Kuthdoos
1977 to 1979	MI Azhar Ghouse
1979 to 1981	MS Moujood
1981 to 1983	M Alavi Sherriffdeen
1983 to 1985	MS Moujood
1985 to 1987	M Nowfal Barry
1987 to 1989	M Rifath Saleem
1989 to 1991	MC Abdul Malick
1991 to 1993	M Rifath Saleem
1993 to 1994	M Faizal Qassim
1994 to 1995	H Imthiaz Mushin
1996 to 1997	M Rizvi Zaheed
1998 to 1999	TMI Ghouse
1999 to	MC Abdul Cader

**Lady Fareed Home for the Elders Committee**

1974 to 1975	AMM Faiz
1975 to 1980	MLM Fauz
1980 to 1981	ILMM Waffa JP
1981 to 1985	Major AMM Nazick
1985 to 1987	MHM Saheed
1987 to 1988	AHM Razik
1988 to 1989	Major AMM Nazick
1989 to 1990	M Ziard Ghouse
1990 to 1994	M Ismeth Macan Markar
1995 to 1999	M Fuard Mohideen
1999 to	M fazal Mohideen

<b>Technical Training Center Committee</b>	
1976 to 1981	M Ziard Ghouse (Director)

<b>Employment &amp; Training Committee</b>	
1981 to 1982	M Ziard Ghouse
1982 to 1985	SC Mohamed JP
1985 to 1987	MI Hamavi Haniffa
1987 to 1988	SC Mohamed JP
1988 to 1989	M Thowfeeq Hassen
1989 to 1991	M Mansoor S Deen JP
1991 to 1993	Omer Zuraik Kamil JP MMC Mayor of Colombo
1993 to 1994	M Macky Hassen
1994 to 1995	M Macky Hassen
1996	Omer Zuraik Kamil JP MMC Mayor of Colombo
1997	M Macky Hassen
1998	AHG Ameen
1999 to	M A Farih Fauz

<b>Employment Recruitment Division</b>	
1979 to 1980	M Uvais Sufi-Ismail



**Foreign Relations & Cultural Affairs Committee**

1981 to 1982	MN Junaid
1982 to 1984	MHM Dhahlan JP
1984 to 1986	M Uvais Sufi-Ismail
1986 to 1988	MHM Dhahlan JP
1988 to 1990	M Uvais Sufi-Ismail
1990 to 1992	MHM Dhahlan JP
1992 to 1993	M Riaz Ismail
1994 to 1995	M Fazal Jiffry
1996 to 1997	M Nowfal Barry
1998 to 1999	M Fazal Jiffry
1999 to	MLM Nawaz

**Constitutional Affairs Committee**

1981 to 1983	M Farook Thahir
1983 to 1985	MI Azhar Ghouse
1985 to 1987	M Rifath Saleem
1987 to 1989	MC Abdul Malick
1989 to 1991	OLMM Salieh
1991 to 1992	MC Abdul Malick
1992 to 1993	M farook Thahir
1993 to 1994	MS Moujood
1994 to 1995	OLMM Salieh

<b>Desk Diary Committee</b>	
1976 to 1981	M Riaz Ismail
1981 to 1982	M Nowfal Barry
1982 to 1983	MI Azhar Ghouse
1983 to 1984	M Riaz Ismail
1984 to 1986	M Thowfeeq Hassen
1986 to 1987	AHG Ameen
1987 to 1989	MLM Fauz
1989 to 1990	MM Bishrul Ansary
1990 to 1991	MLM Fauz
1991 to 1993	M Nizam Mohamed
1993 to 1994	MC Abdul Malick
1994 to 1995	MC Abdul Malick
1995 to 1996	MC Abdul Cader
1996 to 1997	M Nizam Mohammed
1997 to 1999	M A Farih Fauz
1999 to	M Nizam Mohammed

<b>Cultural Relations &amp; Youth Welfare Committee</b>	
1965 to 1971	Mohideen Jalaldeen JP
1971 to 1974	MS Moujood
1974 to 1977	M Alavi Sherriffdeen
1977 to 1979	M Uvais Sufi-Ismail
1979 to 1981	M Nowfal Barry

<b>Women's Hostel Committee</b>	
1985 to 1987	OLMM Salieh
1987 to 1989	M Nizam Mohammed
1989 to 1991	M Rifath Saleem
1991 to 1993	OLMM Salieh

