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About this Issue

This issue of TAPASAM (Vol. I.3, January 2006) has a special focus — the Jewish Heritage of Kerala. Most of the articles in this issue are to be presented in an International Conference organised by the Association for Comparative Studies to be held in and around Kochi during the third week of February.

The Conference follows three recent publications on Jewish-Malayalam Folksongs. *Kārkuḷali-Yefefiah!* comprises 51 folksongs in Malayalam originals and 49 Hebrew translations edited with critical introductions, notes and translations by Scaria Zacharia and Ophira Gamliel (Ben Zvi Institute, 2005). *Oh, Lovely Parrot!* is a CD of Jewish-Malayalam folksongs compiled by Barbara C. Johnson and edited by Edwin Seroussi (Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University, 2005). This CD is accompanied by a booklet of English translations (by Barbara Johnson and Scaria Zacharia) of the songs included in the CD. An anthology of German translations (by Albrecht Frenz and Scaria Zacharia) of 25 songs was published under the title *In meinem Land leben verschiedene Völker* (Schwaberverlag, 2002). These publications have created a lot of enthusiasm in academic circles and the organisers hope that it will stimulate more research and academic deliberations.

We hope that this conference and the publication of relevant papers will facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge on this valuable subject.

We feel that the work done so far on the Jewish heritage of Kerala has not sufficiently taken into account the aspects of local knowledge, such as self perceptions of Kerala Jews,

everyday Jewish life in Kerala, conversationalisation of knowledge in Kerala society and contemporary understanding of religious identification in a network of local communities. We feel that this is a major absence as there are prominent colonial anthropological narratives about Kerala Jews which consider them only as an appendage of some other 'pure' role models existing in other parts of the world. It is part of the Eurocentrism which sees cultural specificities of the Kerala Jews, Christians and Muslims as impurities of which they should be redeemed by their fellow religionists in other parts of the world. It is important to note that local religious communities are proud of their local identity. Jews of Kerala identify themselves as Parur Jews, Thekkumbhagam Jews etc. Each community identifies itself as a local community. But colonial research could not explain many of the divisions in the community in the local paradigm. They labelled subgroups of each community according to the perception of the researchers. The best example is the use of the term 'manumitted slaves' (meshuhrarim) to denote a section of the Kerala Jewish community. This term was and is used by a section of researchers to denote a section of Kerala Jews much against the self perception of Kerala Jews.

Today, we call for reflexivity in revisiting these source materials and secondary literatures with greater emphasis on paradigms of contemporary cultural studies, modern religious studies, folklore and historiography. For this we need more contributions from young and enthusiastic researchers in Kerala studies. We, the Association for comparative Studies and TAPASAM are happy that we are able to bring together so many insights from different disciplines and open up a new path for interdisciplinary studies. We shall be happy to publish more articles on this topic or similar subjects in the forthcoming issues.

Scaria Zacharia
Editor

MUYIRIKKŌṬU - Its identity and Situation

**A study in the transformation of a trading centre
into a sacred site**

Kesavan Veluthat

The Jewish Copper Plates state that they contain the record of the prasāda which the King Bhāskara Ravivarman (AD 962-1020) was pleased to offer Joseph Rabban when the former was gracing Muyirikkōṭu by his presence.¹ It is generally agreed that the word Muyirikkōṭu derives from Muśiri or Muziris, the port town of the west coast celebrated in the classical Tamil and Greco-roman literature. Whatever the exact location of Muziris, it is certain that it was not far away from Mahodayapuram or Makōtai, identified with the coastal town of modern Koṭuññallūr in the Trichur (Ṭṛśśūr) district in Kerala, India, which was the capital city of the Cēramān Perumāḷs who ruled over much of the present day State of Kerala for a little over three centuries from AD c. 800² The present paper accepts this identification attempts to look at the situation of the town within its larger historical context and tries to show how a trading centre got transformed into a sacred centre, much in the same way as some urban centres in other parts of the country and the world.

It is well known that Mahodayapuram-Koṭuññallūr was a sacred centre as much as it was a capital city. The factors responsible for the one were themselves working towards the other. It may be necessary to go a little backward in time in order to realise this. Mahodayapuram-Koṭuññallūr had its antecedents in the ancient port town, known to Tamil sources as Muśiri and to Greco-Roman records as Muziris³. Muziris was "the first emporium of India" for the Romans, where the ships of the

Yavanas arrived in large numbers and took back pepper and other products in exchange of gold. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* tells us that Muziris abounded in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia and Greek ships from Egypt. Pliny, however, has reservations about the desirability of the port because of pirates from Nitrias and also because ships had to anchor at some distance with the result that boats had to be employed for taking the cargoes to the coast. It was the land of Coelobotros. The pepper came there from Cottonara. The Greco-Roman accounts speak of the variety of goods exported from and imported through Muziris. Evidence from a papyrus in the Vienna Museum, published recently, speaks of trade in bulk goods between Muziris and Alexandria⁴. This record is a trade agreement between a *vaṇīkar* (trader) from Muziris and a trader from Alexandria. The fabulous amount of trade which this single document testifies to underlines the substantial scale of the Indian trade with the Greco-Roman world in the second century that passed through Muziris. It did continue, as suggested by statements about considerable Roman settlements in Muziris. In fact, the *Peutingerian Tables* even speak of a temple of Augustus in the town⁵. However, this temple has not come down to us in archaeology or in memory. In any case, the fact of Muziris having been a port of considerable importance for Roman trade cannot be disputed. So also, records dating from later times as well attest its continuity as a centre of trade, particularly with the western world. Into this latter category would fall documents like the Jewish Copper Plates of Bhāskara Ravi (AD 1000) and even the so-called Syrian Christian Copper Plates of Vīra Rāghava Cakravarttikaḷ (AD 1225)⁶.

This extensive trade with West Asia from the early centuries of the Christian era brought Muziris into contact with Judaism and Christianity early on. It is only natural that this *entrepot* of West Asian trade, “the first emporium of India”, was also the place where the earliest settlements of Semitic communities sprang up. One need not accept the tradition of St. Thomas as a precondition to imagine that Syrian Christians arrived on the Indian coast in ships that came to Muziris. The presence of Jews in *Muyirikkōṭu*, the way in which Muciri or Muziris came to be known in later Malayalam, gets an explanation in the same way. Again, whether or not Muslim scholars had won one of the *Perumāls* in disputations and converted him to Islam, it is not hard to believe that Islam disembarked on the West Coast in Kerala at the port of Koṭuṇṇallūr. The centre also became sacred for the followers of these Semitic religions.

Mahodayapuram-Koṭuṇṇallūr was acquiring importance at another level as well. Early Tamil literature known as the “*Saṅgam Literature*” and Greco-Roman accounts are clear in linking this port town with the early *Cēras*, who had their seat in *Karūr* (in the modern Tiruchirappalli district of Tamilnadu). One does not know what happened to the *Cēras* in the period between the close of the early historical period (“the Sangam Period”) and AD ninth century when evidence of the later *Cēras* is available from *Mahodayapuram*. It has been suggested that a collateral line of the *Cēras* might have been residing in Muciri even in the early historical period and that, following the “decline and fall” of the Roman empire and the drying up of Roman trade, this line as well as the port town suffered an eclipse. It may have been this line which got revived in the period after the eighth century under totally different conditions.

It is these conditions that are important in this context. One of the major developments that took place in the intervening period was the phenomenal expansion of agriculture, particularly in the major river valleys. It is seen from the records that this agrarian expansion was also linked with the rise of *Brāhmaṇa* settlements. In fact, the *Brāhmaṇa* settlements formed clusters in the more fertile regions of the river valleys⁷. The thickest of such clusters was on the lower Periyar basin, in the southern parts of the Thrissur and the northern parts of the Ernakulam districts of modern Kerala, in the centre of which was the town of *Koṭuṇṇallūr*. The causal connection between the expansion of agriculture, the rise of the *Brāhmaṇa* settlements as corporations of a class of intermediaries placed above the cultivating peasantry and the development of the *agamaic* temples which were also the nuclei of the *Brāhmaṇa* settlements on the one side and the rise of the *Cēra* monarchy of *Mahodayapuram* on the other has been brought out in a convincing manner⁸. Thus, even in an entirely different socio-economic and political formation, *Mahodayapuram-Koṭuṇṇallūr* remained a centre with considerable sacred character. The sacredness in the changed context eminently suited the elements that had acquired importance in the new formation. That it was a seat of a sacral monarchy is brought out by the fact that temples sacred to the *Bhakti* tradition of both the *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* persuasions exist there. These temples enjoyed considerable patronage from the royalty; the royal patrons were themselves *Bhakti* saints of the respective canons. The mutual support that the *Bhakti*

Movement and the new monarchies in South India had is a point that has been brought out by historical studies⁹. So also, the institution of *Nalu Tali* brings out the Brāhmaṇical character of this sacredness. Incidentally, it is significant that two of these “four temples” are royal temples, associated with Bhakti saints.

Even after the last of the *Cēramān Perumāls* had long disappeared from the scene, the town was still nostalgically remembered in literature and popular tradition as a political centre from where Kerala was ruled¹⁰. But the town is known today more as a sacred centre. In fact, *Koṭuṇṇallūr* is so much a sacred centre that the Dravidian place name, *Koṭuṇṇallūr*, is fancifully derived from Sanskrit *Kōṭilīṅgapura*, “the town of ten million *liṅgas*”. To this day, it attracts pilgrims from all over Kerala to the temple of *Kāli* who, in her fierce form, is supposed to be the custodian of the “seeds” of smallpox. The temple is famous or notorious for the *Bharani* festival in the solar month of *Mīnam* (March-April) every year, when people from all over Kerala throng there chanting “prayers” that are less than acceptable to a decent audience. The celebrated Śiva temple of *Tiruvaicikkuḷam* or *Tiruvaicaikkālam*, which forms part of the pilgrimage circuit of Śaiva devotees because of its association with the Tamil Bhakti saints such as *Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār* and *Sundaramūrtti Nāyanār*, makes it sacred for the Śaivas. So do other Śiva temples in the town such as *Śrīṅapuram* and *Kīḷṭtali*. *Mahōdayapuram-Koṭuṇṇallūr* is equally holy for the Vaiṣṇavas for the *Tṛkkulaśēkharapuram* temple, possibly built by *Kulaśēkhara Āḷvār*, one of the twelve *Āḷvārs* of the Tamil Bhakti tradition. The Muslims, too, hail the town as sacred, as it is claimed that Muslim scholars won the last *Cēramān Perumāḷ* in disputations and not only got him converted to Islam but also had the first mosque in India built there during the lifetime of the Prophet himself¹¹. The Christians, in their turn, believe that it was there that St. Thomas, the apostle, landed and began his missionary activities¹². The Jews had a considerable settlement there; but, following the atrocities of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, they left the place swearing not to spend another night in the vicinity of the town¹³. They have, however, left behind the place name *Jūtakkālam* (Jewish Settlement) as the relic of their having been in that town. There are also unsupported claims linking the place with Jainism and even Buddhism¹⁴. In any case, *Koṭuṇṇallūr* has been a sacred centre for the followers of nearly every religious persuasion. It is our primary purpose in this paper

to bring out the linkages between this sacredness on the one hand and the political and economic importance of the centre on the other and show how the one factor was as much the cause, as it was the effect, of the other in the complex development of the town and the locality of which it is part. Both the sacred character and the economic and political importance can be seen as a function of the geographical situation of the town and the locality of which it is part.