<b>Hostel Committee</b>	
1993	MRH Faruj
1994	MRH Faruj
1995 to 1996	MBM Mansoor
1997 to 1999	MC Abdul Cader
1999 to	B Ansar Samsudeen

<b>Library Committee</b>	
1987 to 1989	MA Nawaz
1989 to 1991	MS Moujood
1991 to 1993	MI Azhar Ghouse
1993 to 1994	TMI Ghouse
1994 to 1995	TMI GHouse
1995 to 1996	MC Abdul Malick
1996 to 1997	M Riaz Ismail
1998 to 1999	M Nowfal Barry
1999 to 2000	M Nowfal Barry
2000 to	ABAC Jiffry

<b>Relief &amp; Rehabilitation Committee</b>	
1993	Dr M Fazli Nizar
1994	Dr M Fazli Nizar
1995	H Imthiaz Muhseen
1996	M Fazal Jiffry

**Women's Bureau**

1994/1995	Zabeedia Rilla
1995/1996	Zahar Rizvi Haniffa
1996/1997	Zahar Rizvi Haniffa
1997/1998	Farida Sheriffdeen
1998/1999	Farida Sheriffdeen
1999 to	Farida Sheriffdeen

## **All Ceylon Y.M.M.A. Conference**

### **the premier Muslim youth organization**

by *Rasheed M. Imthiyaz*  
*Chairman - Publicity Committee, All Ceylon YMMA Conference*

All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association the premier Muslim youth, non governmental organization in Sri Lanka conducts its 54th annual convention on June 13 at Bank of Ceylon headquarters auditorium, Colombo 1. Iskandar Sarudin, High Commissioner of Malaysia, will grace the occasion as Chief Guest and Saleem Marsoof P.C, President, Court of Appeal will be Guest of Honour.

All Ceylon Young Men's Muslim Association has completed 54 years of service to the community and the nation and is marching towards its centenary.

Young Men's Muslim Associations have been functioning in Sri Lanka from the early part of the 20th century. The YMMA Mutwal, Colombo, the first one formed in 1917, is almost 87 years old.

On April 2nd 1950, late Dr. A. M. A. Azeez organized a meeting which was held at Zahira College and representatives of the YMMAs of Aluthkade, Central, Kuruwe Street, Maligawatte and Mutwal participated.

They unanimously decided to inaugurate the All Ceylon YMMA Conference, with the objective of coordinating all existing YMMAs in Sri Lanka.

April 30, 1950 was a memorable day for the Muslim youth of this country. The inaugural meeting of the All Ceylon YMMA Conference was held on that day at Zahira College, Colombo. Dr. A. M. A. Azeez chaired the meeting, Sixty seven delegates from 17 YMMAs were present.

This inaugural meeting was a turning point in welding all YMMAs together to stabilise the YMMA movement and the All Ceylon YMMA Conference came into existence. Today it has completed 54 years of service to the community and the nation as the premier Muslim youth, non governmental organization in Sri Lanka.

From 1950 to date several youngsters have taken up leadership positions in the organization. Annual general, meetings are held every year in time without interruption and elections are held in a democratic manner by secret ballot.

To date 40 Presidents have taken the leadership. They are elected to high office not for their status but for their service. Not for their wealth but for their worth.

About 60 branch YMMAs from various part of the country are expected to participate in this year's annual convention. The main feature of the programme is the presentation of the annual report by the Secretary followed by the awards ceremony. These awards are presented to branches and individuals who have performed some service.

In the recent past, specially during the tenure (year 2002/2003) of the present Executive Committee of the All Ceylon YMMA Conference, under the leadership of Ashroff Rumi, National President several activities for the benefit of the youths were implemented.

In the field religious activities, the Meelad Day celebrations together with its annual publication. "On the Life and Times of Holy Prophet Muhammed" took a leading place.

Residential Leadership Training is an important feature of YMMA activities. A Leadership Training Camp for the benefit of young women in the Eastern Province at Akkaraipattu was launched. Project Chairman K. N. Deen has been very successful in conducting this project.

Our Regional Administration and Training Centre in Bammanna, Kurunegala is the nerve centre for all the branches in the Kurunegala region where we hold almost all the Training camps. This could cater to fifty trainees with fully fledged trainers quarters.