In fact, a study of the development of *Koṭuṇṇallūr* as a sacred centre can clarify several issues related to the transformation of an ordinary place into a sacred centre. The complex processes leading to any centre becoming sanctified would show how a certain place, on account of a combination of circumstances, becomes more central than others in a region and how this centrality is sought to be retained by attaching a religious aura to it. This is not, to be sure, to say that behind the process of a place acquiring sacredness was a deliberate action with sinister motives calculated to achieve secular ends through invoking religion. Nor may there be any agency that consciously does this. A second purpose of this paper, thus, is to demonstrate the process of the sanctification of a place, transforming its character from the secular to the sacred. We examine the historical evidence regarding the centre as a sacred place first and then look at the importance of the place from the social and political points of view. This procedure may bring out causal connections between the two with clarity.

The earliest clear indication of *Koṭuṇṇallūr* being a sacred centre is in the Tamil Śaiva tradition. *Sundaramūrtti Nāyanār*, one of the sixty-three celebrated Śaiva saints of the Tamil Bhakti Movement, has an exquisite hymn devoted to the deity of *Tiruvaicaikkālam* in *Koṭuṇṇallūr*¹⁵. The *Nāyanār* does not fail to mention the location of the town, on the walls of which the ocean breaks its waves. *Periyapurāṇam*, a slightly later text cherishing the tradition continuing from an earlier period, says that *Sundaramūrtti* had stayed in the town on two occasions as a guest of his fellow-devotee, *Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār*, the royal Śaiva saint¹⁶. In fact, both *Sundaramūrtti* and *Cēramān Perumāḷ* were so closely associated with the temple that both are stated to have ascended to *Kailāsa*, the abode of Śiva, from there. The works of *Cēramān Perumāḷ*, namely, the *Ādiyulā*, *Pomvaṇṇattantādi* and *Tiruvārūr Mummaṇikkōvai* are, however, curiously silent about *Tiruvaicaikkālam*. But the *Periyapurāṇam*, a twelfth century hagiographic work, does refer to the

temple as the place where the Nāyanār was sitting in meditation when the Cēra ministers persuaded him to shoulder the responsibility of the kingdom¹⁷. There are two bronze statues in the temple, believed to be of Cēramān Perumāḷ and Sundaramūrtti Nāyanār.

That Tiruvañcaikkaḷam was the royal temple of the Cēras is attested by evidence from epigraphy and literature¹⁸. It is located close to the royal residence, the site of which is identified with what is known today as Cēramān Paṟambu (“the Compound of the Cēramān”), immediately to the south of the temple. Local tradition describes this temple as Cēramān Kōvil (“the Temple of the Cēramān”)¹⁹. Kēraḷōṭṭatti, the traditional historical narrative of Kerala, states that one of the Perumāḷs, Kulaśēkhara, built the temple of Tiruvañcaikkaḷam²⁰. The idol is taken out in a ritual procession which forms part of the annual festival of the temple to the site of the old palace in Cēramān Paṟambu²¹. On the whole, the associations of the temple with the house of the Cēramāns are unquestionable.

Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār is identified with Rājaśēkhara (AD c.800-844), who was probably the first ruler of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapuram²². Rājaśēkhara presided over a joint meeting of the representatives of the temple-centred Brāhmaṇa settlements of Vāḷappalli and Tiruvāṟṟuvāy in Tiruvalla, which was one of the more prominent Brāhmaṇa colonies in Kerala. An inscription on copper plate recording the proceedings of this meeting, dated in his thirteenth year and datable to the first quarter of the ninth century, starts curiously with the invocation *namaśśivaya* (“obeisance to Śiva”), a solitary exception to the inscriptions from Kerala which begin usually with the invocation *swasti śrī* (“Hail! Prosperity!”)²³. It is pointed out that this may indicate the Śaivite bias of the founder of the kingdom. In any case, the big way in which the Bhakti Movement acted as props to the newly established monarchies in early medieval South India is well known²⁴. It is hardly surprising that the founder of the Cēra kingdom too recognised its immense possibilities and promoted it personally.

The sacred associations of the city of Mahōdayapuram in the middle of the ninth century, immediately following the period of Rājaśēkhara or Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār, are brought out by an astronomical treatise composed in AD 869. This is a detailed commentary on the astronomical work called *Laghubhāskarīya* of the

famous Bhāskarācārya by Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa²⁵. Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa lived in the court of the Cēra king Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśēkhara (AD 844-883). He describes the city of Mahōdayapura significantly as a *sēnāmukha*²⁶. He refers to the royal residence situated in a quarter of the city known as Gōtramallēśvara where there was a shrine of Gaṇapati called Bālakrīḍēśvara. However, the work does not mention any other temple in the town. Perhaps the references to temples there, such as they are, are only incidental to the work as its central concern is with problems of astronomy. Bālakrīḍēśvara, the shrine of Gaṇapati, is identified on the basis of a 14th century *Maṇipravāḷam* text, *Kōkasandēśam*²⁷. It gives a detailed description of the town of Mahōdayapuram-Koṭuññallūr, the details of which we shall turn to later in this paper. In the course of the description, there is a reference to the shrine of infant Gaṇapati in Bālakrīḍēśvara. This shrine is in the vicinity of the Tiruvañcaikkaḷam temple complex. Gōtramallēśvara, too, survives, arguably in its slightly altered form, Lokamallēśvaram, which is where the Cēramān Paṟambu is located immediately to the south of the Tiruvañcaikkaḷam temple. Excavations at the site, conducted by the Department of Archaeology of the erstwhile Cochin State and later by the Archaeological Survey of India, have brought out pottery and other interesting details.

Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa was patronised by Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśēkhara²⁸. This ruler, who in all probability was the immediate successor to Cēramān Perumāḷ Nāyanār or Rājaśēkhara, was himself an interesting figure if we go by a couple of identifications. In the first place, it is suggested that he was identical with Kulaśēkhara Āḷvār, the royal Vaiṣṇava saint who is stated to have belonged to the dynasty of the Cēras of the West Coast²⁹. There is no reason why the author of the *Perumāḷ Tirumōḷi*, evidence of the recitation of which at Śrīraṅgam is available at least from AD 1088³⁰, should not be identified with this *Perumāḷ* who ruled in the ninth century as we will have to wait till the end of the eleventh century for another Cēra *Perumāḷ* with a name or title of Kulaśēkhara. Apart from *Perumāḷ Tirumōḷi* in Tamil, he is also described to have composed *Mukundamālā*, a hymn in Sanskrit. In the colophon to certain editions of this work, it is stated that a pilgrimage to Śrīraṅgam is celebrated every day in the town of king Kulaśēkhara³¹. There is also the tradition that this Cēra ruler dedicated his daughter to that temple as a dancing girl, and the shrine of Cērakulanācciyār within the temple complex is believed to commemorate her. It may be

noteworthy in this connection that an inscription from Pagan in Myanmar, referring to a merchant from Mahodayapuram, quotes a whole verse from the *Mukundamālā*².

It is interesting that the successor to the royal Śaiva saint of the dynasty of the Cēra *Perumāḷs* of Mahodayapuram was a Vaiṣṇava saint. Obviously, this points to the realisation of the vast potentials of the Bhakti Movement in both the streams as an ideology of the newly emerging order over which the Cēra *Perumāḷs* were called upon to preside³³. It is in this connection that another identity of Kulaśekhara acquires significance: he is also thought to be the royal playwright called Kulaśekhavarman, the author of the Sanskrit plays *Subhadradhanaijayam* and *Tapātisamvaraṇam* and the *campūkāvya*, *Āścaryamaūjarī*³⁴. The author calls himself *Mahodayapura-parameśvara*, “supreme lord of Mahodayapura”³⁵ and *Keralādhinatha*, “the overlord of Kerala”³⁶ terms that are very meaningful in ways more than one. His Vaiṣṇavite leanings are unmistakable in the plays; the somewhat unwarranted introduction of the Vāmana story in the *Tapātisamvaraṇa* is not without significance either.

This royal playwright is also believed to have been responsible for the inauguration of the Sanskrit theatre in Kerala through patronising the *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* form of presenting Sanskrit plays. Commentaries on the play known as *Vyaṅgya Vyākhyā* are stated to be prepared under instructions of the author himself and for easy enactment of the plays on the stage³⁷. So also, there is the story of a legendary court jester, *Tōlan*, stated to be a contemporary of the royal playwright, who is believed to have contributed much towards choreographing the plays³⁸. Even to this day, *Cākyārs* who stage Sanskrit dramas in the form of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* use Kulaśekhavarman’s plays in a big way in spite of their being not exactly the best of dramatic compositions available in Sanskrit. This has significance going beyond being one more jewel on the monarch’s crown; as theatre was one of the important means of communication, useful in propagating the ideology of *bhakti* through the popularisation of the *Mahābhārata* and other stories, its patronage by a ruler meant patronage of the movement in a considerable manner. This argument gets added emphasis when it is recognised that Kulaśekhara was not only a *patron* of the Bhakti Movement but he was its *great leader*. Incidentally, it may also be mentioned that the *Cākyārs* of Kerala believe that when their art has no longer any takers, they are to abandon their profession by leaving

their costumes on the branch of a banyan tree in front of the Tiruvañcaikkaḷam temple.

Neither the Tamil hymns of Kulaśekhara Ālvār nor the Sanskrit plays of Kulaśekhavarman refer to a temple in the capital city, Mahodayapuram, much less one built by him. But there does exist a temple in the town of Koṭuññallūr with the name *Ṭṛkkulaśekharaapuram*. An inscription in the temple dated in the 195th year of the construction of the temple has been assigned palaeographically to the eleventh or twelfth century³⁹. Reckoning backwards, then, the date of its construction would fall well within the regnal period of Sthāṇu Ravi Kulaśekhara, identified with both Kulaśekhara Ālvār and Kulaśekhavarman, and the name of the temple may point to his hand in its construction and consecration. That the Tamil and the Sanskrit works of the monarch do not mention the temple may be because the temple was built after their composition. In any case, it forms part of the pilgrimage circuit of Vaiṣṇava devotee in South India.

Apart from the Tiruvañcaikkaḷam temple associated with Cēramān *Perumāḷ* Nāyanār and the *Ṭṛkkulaśekharaapuram* temple founded by Kulaśekhara Ālvār, the city of Mahodayapuram in the age of the *Perumāḷs* boasted of two other temples both in close proximity to the former - the *Kīlṭṭaḷi* and the *Ciṅgapuram* or *Sriṅgapuram Taḷi*. Both are dedicated to Śiva. These four temples were together known as the *Nālu Taḷi* or “The Four Temples” and they had a major role to play in the government of the Cēra kingdom⁴⁰. In fact, a discussion of the role of the *Nālu Taḷi* in the polity of Kerala in this period can be useful in bringing out a major aspect of the sacred geography of Mahodayapuram as well as the sacral character of Cēra kingship.

The role of *Nālu Taḷi* in the government of the *Perumāḷs* of Mahodayapuram is a matter of recent recognition by historians. When research into the history of Kerala was initiated on “modern” lines in the twentieth century, statements about the *Nālu Taḷi* in the narrative called *Kēraḷōṭṭatti* were dismissed, together with other details there, as “legendary nonsense”. The story goes that after Paraśurāma created the land of Kerala and gifted it to Brāhmaṇas who were settled in 64 *grāmas* or “villages”, he invested the donees with the right to carry on the governance of the land as *brahmaṇas*, “Brāhmaṇas in the role of *kṣatriyas*”. The sixty-four *grāmas* elected four from among themselves, namely, *Peruñcellūr*, *Panniyūr*, *Paṇavūr* and *Cennannūr* as *kaḷakams* to

represent them. Each of them sent an agent known as *rakṣāpuruṣa*. They together carried out the work of government. But they promptly got corrupted in course of time and it was realised by the community that the work of government was not their cup of tea, it being the function of *kṣatriyas*. Thereupon they decided to have a ruler of the *kṣatriya* caste elected for a period of twelve years, to be succeeded by another similarly elected *kṣatriya* ruler. These rulers were known as *Perumāḷs* and were established at *Mahodayapuram*. The *Brāhmaṇa* representatives of the four *grāmas* continued to be the advisors of the *Perumāḷs*. However, as the *grāmas* from which they hailed were too far away from the capital city, four new *grāmas* were elected, superseding the earlier four, to represent the *Brāhmaṇa* community. The newly elected ones were *Mūlikkaḷam*, *Airāṇikkaḷam*, *Paravūr* and *Iruṇṇāṭikkūṭal*, all within close proximity to the capital. Each of these was also accorded a seat in the capital city in a temple, namely, *Mēlittaḷi*, *Kīlittaḷi*, *Neṭiya Taḷi* and *Ciṇṇapuram Taḷi* respectively. The narrative also mentions the names of *Nambudiri* houses, younger members of which were officiating as the *Taḷi Adhikārikaḷ* or *Taḷiyāṭiris*⁴¹. At least two of these houses which used to enjoy considerable aristocratic privileges, namely *Kariṇṇampallī* and *Elamprakkōṭ*, survive to this day.

The narration in *Kēraḷōṭpatti* is necessarily confused and devoid of a chronological order. Different layers of memory collapse and are mixed up. There is no trace of evidence in other sources to help us say anything about the four *kaḷakams* in the pre-*Perumāḷ* era. But the statements about the *Perumāḷ* era in relation to the *Nālu Taḷi* are interestingly supported by other sources from the period and immediately thereafter⁴². There are inscriptions which suggest that the *Perumāḷ* had a council called *Nālu Taḷi*. At least a couple of them speak of the *Perumāḷ* having taken important decisions in consultation with it. In one case, the meeting is described as being held in *Neṭiya Taḷi*. The affiliation of *Neṭiya Taḷi* to *Paravūr* is brought out by literature⁴³ and that of *Kīlittaḷi* to *Airāṇikkaḷam* by an inscription from *Kīlittaḷi*⁴⁴. The affiliation of the other two temples to their respective *grāmas*, namely *Ciṇṇapuram Taḷi* to *Iruṇṇāṭikkūṭal* and *Mēlittaḷi* to *Mūlikkaḷam* may be assumed safely. A record of the immediate post-*Cēra* period, granting trade privileges to the Syrian Christians in *Mahodayapuram*, speaks of “*Nālu Taḷi* and the *grāmas* attached to them” as situated within the limits of the town⁴⁵. Literary texts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, too, refer to

Nālu Taḷi and the *grāmas* which they represented. A verse in the *Sukasandeśa*, a Sanskrit text of the 15th century, is worth quoting for various reasons⁴⁶:

This [capital city] shines forth on account of the great *Brāhmaṇas* who live in rows of *maṭhas* in the *sthalīs* here. These leaders of the sixty-four *grāmas* are equal to *Bhṛgu* in their command of the weapons and the sciences and are paragons of acceptable manners, upon whose bidding the king is the lord of the earth.

An understanding of the *Nālu Taḷi* is crucial in trying to look at the sacred character of the city of *Koṭuṇṇallūr*; it is equally crucial for the sacral nature of the *Cēra* kingship as well. The *Nālu Taḷi* and the *maṭhas* attached to the temples are known to have been the seats of the representatives of the four *grāmas* of *Mūlikkaḷam*, *Airāṇikkaḷam*, *Iruṇṇāṭikkūṭal* and *Paravūr*. These *grāmas* are situated in the southern parts of the *Thrissur* and the northern parts of *Ernakulam* districts, where there is a concentration of *Brāhmaṇa* settlements. It may be remembered that the *Brāhmaṇa* settlements in *Kerala* had come up in the immediate pre-*Cēra* period, forming clusters around the lower reaches of the *Pērār*, *Periyār* and *Pampā* rivers, in the tract which is most hospitable to rice cultivation⁴⁷. Even there, it is the *Periyār* valley which can boast of the greatest density. It is but natural that four *Brāhmaṇa* settlements from this cluster should be representing the establishment in *Kerala*, particularly when the seat of government was in that locality. Thus, when the *Brāhmaṇas* of the *Nālu Taḷi* are described in the verse quoted above as “paragons of acceptable manners leading the sixty-four *grāmas*” - “*grāmān ṣaṣṭiṃ catura iha ye grāhyaceṣṭā nayanti*” -, our author was stating something which was well known. The *Nālu Taḷi* was the symbol of the *Brāhmaṇical* world of *Kerala* in the *Cēra* capital.

What is more important is the political role which the *Nālu Taḷi* played. Epigraphic evidence tells us that this body functioned as the king’s council. It seems that it influenced the decisions of the monarch considerably in administrative and fiscal matters. An inscription from the *Rāmēśvaraswāmin* temple at *Kollam* speaks of the amends that king *Rāmavarma Kulaśekhara* had made for the wrong he had done the “*āryas*” - an expression used to indicate the *Brāhmaṇas*⁴⁸. This shows the extent of power that the *Brāhmaṇas* had whereby they could force such an act

of atonement on the ruler himself. That the documents makes a specific reference to presence of the *Nālu Taḷi* on the occasion is significant. In fact, accounts in the *Kēraḷōtpatti* say that the *Nālu Taḷi* had extracted an oath of habitual allegiance from the ruler and that it was the *Nālu Taḷi* that was responsible for establishing the king on the throne. *Nālu Taḷi*, and the *Brāhmaṇa* power it represented, have been demonstrated as the real power behind the *Cēra* throne. It is this fact that is underlined by the verse quoted above: “upon whose bidding the king is the lord of the earth” - “*Vācā yeṣām bhavati nṛpatir nāyako rājyalakṣmyāḥ*”.

It was not for nothing that Kerala was described as *brahmaṣatra* - a land where *Brāhmaṇas* played the role of *ksatriyas*. *Paraśurāma* himself, who created the land, had combined these two in him! The story goes that *Paraśurāma* created the land of Kerala and donated it to *Brāhmaṇas* as *brahmaṣatra* with the right to rule and protect the land which they so got⁴⁹. Several *Brāhmaṇa* families of Kerala were even given training in the use of arms for this purpose, a tradition which is again attested by epigraphy and literature⁵⁰. Thus, when our author says that the *Brāhmaṇas* of Kerala were “equal to *Bṛghu* in their command of the weapons and the sciences” - “*śāstre śāstreṇ pi ca bṛghunibhaiḥ*” -, we have to see this historical allusion.

This heavy *Brāhmaṇical* influence and a certain sacredness claimed on account of it was a characteristic feature of the *Mahodayapura* monarchy. The *double entendre* employed in the opening verse of the commentary on *Laghubhāskarīya* brings this out clearly. It praises the ruler, *Sthānu Ravi*, who was the patron of the astronomer although all the terms used to describe the object of the praise are also equally applicable to *Śiva*⁵¹. In fact, one of the characteristic features of the image of royalty in the whole of south India in this period is this divinisation through various means⁵². This is seen in the case of the *Cēra* kings of *Mahodayapuram* as well. The rulers of this dynasty are described as *deva* (god) as witness the titles *Rājaśekhara*deva, *Kulaśekhara*deva, *Rāma*deva, *Manukulādicca*deva, etc., in the epigraphic records⁵³. *Kulaśekhara*varman, the royal playwright, liked to call himself *Mahodayapura-Parameśvara*. This divine claim or attribute is a pointer to the sacral character of kingship and, naturally, the seat of that king becomes a sacred centre. Even this, at least in the case of *Mahodayapuram*, was probably because of the role of the *Brāhmaṇas* in the polity. It may be remembered that the largest number of inscriptions of this period in Kerala are from the

Brāhmaṇa settlements centred on temples and that the majority of them are concerned with land and its use for rice cultivation. What is peculiar there, in contrast to the rest of south India, is the general absence of a powerful class of non-*Brāhmaṇa* landowners. Therefore, it was easier and more appropriate to use the *Brāhmaṇical* idioms in politics and its legitimacy in Kerala; *Mahodayapuram*, the capital, naturally represented and projected this sacredness through the large number of temples and other symbols of *Brāhmaṇical* religion.

At the same time, *Mahodayapuram-Koṭuṇṇallūr* was equally sacred for those who practised the non-*Brāhmaṇa* cults as well. This is brought out by the importance of the *Kāḷi* temple there, although even *Kāḷi* has been co-opted to the pantheon of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Interestingly, there is no reference to this temple in the sources of the *Cēra* kingdom of *Mahodayapuram*, although the possibility of the temple having been there cannot be ruled out. By the time the temple finds mention in the post-*Cēra* records, it was already a *Brāhmaṇical* temple, with centrality given to *Śiva* in a technical sense but *Kāḷi* herself remaining more important for the worshipping devotees⁵⁴.

Three *sandēśakavyas* from the post-*Cēra* period, all modelled on the *Meghasandēśa* with the separated and pining hero sending a message to the heroine through an unlikely messenger, are interesting in this context. In all the three, like in other similar *sandēśakāvya*s, the hero gives detailed descriptions of the route to be taken by the messenger. Of these 14th-15th century texts, the *Kōkasandēśam* is a *Maṇipravāḷam* (a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit) work of anonymous authorship while the *Kokilasandēśa* of *Uddaṇḍa* and *Sukasandēśa* of *Lakṣmīdāsa* are in Sanskrit. The destination of the messenger is different in each case; but each has to go via *Mahodayapuram-Koṭuṇṇallūr*.

Kōkasandēśam has about 25 verses to describe the complex⁵⁵. *Kāḷi* of the *Kurumpakkāvu* shrine takes more than three verses⁵⁶. She is the dark, tall and fierce goddess, who drinks the blood of the demons, and is surrounded by goblins dancing in the blood of the demons so fallen. But she is also the benevolent mother of the entire world. For the author of *Sukasandēśa*, the fierce goddess in the sacred grove is the deity of destruction for whom the entire cosmos is not enough for one gulp at the time of the ultimate flood⁵⁷. *Uddaṇḍa* in his *Kokilasandēśa* describes her as enshrined in a grove and as very fierce. Even Death is scared of her and thus she is helpful to Life. Her attendants are described as trying to sacrifice the buffalo which *Yama*, the god of Death, rides on⁵⁸!

The way in which this shrine in the grove is described in these three important kāvyas is significant. This place of worship, just outside the city of Mahodayapuram, is where animal sacrifices were offered. The deity there presides over the final dissolution of the Universe. She is herself bloodthirsty and is surrounded by goblins who play in blood. In fact, this is a faithful picture of the goddess in the Kāli temple of Koṭuññallūr, who is a non-Brāhmaṇical deity in a fierce form, pleased by animal sacrifice. At the same time, attempts to link her with Purāṇic mythology and cosmology are made in these texts, which are of great significance.

The Kāli temple at Koṭuññallūr became a centre of pilgrimage for non-Brāhmaṇa devotees in the period after the decline of the Cēra kingdom. Pilgrims from all over Kerala, after fasting and observing several other month-long austerities in March-April, go there in groups for the *Bharaṇi* festival, shouting obscene songs as part of their worship. They offer turmeric and pepper to Kāli. Till recently, cocks and goats were also sacrificed at the festival. How and why this festival began and took shape is hard to say; but it is interesting that people from different parts of Kerala, which were recognised as separate political units under the Cēras of Mahodayapuram, participate in this festival. The records of the Zamorins of Calicut show that the *lōkar* (militiamen) used to visit the temple of Kurumpa in Koṭuññallūr and worship there during the *Bharaṇi* festival⁵⁹. It is significant that members of the Nāyar and Īlava castes who had military pretensions formed the largest number of pilgrims. There are a large number of Kāli shrines in different parts of Kerala where it is claimed that the deity is a close kin, mostly an elder or a younger sister, of the goddess of this temple. A number of Teyyams, the folk deities worshipped by the non-Brāhmaṇas in North Malabar, cherish this tradition⁶⁰. The special rights that the Taccōḷi house from North Malabar, famed for their military achievements in the post-Cēra period, had in this festival are particularly noteworthy⁶¹. It is tempting to ask if this annual pilgrimage was a vestige of the movement of soldiers from the chiefly territories to the capital of the overlord. One is reminded of the important statement made by Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa, the commentator of *Laghubhāskariya*, that the city of Mahodayapura had a separate *senāmukha* ("Cantonment")⁶². The role that a Nāyar body of Koṭuññallūr known as the *Onnu Kure Āyiram* ("The Thousand Less One") had in this festival would support this surmise, although nothing can be said definitely about this.