Apart from that a massive cultivation project is carried out. Jiffry Haniffa is the Chairman of the Bammanna Training Centre. All Ceylon YMMA Conference is planning to make this centre a full time residential vocational and training centre for the benefit of the youths of Sri Lanka.

Educational scholarships are another important feature of the Association where poor and needy students are granted cash awards so that they do not drop out from school due to poverty.

Advanced Level and university students are given Rs. 750 and Rs. 1,000 respectively per month for the entire period of their educational career 107 educational scholarships will be awarded on 12th June when the all island branch YMMAs gather at the Central Council meeting.

Nadvi Bahaudeen, Chairman, education project, has been very instrumental in getting a large number of funds from the well-to-do who have assured continuous funding to this project.

An anti-drug programme under the theme "Towards a Drug Free Society" was another feature of All Ceylon YMMA Conference activities. A large number of young boys are invited to participate in an anti drug workshop.

A comprehensive four day workshop on the theme of "Enhancing Life Skills" was held at Bammanna, Kurunegala which was sponsored by the Colombo Plan with the kind courtesy of Tay Bian How, Director, Drug Advisory Programme of the Colombo Plan, Iffal Abdullah, chairman of this committee took an active part for the successful implementation of the project.

DN Fri June 11 2004

## ALL CEYLON YMMA



**Founder**  
**Al-Haj Dr. A M A Azeez**



**PresidentFounder**  
**Al-Haj Lafir Cassim**

**Secretary**

## ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

All Ceylon YMMA Conference, primarily is a Youth and Youth serving Community based Organisation [CBO] founded on the 30 April 1950 with seventeen YMMA Branches coming under one umbrella under the distinguished LEADERSHIP of Marhoom. Al-Haj Dr. A. M. A. Azeez (Ceylon Civil Service) as Founder National President with Al-Haj Lafir Cassim as the Founder National General Secretary.

The All Ceylon YMMA Conference is Incorporated by an Act of Parliament No 31 of 1968 and is declared as an Approved Charitable Institution by the Ministry of Finance. During the course of the last 55 years it has served the Muslim community and the country in numerous ways by promoting activities in every field of endeavour while contributing to the building of a healthy, vigorous and intelligent youth movement. It has imbibed into our young men a sense of dedication and service to the community and country. It has provided opportunities and awareness to develop their skills and talents within the framework of Islamic teaching and the culture of our country.

It has spotlighted the poverty and illiteracy among the large sections of our community and endeavored to minimize these by practical and realistic measures in various other ways. It has raised the status of the people of this country in equal terms to build a united, happy peaceful and prosperous Sri Lanka.

The All Ceylon YMMA Conference is national in outlook with 102 Branches spread over the length and breadth of Sri Lanka, having its National Headquarters at No 63. Sri Vajiragnana Mawatha, Colombo 09. The central administration with the infra structure facilities handled by permanent staff is also housed at the National Head Quarters.

The Board of Trustees, a Permanent Body under a Chairman comprising of all Past Presidents are the Custodians of all Funds and Assets of the Organization. They are also in

charge of the recruitment of the Staff, basically play the role of Advisors. The Key Officials of the Organisation the ( National President, National General Secretary and the National General Treasurer ) are Ex— officio Members of the Board of Trustees linking the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Committee comprises of the National President who is the head of the Organisation, the National General Secretary (the Chief Executive Officer), the National General Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer, Eleven member YMMAs (Branches), Eleven Special Members, all of who are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The Past National Presidents / Past National General Secretaries / Past National Treasurers are Members of the Executive Committee by virtue of office.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the operation and implementation of all activities / Projects and Programmes of the Conference.

The main focus of the Executive Committee's activities are:

**Education / Scholarship**

**Socio — Economic Development — Poverty Alleviation / Job bank**

**Social Justice / Human Rights / National Integration Advocacy Role**

**Leadership Training / Vocational Training / Career Guidance**

The All Ceylon YMMA Conference has its own Constitution. Accordingly the Annual General Meeting democratically elects the Office bearers, Adopts the Annual Report and Accepts the Annual Audited Statement of Accounts.