The *Onnu Kure Āyiram Yogam* continues to have considerable rights and privileges in the Kāli temple. M.G.S. Narayanan has proposed that this body may represent a continuation, in altered form, of the *Āyiram* ("The Thousand") identified as the bodyguards or Companions of Honour of the Cēra *Perumāḷs* of Mahodayapuram⁶³. That a body with military and police functions got transformed largely as a body managing the affairs of a temple with rights and privileges there during a major festival where non-Brāhmaṇas had a greater participation is significant for our understanding of the sacred character of a political centre. If the process of the former can be known in greater detail, the latter could be brought out with greater clarity.

As stated earlier, Koṭuññallūr is sacred also for the Jews, Christians and Muslims. There are no Jews there any more, but that there used to be a considerable Jewish settlement is attested by the place-name *Jūtakkalam*. The Jewish Cooper Plates of Bhāskara Ravi Varman (AD 1000) were not only issued from this town but also gave Joseph Rabban, the Jewish merchant chief considerable aristocratic privileges⁶⁴. Jewish tradition believes that the first permanent settlement of the Jews in this town, known to them as Shingly, dates from AD 370, following the destruction of the second temple at Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian. There is rich folklore among the Jews of Cochīn, which preserve the memories of the Synagogue at Kōtai or Makōtai, another name by which the town of Koṭuññallūr was known. It was in AD 1567 that the Portuguese razed this settlement and the Synagogue to the ground⁶⁵. So also, a strong Christian settlement exists there. In fact, Christians believe that it was there that St. Thomas, the apostle, began his missionary activities. They boasted of a Christian royal house known as the *Villārvaṭṭam swarūpam*, which is believed to have had its seat in the vicinity of Koṭuññallūr⁶⁶. So also, there is a mosque that is presented as dating from the beginning of the Kollam era (AD ninth century), that being the date on which the legendary Cēramān *Perumāḷ* was believed to have been converted to Islam and gone to Mecca⁶⁷. Even if this early date is an exaggeration, it is possible that there was a strong Islamic presence in the port town which had trade contacts with West Asia in a big way. Whether or not the last *Perumāḷ* was converted to Islam and had one of the first mosques established there, a medieval Sanskrit text, the *Viṣṇudrābhāṇam*, makes a reference to the "*paḷli* of the shaven heads" (*muṇḍadhāriṇaḥ paḷli*) to the south of the Tiruvañcaikkalam temple⁶⁸. There are also unsupported claims linking the town with Buddhists and Jains.

In the period following the break-up of the Cēra kingdom, Koṭuṅṅallūr retained its sacred character. While the Brāhmaṇical temples continued to be important, the Kāḷi temple, with its non-Brāhmaṇa forms of worship and animal sacrifice, came into prominence and got Brāhmaṇised to a great extent. The martial character of the body of Nāyars who managed the temple and its *Bharani* festival as well as the pilgrims who went there is interesting. The post-Cēra period of the history of Kerala, it is suggested, was a period of continual bickering among the principalities that formed a heterogeneous assortment in the political geography of Kerala. The Semitic religions, too, continued to hold the town as important and sacred, for there was a revival of trade by the second millennium. Mahōdayapuram's standing as a centre of trade in the post-Cēra period is brought out by epigraphic evidence from Southeast Asia and also from Mahōdayapuram itself. It continued its brisk trade with West Asia, until a cataclysmic flood filled the port with silt in AD 1341 and rendered it literally high and dry⁶⁹.

Thus, Mahōdayapuram-Koṭuṅṅallūr offers a good case study in sacred geography. Endowed with geographical peculiarities such as location on the estuary of a river and potentials as a port, it attracted traders from different parts of the world who brought with them religions of different descriptions. It is well known that pepper dominated the merchandise of that trade. That pepper should also be an offering dear to the deity of the Kāḷi shrine is of its own significance. Even after that early trade dried up, the religions which came with it thrived. At a later point in time, again on account of the location of the centre in the midst of rich rice-producing plains, it becomes the centre of a sacral monarchy and the sacred institutions attached to it. In fact, the sacral character of the monarchy of the *Perumāls* of Mahōdayapuram and the sacredness of the institutions attached to it were themselves factors which contributed to the sacredness of the town. The fall of that monarchy did not, however, lead to the loss of its sacredness. On the contrary, the urban centre became a centre of pilgrimage. Even in the period following the fall of that monarchy, the memory of the town as a capital city lingered. Even this memory was sacred in character. The sacredness of royalty and the relics of royal institutions made the town sacred in the period that followed. The way in which the Kāḷi temple rose to prominence in the post-*Perumāḷ* era, commanding allegiance from all over Kerala, is suggestive of this. The military character of the pilgrims to this shrine in the *Bharani* festival

is of particular interest in this connection. The Semitic religions, in their turn, continued with renewed vigour in the context of the revived trade that the port facilitated. The flood of AD 1341 and the consequent deposit of silt rendered the port literally high and dry; but the town continued as, and remains, a sacred centre.

References:

- ¹ For a detailed discussion, with text and translation of the Jewish Copper Plates, M.G.S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, pp. 23-30; 51-53; 79-82. The expression *prasāda* is significant: it is used for "secular" grants in contradistinction with "religious" grants which are described as *sāsanas*". R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, II Edn., Delhi, 1980, p. 161.
- ² *The history of Kerala, written on 'modern' lines, had not recognised that Mahōdayapuram or Koṭuṅṅallūr was the capital of Kerala in historical times, despite the strong tradition to this effect. When epigraphists discovered and published a large number of inscriptions in the twentieth century, this recognition came about gradually. It was Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai who hit the nail on the forehead by both identifying the existence of a kingdom of Kerala in the three centuries after AD c. 800 and locating its capital at Mahōdayapuram. He also 'identified' it with Koṭuṅṅallūr and wrote a somewhat defensible history of that kingdom. Most of his writings are in Malayalam; but the more important ones are available in English translation. Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History, Kottayam, 1970*. M.G.S. Narayanan continued the good work of Elamkulam, offered many important corrections and placed the kingdom of the Cēras of Mahōdayapuram on secure foundations. For details, M.G.S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala, Calicut, 1996*.*
- ³ For Muziris as a centre of Roman Trade in the early centuries AD and a most recent attempt at its identification within Koṭuṅṅallūr; Rajan Gurukkal and Dick Whittaker, "In Search of Muziris," *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, vol. 14 (2001), pp. 333-350.
- ⁴ Cited in Romila Thapar, "Black Gold: South Asia and the Roman Maritime Trade", *South Asia (Journal of the South Asian Studies Association)*, Armidale, NSW, Australia, New Series, vol xv, No. 2, Dec. 1992. Thapar's study is useful in this context.
- ⁵ Gurkkal and Whittaker, *op.cit.*
- ⁶ *Epigraphia Indica*, IV, pp. 290-7.
- ⁷ Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala, op.cit.*, pp. 21-38
- ⁸ Narayanan, *op.cit.*, *passim*.

- ⁹ M.G.S.Narayanan and Kesavan Veluthat, “The Bhakti Movement in South India”, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁰ This Cēra kingdom had ceased to exist in the first quarter of AD twelfth century. However, literary texts produced in the subsequent periods continued to remember it as the capital city of the kingdom of the Cēramāns, the rulers of Kerala. This is true of creative literature of the classical variety contained in Sanskrit and *Maṇipravāḷam* (a union of Malayalam and Sanskrit) as well as folk memories of history as contained in the *Kēraḷōṭpatti*. The literature is too extensive to be cited; but for a sample, see *Kōkilasandēśa*, *Kōkasandēśa*, *Śukasandēśa*, *Anantapuravarṇana*, etc.
- ¹¹ For an analysis of the tradition, see below.
- ¹² There is considerable literature on the traditions of Christians in Kerala. A balanced discussion of the present problem is available in Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 155-61; 186.
- ¹³ For a discussion of Jews in Mahodayapuram, see below. The Jews used to avoid staying in Koṭuññallūr overnight, a travesty of observing an oath!
- ¹⁴ One of the fancy explanations of the Bharaṇi festival, where obscene songs are sung as “prayers”, is that it was to drive away the nuns from the Buddhist viḥāra which stood there!
- ¹⁵ M. Raghava Aiyangar, ed., *Cēravēntar Ceyyūṭkōvai*, Vol. II, (Trivandrum, 1951), pp. 78-82. Is *Mahodayapuram* (Mahā+udaya+pura) a Sanskrit translation of this Tamil word *Koṭuññōḷūr* (koṭum+kōḷ+ūr)?
- ¹⁶ *Periyapurāṇam*, *Kaḷarirṇarivār Nāyanār Purāṇam*.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ The *Kokilasandēśa*, I, v. 88 describes the temple of Aújanakhaḷa (Tiruvañcaikkam) as where the flags from roof-tops fan the horse of the Sun. An inscription of Rājasimha from Tiruvañcikkulam AD c. 1036, although not detailed, is significant. *S.I.I. V, NO. 789*, p. 340; *T.A.S. VI, II, No. 138*, p. 1191. This temple was probably one of the constituents of the *Nālu Taḷi*. See below.
- ¹⁹ In his translation of the *Śukasandēśa*, Koṭuññallūr Kuṭūṭṭuṭṭan Tampurān, a renowned scholar-poet of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, who hailed from this town, uses the term Cēramān Kōvil for Tiruvañcikkulam. Koṭuññallūr Kuṭūṭṭuṭṭan Tampurān, trans., *Raṅgu Sandēśaṅṅal*, (Thrissur, 1900), v. 70, p. 32. The Sanskrit original uses the word Jayarāteśvaram. There is one Cēra ruler called Vijayarāga known to epigraphy, who ruled after Sthāṇu Ravi. Sthāṇu Ravi is certainly known to have gone up to AD 870, perhaps even beyond. This Vijayarāga has been identical with the Jayarāga of *Mūṣakavaṃśakāvya*. Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-7. Is the temple of Jayarāteśvaram in any way associated with the name of this Perumāḷ?
- ²⁰ Hermann Gundert, ed., *Kēraḷōṭpatti (the Origin of Malabar)*, Mangalore, 1868. The references below are to the edition of eight works of Gundert brought together with a prefatory study by Scaria Zacharia, ed., *Kēraḷōṭpathiyum Maṅṅum*, Kottayam, 1992, p. 172.
- ²¹ This compound is known by that name even to this day. The site was excavated in 1944-46 and the Archaeological Survey in 1969-70 and recovered pottery, foundations of a big house and a temple and other odd little things from there. *Administration Reports of the Archaeological Department of Cochin for 1944-45 and 45-46 and Annua Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, Southern Circle for 1970-71*. Full reports are awaited.
- ²² Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp 24-5; 212.
- ²³ *T.A.S.*, II, No. 2, pp. 8-14.
- ²⁴ M.G.S.Narayanan and Kesavan Veluthat, “The Bhakti Movement in South India”, in S.C.Malik, ed., *Indian Movements: Aspects of Dissent and Protest*, Simla, 1978, pp. 33-66 esp. pp. 43-5.
- ²⁵ P.K. Narayana Pillai, ed., *Laghubhāskarīya of Bhāskara*, Trivandrum, 1949. The commentary of this work, called *Vivarāṇa* by a certain Śāṅkaranārāyaṇa, is published along with it. Śāṅkaranārāyaṇa says clearly that he was patronised by Ravivarma, who had the title Kulaśekhara, and alludes to him as a Sthāṇu in the opening verse.
- ²⁶ *Laghubhāskarīya*, *op. cit.*, Chapter III, p. 42.
- ²⁷ Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, reprint, Kottayam, 1972, p. 76, v.75.
- ²⁸ Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-26.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 213-4.
- ³⁰ *South Indian Inscriptions*, III, pp. 148-52.
- ³¹ “ghuṣyate yasya nagare raṅgayātrā dine dine |
tamaham śirasā vande rājānaṃ kulaśekharam ||”
- ³² *Epigraphia Indica*, VII, No. 27, p.97.
- ³³ Kesavan Veluthat, “The Socio-Political Implications of Kulaśekhara Ālvār’s Bhakti”, in the *Proceedings of the India History Congress*, Bhubaneswar, 1977.
- ³⁴ Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 213-4.
- ³⁵ *Tapatīsaṃvaraṇa*, Prologue.
- ³⁶ *Subhadrādhanāṅjaya*, Prologue.
- ³⁷ *Vyaṅgyavyākhyā*, quoted by N.P.Unni, *Sanskrit Dramas of Kulaśekhara: A Study*, Trivandrum, 1977, p.24.
- ³⁸ K. Kunjuni Raja, *The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Madras, 1958, 1980, pp. 11, 18, 57. Raja accepts the identification, first proposed by

Koṭuññallūr Kuññikkuṭṭan Tampurān, of Tōlan with the author of Vṅgyavyākhyā.

³⁹ S.I.I., vol. V, No. 790, p. 340; T.A.S., VI, II, pp. 193-4.

⁴⁰ Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-6.

⁴¹ Scaria Zacharia, ed., *Kēraḷōlpathiyum Maṟṟum*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-2; 166.

⁴² Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-6.

⁴³ Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, *op.c it.*, pp. 82-3, v. 84.

⁴⁴ *Administration Reports of the Archaeological Department of Cochin*, 1100 ME (AD 1924-25), App. E., No. 36, p.21; *Ibid.*, 1103 ME (AD 1927-28), p.4.

⁴⁵ *Epigraphia Indica*, IV, pp. 290-7. Incidentally, this is an extremely important document giving many details of the town of Makōtaiyar paṭṭinam-Koṭuññallūr with its *aḷi*, *gōpura* and other details of the urban centre.

⁴⁶ “*vācā yeṣām bhavati nṛpatirṇāyako rājyalakṣmyāḥ grāmān ṣaṣṭimcatura iha ye grāhyaceṣṭā nayanti \ śāstre śāstre’pi ca bhṛgunibhaiśśāśvadubhāsate yā viprendraistairvipulamaṭṭhavaryāvaliṣu sthalīṣu *” Śukasandēśa, I, v. 69. in Koṭuññallūr Kuññikkuṭṭan Tampurān, trans., *Raṭṭu Sandēśanīal*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ For the identification of the Brāhmaṇical grāmas in Kerala and their geographical location, Kesavan Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements in Kerala:Historical Studies*, Calicut University, 1978, pp. 21-38.

⁴⁸ T.A.S., V, No. 13, pp. 40-46.

⁴⁹ Scaria Zacharia, *Kēraḷōlpathiyum Maṟṟum*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁵⁰ For the arms-bearing Brāhmaṇas of Kerala, Veluthat, *Brahman Settlements*, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-115.

⁵¹ P.K.Narayana Pillai, ed., *Laghubhāskarīya of Bhāskara*, *op. cit.*, v. 1.

⁵² For a discussion, Kesavan Veluthat, “Royalty and Divinity: Legitimisation of Monarchical Power in South India”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Hyderabad, 1978.

⁵³ For references, Naryanan, *op.cit.*, chapter on “Chronology of the Cēras”.

⁵⁴ For a recent study of the temple of Kāḷi at Koṭuññallūr and the worship there, Sarah Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother: Violence, Sexuality and Worship of the Goddess Kali*, New Delhi, 1999.

⁵⁵ Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Kōkasandēśam*, *op.c it.*, pp. 63-79, vv. 55-79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, vv. 55-7.

⁵⁷ Śukasandēśa, v. 71 in Koṭuññallūr Kuññikkuṭṭan Tampurān, trans., *Raṭṭu Sandēśanīal*, *op. cit.*, p. 33

⁵⁸ *Kokilasandēśa*, v. 86 in Koṭuññallūr Kuññikkuṭṭan Tampurān, trans., *Raṭṭu Sandēśanīal*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁹ Haridas V.V., “King, Court and Culture in Medieval Kerala: The Zamorins of Calicut (c. AD 1200- 1767)”, Ph.D thesis, Mangalore University, 2003, Chapter 7. These references are from the 17th century.

⁶⁰ M. R. Raghava Varier, “The Sacred Geography of Teyyams” An unpublished paper.

⁶¹ V.T.Induchudan, *The Secret Chamber*, Trichur, 1969, pp. 117,118. Fantastic theories contained in it notwithstanding, this book documents many important details regarding Koṭuññallūr.

⁶² P.K.Narayana Pillai, ed., *Laghubhāskarīya of Bhāskara*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3, p. 42.

⁶³ Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 122-4.

⁶⁴ *Epigraphia Indica*, II, pp. 68 ff.

⁶⁵ I owe these details to the articles contained in the 400th anniversary souvenir of the Jewish Synagogue of Cochin.

⁶⁶ There are many claims, most of them of a glorifying variety, related to the history of Christianity in Kerala. Among the factors responsible for the arrival of Christianity in Kerala, the West Asian connections of Koṭuññallūr was not the least.

⁶⁷ What is known as the “Cēramān Mosque” in Koṭuññallūr exhibits a modern plaque showing the date of its construction as AD 828. This is not acceptable. However, historians are in a mood to accept the story that the last Perumāl got converted to Islam and left for Mecca. Narayanan, *op.cit.*, pp. 64-70.

⁶⁸ “*aho cūrṇīsaritkallolahastālingitamekhalāyāḥ keraḷakularājadhanyaḥ śrīrāmavarma- paripālītāyāḥ mahodayapuryaḥ ... ṣaṭhakopasya muṇḍadhāriṇaḥ paḷḷimuttareṇā*”. Cited in Narayanan, *op. cit.*, Chapter V, n. 47. Narayanan, however, takes the *paḷḷi* for a Jain institution, with nothing to support the identification. Given the fact that there is a Muslim mosque to the south of the temple, that mosques in Malayalam are called *paḷḷi*, and that Muslims in Kerala till recently used to shave their heads, I propose this identification.

⁶⁹ Till recently, there was an era reckoned from this point onwards, which was known as the Puduvaippu Era. This commemorated the throwing up of the land mass known as Puduvaippu (‘the New Deposit’) to the south of Koṭuññallūr. The closing down of the port of Koṭuññallūr and the opening up of Cochin, together with the creation of the Puduvaippu, marked a new era in the history of Cochin. So, the Puduvaippu Era commemorated both a fact and a metaphor and was widely used in the state of Cochin.

King of the Jews in Kodungallur (Kerala)

M. G. S. Narayanan

The tourist arriving in Kerala today can see the splendid but deserted synagogue at one end of the Jew Town at Mattanchery, a part of Kochi (Old Cochin), adjacent to the so-called Dutch Palace of the Raja in the former native state. The town has a cobbled street, houses with Star of David windows, four-poster beds, and other period furniture of Europe, and relics of their association with the tolerant Dutch in the days of their glory and prosperity in the 17th -18th centuries AD. The synagogue, known as Paradesi Synagogue i.e. the Synagogue of the foreign Jews, is an important tourist attraction, but no longer a regular worshipping centre. Only a compound wall separates it from the temple of Pazhayannur Bhagavati, the family deity of the Raja.

The shrine has hand-painted tiles from China, shining chandeliers from Belgium, prayer books from Israel, silk-embroidered hangings and traditional oil lamps. All these were acquired by the prosperous Jewish immigrants from Spain, coming in different batches in the medieval period, and identified as the White Jews by the local people. The clumsy-looking chalky clock tower, with its old tiles and windows, had also been constructed four centuries ago, and has three faces bearing Malayalam, Hebrew and Roman numerals. These faces truly reflect the fact that the Kerala Jews had in them a mixture of Malabar, Jewish and European cultures.

In 1685 AD. Moses Pereira De Paiva, deputed by the Amsterdam Jews, reported that about 70,000 to 80,000 Jews had come to the coast from Spanish Majorca, and found favor in the eyes of King Ceran Perumal. The time of their arrival in two batches at Cranganore (Kodungallur, 30 km. from Kochi) was calculated as 370 and 499 AD. respectively. These are speculative numbers and dates, and therefore

unreliable. Benjamin J. Israel, author of *The Jews of India*, (New Delhi, 1982) rightly doubted these figures and the theory of Spanish origin too. S. S. Koder, a prominent leader of the Cochin Jews in the 20th century, supported the traditional belief that the Jews came to Cranganore after the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD. Many of the Cochinites claimed to be the descendants of Yemenite Jews and Jews from other Arab countries. These traditions may or may not be true, but they are not supported by any contemporary or near-contemporary evidence.'

If the visitor is lucky - and many of us were, in yester years - the synagogue authorities may show them a set of well-preserved copper plates, which is a precious part of their legacy. They belong to a period long before the advent of the West European Jews, the builders of the Mattanchery Synagogue, and we do not know how they came to possess these plates. Apart from the copper plates, the Jews also have a tradition of community songs on Joseph Rabban, the hero of the copper plates.²

Legends and Traditions

There are vague and unsupported legends connecting the Kerala Jews with the Biblical tradition of King Solomon. There have been scholarly attempts to relate their migration to Kerala to the known disturbances in West Asia that provided the incentive for the Jewish Diaspora. This is how they arrived at tentative dates like 1000 BC. when King Solomon is believed to have sent ships to the East, 70 BC. when the second temple at Jerusalem was destroyed, or 457 - 484 AD. when the Jews of Iran had to face persecution under Firuz.³ Some Kerala scholars also relied on dubious linguistic evidence from the Old Testament of the Bible.⁴ Quite recently the analysis of influences on ritual music of the Cochin Jews brought out traces of Babylonian, Kurdish and Yemenite patterns, permitting the use of music as a heuristic tool, but again this cannot yield precise information about the dates of migration.⁵

The dispute between the White Jews and Black Jews of Cochin about the ownership of the copper plate grant makes the whole question more complicated. With the advent of the prosperous Jews from Spain in the 16th century, the earlier settlers in Kochi appear to have faded into insignificance. Their counterparts in other nearby places like Tekkumbhagam and Kadavumbhagam in Mattanchery, Tekkumbhagam and Kadavumbhagam in Ernakulam, Chendamangalam, Mala and Paravur continued to live as before. From the fact that all these were 'Black' Jews, it may be inferred that the Black Jews were the earlier

inhabitants of Jew Town in Mattanchery also. They all trace their original settlement to Kodungallur. Those ancestors of the Jews who came from Kodungallur must have brought the copper plates. It is stated that the plates were issued in Muyirikode, which is the name of ancient Muciri (Muziris), identified with Kodungallur in medieval times.