In YMMA Conference's 56 years of Service, it has produced 42 National Presidents, adopted 56 Annual Reports and has submitted 54 Audited Statements of Accounts. .

The Central Council comprises of the entire Membership and is the Policy making body. The Members of the Central Council also attends the AGM to elect the office bearers.

The All Ceylon YMMA Conference in its plan to decentralize the Administration, has established many Regional Administrative Centers under a Regional Director and Regional Chairman to be in charge of the Regional Operations.

The All Ceylon YMMA Conference eschews Party Politics and has the support and acceptance of all Governments and of all Political Parties. It also has very good connections with many embassies and High Commissions resulting in the YMMA Conference being consulted by the Diplomatic Corps on various Community and National issues. The Conference has good connections with many International Funding Agencies which has brought in Funds and Co-operation to our people. .

The Membership is a mix of the Young and elders, blending together in its day to day operations, comprising of - Academics / Professionals / Doctors / Lawyers / Accountants



/ Marketers / Teachers / Businessmen and Traders. The Conference has its own residential Training Centre in the Wayamba District.

The Government in recognition of the services of the conference issued a stamp for the Golden Jubilee Celebration in the year 2000.

## OFFICE BEARERS

### PATRON

Mr. M. T. Hamza

### VICE PATRONS

Mr. Zubair Hassan  
Mr. M. Haleem Azeez

### NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Mr. Jiffry Haniffa

### VICE PRESIDENTS

Mr. M. S. Raheem  
Mr. M.S.M. Saleem

### NATIONAL SECRETARY

Mr. Nadvi Bahaudeen

### GENERAL SECRETARY

Mr. Makarim Thaha

### GENERAL TREASURER

Mr. K. N. Deen

### GENERAL

### ASST. TREASURER

Mr. M R M Ziyath

### GENERAL

## CONTACT DETAILS

### ALL CEYLON YMMA CONFERENCE

63,  
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Sri

Vajirangana

Mawatha,

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Fax: +94 11 2 676 889

Email: [info@ymmasl.org](mailto:info@ymmasl.org)

## MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP

Year	Presidents	Year	Presidents	Year	Presidents	Year	Presidents
1950	A.M.A.Azeez	1968	M.M.Bahaudeen	1987	M.Zubair Hassan	2005	M.H.Saleemdeen
1951	A.M.A.Azeez	1969	M.M.Bahaudeen	1988	A.A.A.Haleem	2006	Al-Haj Jiffry Haniffa
1952	A.M.A.Azeez	1970	M.Budree Hashim	1989	A.A.A.Haleem	2007	Al-Haj Jiffry Haniffa
1953	I.M.Yoosuf	1971	M.L.M.Farook	1990	M.F.S.Muheed		
1954	M.Falil A.Caffoor	1972	O.M.M.Hussain	1991	Hussain J. Salahudeen		
1955	M.A.Razak	1973	A.M.Musthakeem	1992	A.L.M.Sabir		
1956	S.H.M.Mashoor	1974	M.Macky Hashim	1993	S.M.Raslan Mowlana		
1957	S.B.A.Hameed	1975	M.M.Bahaudeen	1994	Rumi Mohamed		
	M.Lafir Cassim	1976	S.F.M.Zavahir	1995	Rumi Mohamed		
1958	S.H.A.Wadood	1977	A.C.M.Huzair	1996	Junaid M. Jhan		
1959	A.H.M.Farook	1978	M.T.M.Hamza		T.M.Kamaldeen		
1960	S.M.Kamaldeen	1979	M.T.M.Hamza	1997	T.M.Kamaldeen		
1961	A.R.A.Noor Amin	1980	A.Cader M Ali	1998	Khalid M. Farouk		
1962	A.M.Nazeer	1981	A.Cader M Ali	1999	Khalid M. Farouk		
1963	Marzook Burhan	1982	Cassim M. Naeem	2000	Khalid M. Farouk		
1964	S.S.Issadeen	1983	Cassim M. Naeem	2001	M.Fawzan Anver		
1965	Mansoor S. Deen	1984	M.Naleem Haniffa	2002	M.Ashroff Rumi		
1966	A.H.M.Jezail	1985	M.Naleem Haniffa	2003	M.Ashroff Rumi		
1967	S.B.C.Halaldeen	1986	M.Zubair Hassan	2004	M.H.Saleemdeen		