A great upheaval at the bottom of the sea, followed by a great flood in 1341 AD. was an epoch-making event in the history of Kerala. The configuration of the river-mouth of the Periyar underwent drastic changes. The backwaters around Kochi were formed, and new islands were thrown up there. The rise of the mud banks of Narakkal rendered the harbour of Kodungallur almost useless. In course of time a new harbour opened in Kochi or Kochazhi (Small Harbour) and the ruling family shifted their capital to the new place.⁶ It is possible that the Jewish traders also shifted, along with other traders, and brought their copper plates, to be deposited in the new synagogue. New Jewish immigrants from Spain appear to have come to Kochi in the 16th century. The Raja of Kochi allotted them place to build Jew Town and a synagogue near his own palace in 1565, and the settlement assumed final shape in two years. The Paradesi synagogue at Mattanchery, a part of Kochi, was built in 1568 AD.⁷

The Portuguese who were allowed to build a fort in Kochi remained powerful during the whole of the 16th century, when they reduced the Raja to a puppet in their hands. The Dutch took over from the Portuguese in the 17th and 18th centuries. While the Portuguese harassed the Jews, the Dutch were more tolerant and extended them the privileges of trade.⁸

Importance of the Copper Plates

The unique importance of the copper plates lies in the fact that for the first time we get clear and concrete evidence of the high social status of the Jews in Kodungallur and their political presence in Kerala. For a long time the exact period and content of the grant were not known, though many great scholars of the 19th century, like Hultsch, Burnell, Gundert and Logan had worked on them. The old script and language could not be deciphered properly, and in the absence of clear knowledge about the pre-modern history of Kerala, the context and implications of the grant remained obscure.

Thanks to the cumulative results of early work, Professor Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai was able to present a reliable text and fix the date and political context of the Plates. He identified the Cera or Kerala kingdom of Makotai (Mahodayapuram or Kodungallur) that

existed in the 9th- 12th centuries, and reconstructed the history of this kingdom in outline.⁹ The present writer continued the work on this kingdom, and it was left to me to confirm the existence of this Cera or Kerala kingdom with the help of several newly discovered or identified sources. A few errors in chronology and socio political history were corrected. It was also possible for me to present a detailed history of Kerala in those times.¹⁰ As part of this work I had published a paper on the Jewish Copper Plates of Cochin, which clarified the text and context of the grant, and placed the story of the Jews of Kerala in historical perspective.

It was established beyond reasonable doubt that the grant was issued by Bhaskara Ravi Varma (AD. 962-1020), king of Kerala, in his 38th regnal year (1000 AD.) from his capital in the presence of his chief vassals and the commander of the armed forces. This was a period in which the kingdom was being threatened by a powerful neighbor, i.e. the Cola Empire. The Colas under Raja Raja the Great had already conquered the Pandyan kingdom that lay to the south of his territory, and appointed the crown prince Rajendra as the Cola Viceroy in the Pandyan capital of Madurai. Their forces then moved into the southern part of the Cera kingdom near the seacoast and usurped the right of tax collection at Kandalur Salai, a great Brahmin educational centre maintained by the Cera king. It would appear that the Colas were using their famous navy in this operation to attack from the sea. Their chief motive could have been the establishment of Cola authority in harbor towns like Vizhinjam, Kollam and Kodungallur, so as to appropriate the revenue from maritime commerce.¹¹

This is where the Jews and the copper plates presented to them come into the picture.¹² The Jews are already known to have been well-established in Kollam, the southern harbor of Kerala, at the time of Tarsappalli copper plates of 849 AD., granted in the 5th regnal year of Sthanu Ravi Varma to the Christian church founded by Mar Sapir Iso there. Kollam was the headquarters of the district of Venad, which was under the Cera king of Mahodaya (Kodungallur). According to these copper plates, now kept in the Bishop's house in Kottayam, the Christian leader, Mar Sapir Iso, was granted land to build the church, several families of agricultural workers and skilled workers (Velialar, Tachar, Izhavar, Vannar) for the service of the church. The maintenance of weights and measures, the protection of the church, and the collection of tolls and dues on behalf of the ruler were entrusted jointly to the guilds called Manigramam and Ancuvannam under the supervision of the officers and the warrior body called The Six Hundred (Arunurruvar) in the district. The church authorities and the families handed over to them were

exempted from several taxes. The ruler also bestowed on the Christian leader the 72 privileges that are not enumerated.¹³

Syrian Christians and Jews in Kerala

The Syrian copper plates of Tarsappalli in Kollam (849 AD.) are also important in the history of the Jews in Kerala. This is the first time when the Jews figure in the records of this region, though they could have existed earlier also. They are not mentioned directly as Jews, but the guild called Anjuvannarn is mentioned along with Manigramam of which the Christian chief was the leader, and the two guilds are given joint responsibilities and equal importance. Ten of the witnesses to the grant, possessing Christian names, have signed in Syriac script, ten others with Jewish names have signed in Hebrew script, and ten others with Muslim names have signed in Kufic (Old Arabic) script. Obviously these were the prominent traders of the newly established Nagaram or trade centre. The Christian leader is identified as the chief of the guild of Manigramam, and it is inferred that the other guild, which has the Hebrew/Persian title of Anjuvannam (Anjuman), belonged to the Jewish traders of the region.¹⁴

This inference is confirmed by the fact that the Jewish leader, Joseph Rabban, is mentioned as the chief of Anjuvannam in the Jewish copper plates. It is also supported by other contemporary and later evidence.¹⁵

A comparative study of the evidence of these two sets of copper plates - Syrian Christian plates of Kollam (849 AD.) and Jewish plates of Kodungallur (1000 AD.) - reveal certain important facts which provide insight into the character of the sociopolitical system obtaining in early medieval Kerala. These facts have to be interpreted against the entire background of all other information about society in India, and especially in the Kerala kingdom, in those times. The leaders of the Christian and Jewish guilds were honored with titles and privileges that were usually associated with the high aristocratic groups in the state. The 72 privileges are not enumerated in the Syrian Christian plates also, but the most important among them are listed in the Jewish plates. Some of them are listed in a slightly later charter, about a century after the collapse of the Kerala kingdom of Mahodaya.¹⁶ There are several other references to similar titles and privileges granted to native officers and functionaries in Kerala and elsewhere in India. It is mentioned that immediately after the Ariyittu Vazcha (Coronation), the first act of the Zamorin of Calicut was to sign orders to resume authority for collecting taxes and confirming the appointment and titles of ministers, commanders, governors etc.¹⁷

The system of granting hereditary rights, titles and privileges formed part of the sociopolitical practice in the feudalistic caste society of India. Contrary to the notions propagated in colonial India, it appears to have been a society that facilitated upward and downward mobility for groups of people. Each group fitted into the native society as a caste or sub-caste having its own semi-autonomous status under a leader, practicing their own faith and following their own customs, manners, dress and language. They were certainly influenced by the community life and culture of other groups, but were not always directly controlled by a central power or central organization. That society can be described as a federation of semi-autonomous communities. In other words, each group had a chief or a 'king', though he had power only within his community and subject to the common social framework and the overall supremacy of the king at least in a nominal sense. It was a kind of limited freedom, with all signs and paraphernalia of authority normally attached to the sovereign. "

It was not kingship in the regular sense, but something that looked like kingship in terms of territory and the control over people. These community leaders or chieftains were quite powerful in their own sphere. They were little kings in effect, since they commanded independent resources and hereditary authority, in which the political ruler could not interfere. This was the position in Kerala, and to a certain extent in some other parts of India. Customary laws and precedents controlled polity and society, unless great military or political upheavals were produced by large-scale migrations or invasions from outside.¹⁹

Chief of Community as King

In the case of the Jews, Syrian Christians and Arab Muslims of a later date, they possessed independent resources in the form of gold and the infrastructure of trade including shipbuilding and navigational techniques and the knowledge of the sea routes. These were absent in the country at that time. They also possessed the discipline of their faith and the background of the civilized traditions of West Asia and Europe. They had great demand for the natural hill products of Kerala. On the Kerala side, the natural physical settings and climatic conditions prevented the growth of centralized power, based on the generation of surplus wealth and military formation. The religious traditions of the country were also not favorable for the growth of a rigid, monolithic and intolerant religious institution like the Papacy or the Caliphate. Even the Brahmins who exhibited exclusiveness and isolationism in other parts of India were constrained to recognize matrimonial alliances with non-Brahmins like Nayars, and patronize the military and political power of

non-Kshatriyas like the Sudra Nayars.²⁰ In this context the relatively unconventional Brahmin oligarchy of Kerala in the Kerala kingdom could not have found it difficult to accept the wealthy foreign traders in the role of 'Vaisyas' irrespective of their faith, nationality and race. The pragmatism of the Kerala Brahmin oligarchy in adapting prescribed laws to perceived requirements can be noticed in several innovative steps like this in administrative practice.

This combination of circumstances encouraged the process of cultural symbiosis, which the present writer had identified in the course of earlier researches, though I had not found or offered an explanation for this peculiar phenomenon. Further investigations enabled me to highlight the importance of the geo-political factors including the course of the monsoon, the role of the Western Ghats and rivers, and Kerala's monopoly over pepper and spices that were in great demand in West Asia and Europe. These factors accelerated the trend towards fragmentation of political and economic power, and the development of the autonomy of regions and communities in Kerala.²¹

This is how the Jewish and Syrian Christian communities of Kerala were in a position to speak of the 'King of Jews' and the 'King of Christians' in their traditions and literature. When the reports about the special status and powers of the chiefs of the respective communities reached the distant lands in West Asia and Europe, there was natural scope for exaggeration and over estimation regarding the position of these leaders. That was all the more possible because the travelers found the Jewish and Christian guild chiefs exercising powers on behalf of the rulers in the harbor areas like Kollam and Kodungallur, and enjoying great freedom in matters of religion and culture. Thus Rabbi Nissim of Barcelona wrote in the 14th century:

" I traveled from Spain,
I had heard of the city of Shingly;
I longed to see an Israel King.
Him I saw with my own eyes."

Professor P. M. Jussay quotes these lines and explains that this view was generally accepted, especially after the discovery of the "Sippur" (Diary) of David Ruebeni from the Bodleian library in the 19th century. He adds that David belonged to the family of Joseph Rabban, which in course of time became Rabbani and later Reubeni by the 16th century. Daniel, the Head of the Reubeni family sent his brother David to meet the Pope and the king of Portugal to seek military alliance. His report was corroborated by the courtiers of the Portuguese king in Europe.²²

Adrian Moens, Dutch Governor, in his Memorandum on the Administration of Malabar, 1781. states:

"These St. Thomas Christians, being favored with privileges, increased, it is said, in influence, power and number among the nations of the country, became bold through these advantages and desired, just as the Israelites of old, a king over them and did in fact appoint one, by name Balearte (Viniyarvattom), and gave him the title of king of the St. Thomas Christians. His descendants are also said to have succeeded him on the throne until at last one came to die without offspring."²³

In the later medieval period, the Mappila Muslims enjoyed the same type of political, economic and social privileges in the Zamorin's kingdom of Kozhikode in north Kerala. The Kozhikkottu Koya, was given the title of Shah Bandar Koya, Governor of the Port, and was given all the privileges and dignities of a Nayar chief, jurisdiction over all the Mohammadens residing in the Bazaar, the right to receive presents from different groups, right to levy tolls and punish offenders. He was also permitted to stand on the left side of the king on ceremonial occasions like the Mamankam.²⁴

In all these cases, the common factor was the excessive dependence of the rulers and chieftains on the revenue from sea trade. The relative backwardness of organized agricultural production of food grains in the small principalities of Kerala, when compared to the great kingdoms of the Gangetic valley or other major river valleys like those of Godavari or Kaveri, forced the rulers to look for profits in trade. Therefore the relationship between the king and the guild leader was not that of patron and client, but that of partners in trade.

This mutual dependence of the parties paved the way for cultural symbiosis in Kerala. Therefore it becomes necessary to understand the characteristic traits of the sociopolitical set up in order to be able to appreciate the significance and the limitations of the concept of a 'King of the Jews' in Kerala.

Notes and References

- ¹ Ketaki Sheth, 'The Jews of Cochin', *The India Magazine*, New Delhi, February 1987. There were only thirty-three Jews in Cochin at the time, nearly 40 years after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. When Kerala celebrated the 400th anniversary of the Mattanchery Synagogue in 1968 in the presence of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, there were about one hundred Jews in Kochi. The mass exodus of Jews to the new Promised

Land moved Vailoppilli Sreedhara Menon, the great poet of Modern Kerala, to write a poem to mourn their departure. See *Valloppilli, Collected Works*, Current Books, Trichur, 2001, pp. 351-55.

- ² 'Professor Scaria Zacharia states that about 300 songs have been copied in about 30 notebooks due to the efforts of Shirly Isenberg, P. M. Jussey, Barbara Johnson etc. His selection of 51 songs being released now has not included the songs about Joseph Rabban of the copper plates. Only one song (No.6. Mala Palli) mentions Joseph Rabban by name. At least half a dozen songs are known to be in circulation. The present writer had included three of these songs in his discussion of the plates. See note No.12 below.
- ³ Dr. Johanna Spector, 'The Music of the Jews of Cochin...' *Commemoration Volume, The Cochin Synagogue 400th Anniversary*, Cochin. pp. 177-85.
- ⁴ S. S. Koder, *Kerala and Her Jews*, Cochin, 1968. p. 7
- ⁵ Dr. Johanna Spector, *Op.Cit.*
- ⁶ William Logan, *Malabar* 1.1887. p.158. Note 1; K.P.P.Menon, *History of Kerala* 1. pp. 215-27 & 325
- ⁷ *Commemoration Volume. Op. Cit.* Preface pp. vii -ix
- ⁸ Dr. Walter J. Fischel. 'The Contribution of the Cochin Jews to South Indian and Jewish Civilization'. *Commemoration Volume Op.Cit.* pp. 19-39
- ⁹ Professor Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, Kottayam, 1970
- ¹⁰ M.G. S. Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut, 1996; (Printed version of the doctoral thesis, published for limited circulation).
- ¹¹ *Ibid.* Chapter V. Cola Invasions and the Last Phase. pp. 50-56
- ¹² Narayanan, 'Jewish Copper Plates of Cochin', *Cultural Symbiosis*. Tirivandrum, 1972. pp. 23-30, 51-3 & 79-85.
- ¹³ Narayanan, *Symbiosis. Op.Cit.* 'Mar Sapir Iso, Founder of the Church of Tarsa', pp. 31-37, 54-59 & 86-94.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala, Op. Cit.* Chapter X. Social System, pp. 155-58.
- ¹⁶ Venkayya, (ed.), 'The Syrian Christian Copper Plate of Vira Raghava from Cochin', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV pp. 290-97
- ¹⁷ Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala. Op. Cit.* Chapter VIII. Local Bodies. End Note No. 21. PLXIX. Ancient texts and inscriptional references are cited here. See also K.V. Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut, 1938. Second Edition. 1999. pp.37-38.
- ¹⁸ See Narayanan, *Perumals of Kerala. Op.Cit.* Chapter VIII, Local Bodies.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

- ²⁰ In the medieval period, the Kerala Brahmins or Nambudiris married the women from Kshatriya, Samanta and Nayar families of rulers who followed Marumakkattayam (matriliny) order of inheritance and succession to the throne. Thus all the rulers had Brahmin fathers, though they themselves were not recognized as Brahmins. This was a unique situation in Kerala, different from the rest of India.
- ²¹ Narayanan, 'Gods and Ancestors in Development - A Study of Kerala'. M A. Oommen, ed. *Kerala's Development Experience I* New Delhi. 1999.
- ²² P.M. Jussay, 'A Jewish Settlement in Medieval Kerala', Paper presented at the Indian History Congress, Madras, 1996. Section II. Medieval India.
- ²³ T. K. Joseph, 'A Christian Dynasty in Malabar', K. J. John, ed., *Christian Heritage of Kerala*, Cochin, 1981. pp. 327-330.
- ²⁴ K.V Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins, Op. Cit.* pp. 99-100.

Jewish Women in Historical Perspective

Galia Hacco

In this paper I introduce Jewish Women and their activities in different eras and places through primary records and secondary studies in Jewish history, culture, religion and society. I choose to bring here data from updated studies and researchs, published from the eighties on, in the 20th century. These critical feminist studies use gender as criteria of analysis, and some of them deal with Jewish women’s lives in transitional epochs caught between rapid social, political and intellectual change in the Jewish and non Jewish societies – and the Rabbinic traditional Judaism. (Rabbi means teacher and an authority in Jewish law).

Rabbinic Judaism was the only way of life in most Jewish communities around the world from 6th to 18th centuries.

Rabbinic Judaism is strict in the separations it ordains between male and female role and the social religious status and activities seemed appropriate to each sex. In this patriarchal system, female activities are to be confined to the private spheres of husband, children and economic survival, as opposed to public realms of prayer, study and communal relationship and leadership.

Most accounts of Jewish History and the history of Judaism have been written from the point of view of the male Jew. So, until recently, there has been little direct access to information about female oriented Jewish traditions and rituals. Moreover, only few women, before modern times, had the skills or authority to preserve their voices for posterity.

While women have rarely played central roles in the pivotal events in the scientific, artistic and intellectual accomplishments in the past, a critical thorough investigation may reveal evidence of women’s active past in shaping alternative traditions. When women are excluded from

the male religious activities and observances they often create their own artifacts and rituals. Moreover, in times of rapid social change and political turmoil, women frequently become cultural bearers, preserving the essentials of group cultural identity in both the domestic setting and the public sphere.

The insights gained by using gender as a category of analysis are valuable in studying Jewish societies and cultures as well.

My intention is to try to highlight the diversity in Jewish women’s life with seven examples, without bringing all the environments, eras, places and forms of Judaism throughout the four thousand years of Jewish History.

These examples collected here, it is my hope, do advance general knowledge of the diversity and richness of the Jewish female past, while encouraging further research and similar scholarly endeavors in the future. Moreover, expanding our knowledge of Jewish women enlarges what we know about Jewish History and the Jewish experiences, and also redefine our very conceptions of what Jews and Judaism were about and continues to be.

First Example

From Biblical times, I present Hannah, a Jewish woman, mother of Samuel. (Old Testament, Samuel A, chapters 1- 8). I read these chapters and I consider her a prophet and a poet, a woman of high spirituality, religiosity and of leadership qualities.

Most of the scholars in Jewish Bible of our era, agree that many authors, sources, periods and cultural threads lie behind the work we call the Hebrew Bible. Until its codification or canonization there were many changes, revisions and elaborations in the Bible.

Here, let me remind you of Hannah’s story as the Bible tells us in Chapters 1-2, Samuel A. Hannah, one of the two wives of Elkana was a barren woman for many years, suffering from the mocking and hurt by the co-wife of her husband, as she had no children.

Hannah prays for a child and God answers her prayer. She became mother of a boy. Hannah names her boy Samuel as she borrowed him from God. She vows that after the boy’s breast-feeding years are over, she will bring her son to serve God at the High Priest Eli’s service for all his future. As God lent her the boy, she lends her boy to God’s service.

If we continue reading the chapters 1-8 as one unit, we see the difficult situation of Jewish people in those days: There is no judge, no spiritual leader or prophet, and no army commander. Jewish people were

attacked by all neighbors. The old priest Eli's two sons sinned to God by their immoral behavior; so God did not see them fit for leading the people.

We see that Samuel was chosen to lead the Jewish people spiritually, to save them from their bad ways, and prepare Saul to be the first king of Israel. We realize that Hannah's plan was that Samuel studies and prepares himself for his role as the spiritual leader of Israel at the old high priest's service from his childhood. Her dedication of Samuel from boyhood to serve God prepared him for the role and enabled him to serve his people. Hannah, as a prophet, could visualize the right path and act accordingly from the beginning for the future of her people.

Yes, Hannah may be viewed as a prophet.

Is Hannah a poet? Yes, we read in chapter 2 sentences 1-11; here is beautiful, rich glorious poetry.

I bring this example to show a different way of looking at the same chapters of Bible.

We can see the woman's role in a different context and pay attention to her intentions and actions as a responsible clever thinking person for a better future for her people.

Second Example

From the Diaspora of Jewish World of late antiquity, second Century C.E., I present Rufina, a Jewish woman of Asia Minor, and her Greek inscription on a tomb marble slab about the rights of her slaves.

In the second century C.E., in the city of Smyrna on the western coast of Asia Minor, a Jewish woman named Rufina commissioned the following Greek inscription on a marble slab: "Rufina, a Jewess head of the Synagogue, built this tomb for her freed slaves raised in her household. No one else has the right to bury anyone (here). Anyone who dares to do (so) will pay 1500 denaria to the sacred treasury and 1000 denaria to the Jewish people. A copy of this inscription has been placed in the (public) archives".

Rufina's inscription seems surprising for many reasons: Rufina commissions an inscription in Greek, calls herself "head" or "president" of the synagogue, acts both autonomously and publicly without any reference to a father, husband, son, or male guardian. She oversees her own household of slaves and former slaves and lives in sufficient social proximity to the non-Jewish community to prescribe a double penalty to prevent from anyone to violate the tomb she had built for her slaves and free slaves.

By focusing predominantly on non-rabbinic sources, especially epigraph, inscriptions, papyri and less well-known literature, we have evidence for the lives and actions of Jewish women in late antiquity. These sources not only serve as an important corrective to the rabbinic model but also allow us to see that rabbinic Judaism is only one strand in the rich tapestry of diverse Judaism in Greco-Roman antiquity.

Third Example

In the Muslim world in Middle Eastern countries in the middle ages-950-1250 C.E., I present two women from Cairo Genizah documents. Shlomo Dov Goeitein's analysis of women and Mimonides' responsa, (1135-1204) his ruling in a divorce a case in the Jewish Rabbinical Court.

In the Cairo Genizah documents from 1890 C.E., scholars can find information about medieval Jewish Society and Jewish institutions under Islam rule. Cairo Genizah included a huge quantity of discarded secular writings such as official, business and private correspondences, Jewish court proceedings, contracts and other legal records relevant mostly to Jewish life from 9th to 13th Century C.E. Also many marriage Contracts or Ketubah, as marriages were regarded as economic agreements containing various social safeguards protecting the wife.

Genizah documents indicate that problems stemming from polygynous households were common in the Jewish communities under Islam rule. There are Genizah texts containing agreements to grant equal rights to cowives.

Numerous documentary references deal with one specific business woman Karima (the dear one) known as al-Wuhsha (object of yearning), the broker. Her marriage ended in divorce and she left an extensive will detailing her considerable assets and their disposition, which included bequests to numerous communal religious and charitable institutions, as well as to family members, in addition to directions for an elaborate funeral for herself.

In a series of legal inquiries - responsa - to Mimonides, the Cairo Genizah documents tell about a deserted wife who was able to make herself independent by running a school, assisted by her elder son. After some years her husband reappeared and demanded that she gives up the school because it injured his dignity for his wife to be a teacher, and besides he had no one to serve him. Otherwise, he asked permission to take a second wife.

The wife in return argued that her husband had been repeatedly undependable in the past. She said that she had built up her student clientele over time, and if she gives up her teaching, she would not easily be able to restart her school, if her husband disappears again.

Mimonides' remedy was that the Jewish Rabbinic court compels her husband to divorce his independent wife on the grounds that he had not fulfilled his legal obligation to support her.

Moreover he advises the wife to refuse all relations with her husband and to appeal for her marriage portion or Ketubah portion by law, since these actions, too, would constitute grounds for divorce. After that Mimonides says: "She will have disposition over herself. She may teach what she likes and do what she likes", but Mimonides rules: "if she stays with her husband, he has the right to forbid her to teach".

This incident raises questions about Jewish Women's education and their involvement in Jewish communal religious life in that period, in Jewish Communities in Egypt and Middle Eastern Countries.

The only documents in the Genizah attributed to women are letters; most of them were probably dictated to professional scribes.

Fourth Example

The Hebrew tomb-stone inscription from 1269 C.E. of Sarah Bat Israel, standing in front of my home village synagogue in Chendamangalam, Kerala, was erected on a concrete column with an additional slab saying that Cochin Government erected it in 1936.

It is a Jewish Custom to put a Hebrew written stone with the Hebrew date on a dead person's tomb.

We do not know who Sarah Bat Israel was, what age she was in time of death and who were her family. The epigraph says in Hebrew "Here rests Sarah Bat Israel, who died and joined her creator on (day) (month) (year)".

This marble tomb stone is an old physical evidence of Jewish life in Kerala from 1269 C.E., a clue to the Jewish communities and their locations at that time in our mutual history of Kerala.

I wanted to know when and where the stone was found and what was the reason for the written announcement of the Cochin Government in 1936 to write and put it under the tomb-stone.

I interviewed Mr. Elias Tifereth of Chendamangalam, age 86, living in Ramla in Israel. Mr. Tifereth is a second cousin of my father, Mr. P.M. Elias, of Pallivathukal family in Chendamangalam. My questions took his memory to his adolescent days and my father's law school days in Thiruvananthapuram University. He told me that the tomb-stone of Sarah Bat Israel was found between the synagogue and the river shore in 1935 in Chendamangalam. The Cochin Paradeshi Community understanding

its historical value, wanted to take it and put it in their cemetery in Mattanchery. Chendamangalam Community didn't agree to that. When the Cochin Paradeshi Community tried to take the tomb-stone by force, the youngsters of Chendamangalam Community, including Mr. Elias Tifereth consulted Mr. P. M. Elias, the law student (my father) and appealed to the court.

Cochin Court ruled in favor of Chendamangalam and in order to prevent any future dispute, the Court ordered to install the tomb-stone on a concrete column and put a marble-slab on the lower part of the column saying "erected by the Cochin Government in 1936", and to install the column in front of the synagogue.

Two years ago, I have read in Malayala Manorama daily, date 28.3.2003, the following title "Tomb-Stones found in Synagogue compound, in Chendamangalam". The article said "It is pointed out that before 9th Century, a Jewish cemetery was located outside the synagogue building. Recently while cleaning up the premises for repair work taken up by Archeological department, a few tomb stones written in Hebrew were found.

The present Jewish cemetery is situated a little away from the synagogue in a hillock Kotayil Kovilagam.

Since the tomb stones were found near the synagogue compound, it was surmised that the present cemetery may not be very old but a recent one. This kotayil Kovilagam area belonged to Villantattam Kings family. After the departure of the king's family, the Jews shifted the cemetery to the new place.

If you are able to decipher the Hebrew writing on the tomb stones found in the synagogue compound it will reveal more details of the history of Jews in Chendamangalam".

These newly found (2003) epigraphs are a valuable clue to the antiquity of Chendamangalam Jewish History. They must be studied and researched, as they may illuminate unknown portions of local History and the Kerala History.

This matter is equally important to Jewish History too.

The question is whether the Hebrew date of Chendamangalam Synagogue inauguration, 1614 C.E., indicates a new synagogue building constructed on top of the ruins of an old one which was existing in 1269 C.E., when our Jewish woman Sarah Bat Israel died and was buried in her community's cemetery near the synagogue, in Chendamangalam.

I address this question to Kerala Historians.

Fifth Example

From Rabbinic Judaism in Eastern and Central Europe (1646-1724) Gluckel of Hamelin, a woman, writes an autobiography, written for her children to know their dead father and their ancestries. This writing is an exception to the pattern of female silence and is an engrossing record of a woman who actively shaped her own destiny; and that of her family. It is her female voice that we hear with particular concerns with household and children, as well as business and the synagogue. This work was preserved by the author's family for several centuries before its publication. It is an essential accompaniment to any study of Jewish women's History.

The fundamental relationship for the Jewish women was with their families, particularly their husbands. Marriage and its joys, as well as the complications stemming from divorce, desertion, widowhood, remarriage, inheritance, and the guardianship of minor children, have always played a primary role in the lives of Jewish women. Marriage was fundamentally an economic transaction in most periods of Jewish History. Still marriage functioned as an enduring and meaningful bond for many women and men.

Sixth Example

From the first half of the 20th Century in American Jewry, Henrietta Szold, (1860-1945), the founder of National Council of Jewish Women - N.C.J.W. - cofounder and head of Hadassah from 1912. Members of Hadassah defined themselves as not religious but cultural Jews. They shared with Szold the belief that the perpetuation of both Jews and Judaism depended on Jewish repatriations to Israel. In numerous speeches she appealed to Jewish women to convince their families and communities that "Jewish survival depended on Zionist efforts".

Hadassah gave many Jewish Women the opportunity to engage in Jewish philanthropic, educational, cultural and political activities.

Hadassah sent nurses to pre-state Israel, helped the poor and worked for Jewish-Arab rapprochement. They worked for practical change. These deeds may be seen as expressions of moral and social convictions.

Hadassah's another Organization, established in 1927, was Rehabilitation through Training O.R.T. - to provide technological and vocational education for Jewish Communities throughout the world. As we see here, significant numbers of Jewish Women, throughout the twentieth Century have sought to give their own understanding of being Jewish and in greater public expression.

Henrietta Szold was a social worker. As the head of Welfare Services of Jewish Agency, she founded Youth Aliya movement for rescuing the Jewish Children of post-second-world-war-Europe and bringing them to Israel to build a new life and future.

Seventh Example

From our era – Susan Sered's (1988) Anthropological in-depth study of elderly illiterate middle-eastern Jewish women in Jerusalem, repeatedly constructing their own female oriented religious traditions and rituals.

In her article: "The Domestication of Religion: The Spiritual Guardianship of Elderly Oriental Jewish Women of Jerusalem", published in 1988, pp 506-521 (in English).

I present this example as a demonstration of the process of women's active religious life, creating and shaping alternative traditions and rituals when they are excluded from the "sanctional" male religious observances.

What Sered's two year in-depth field study in 1984-1985 reveals is a valuable insight in understanding Jewish Women and their religiosity.

The religious life of these elderly oriental Jewish Women is characterized by sincere concern for the well-being of their extended families, seen by many spontaneous, formal private and public rituals. By enacting these rituals, they protect their living and dead relatives and also protect the unknown future family members.

These women feel that they have close relationship with all these extended family members. These old ladies' religious world reveal their need for religion, which includes the close inter-relationship that many world religions demonstrate.

By the help of the term: "Domestic Religion", Sered describes the process of domesticating the Jewish Religion by these elderly women. In the same time, they declare their loyalty to the traditional Judaism and feel belonging to the bigger Jewish circle.

In their female rituals, Judaism turns to be a personal setting in order to protect, provide good health, happiness and security to certain people with whom these women are connected in deeply concerning mutual dependence.

Conclusion

These examples collected here, it is my hope, do advance general knowledge of the diversity and richness of the Jewish female past, while encouraging further research and similar scholarly endeavors in the future. Expanding our knowledge of Jewish women enlarges what we

know about Jewish History and the Jewish Experiences and also re-define our very conceptions of what Jews and Judaism are about.

Judaism is a constantly evolving religious and social system. Jewish societies attempted each in its own way to adapt the language, dress manners and customs, etc. of the bigger civil non Jewish societies they live in. At the same time, maintaining loyalty to the guidance and demands of Rabbinic Laws. So, in Jewish Practice it is possible to have a perpetual tension and there are also the efforts to evaluate, change and adapt the Jewishness and the sense of Jewish Identity by conveying the importance of Jewish peoplehood, Jewish spirituality as both moral obligation and inner piety, and Jewish ethnicity.

Jewish women were my examples from Jewish History.

In these examples, we have met different active and creative women, most of them expressing their spirituality. We have heard about their actions and contributions to their own human societies.

To be able to see these women and understand their activities we needed the analytical tools of feminist critical studies.

We need more works of studying women in every human society around the world. Fifty per cent of mankind is womankind, and the process has only recently started. ▲

The Parur Songs Reflections on the Role of Women

Albrecht Frenz

Studying the history of peoples we find that, throughout the centuries many experienced collective catastrophes which resulted in a situation of total despair. We may call such a situation the “Hour Zero” since – despite its characteristic of hardship – it also bears the potential of a new beginning. People did not experience “Hour Zero” as an isolated experience but as part of a complex social network. There were conquerors and defeated, oppressors and oppressed, persecutors and persecuted, guests and hosts, refugees and those who provided accommodation. Within this frame women became decisive because they often were almost the only survivors after persecution. In this paper a specific part of Jewish culture in Kerala and the surroundings is taken as a starting point. From the very beginning the existence of Jewish people is confronted with settling-down and setting-off. Israel as a globally dispersed people never gave up its identity. Nevertheless, Jews were able to adopt cultural elements and the language of their host countries. This characteristic feature can be studied very well with the Jews in Kerala. Luckily they compiled songs which are sung by women till now and which contain the memories of the past, the present situation and hope for the future. Of the collection, the two Kili (parrot) songs of Parur are particularly good examples.

At first sight the two songs seem to deal with one and the same event. Looking closer it becomes clear that Parur song (A) narrates the story of Jews who once lived in Kodungallur. There, they “sat like birds in one row on trees in a golden forest”. When the Portuguese came and persecuted them severely they had to flee and came to a town near the seashore and settled in Parur. Parur song (B) gives us an account of the persecution of Jews in Spain and Portugal. They migrated and finally came to the coast of Parur.

In both songs it is narrated that Jews have lost their family homes and are now on their way to search for a new settlement in a foreign country. However, they had to get over “Hour Zero”. They had to start afresh. In such a challenging – even despairing – situation one can generally note that it is especially the women who encourage the community to envisage a brighter future. So, too, in the case of Indian Jews, songs were composed and then sung by women. When singing the songs women created an atmosphere of hope. The performance of the songs constituted a decisive element in the history of the Jewish community in Kerala. Words, expressions and the way how the songs were performed show that they contain typical Kerala features in terms of landscape, behaviour and the liveliness of performance. Although Jewish, the songs became deeply rooted in Kerala culture. They constitute links between Jewish and Kerala culture. Even European influences are found. The songs survived the most recent migration to Israel in the 1950s. Jewish women could – in spite of the burdened past – transmit the songs into present times. Today they constitute a significant part of the Kerala Jewish culture in Israel.

One is reminded of the situation after World War II when Germany was reshaped mainly by women, the so-called “Trümmerfrauen” or “the women who cleared away rubble”. Many men had not come home from war. Most of the refugee treks brought into Germany old people, children and women who had to find a new home in unknown surroundings. Rebuilding the destroyed cities and restructuring Germany by the end of the 1940s and beginning of 1950s was carried out by women to a great extent. They shouldered the burden of removing the ruins and constructing new homes. They nourished the families and got an increasing influence in society. Within a few years the basic thinking of society changed. They stood behind the increasing consciousness of guilt as well as the wish for reconciliation. A new reality took shape within the majority of people.

If we want to understand the force behind the Jewish Malayalam folk songs sung by women, we first have to look into the history of the Old Testament and see how women behaved when they were confronted with “Hour Zero”.

At first Miriam has to be mentioned. In Genesis 15,20 f. Miriam’s song is handed down as follows: “Then Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.’” Most of the commentaries of the Old Testament agree that Miriam’s song proves the outstanding position of Miriam as woman and contains the first credo of Israel to Jahwe. It

created a new identity after the exodus from Egypt which is also interpreted as the hour of birth of the Israel people.

The credo is repeated and confirmed by a non-Israelite woman called Rahab. She was a harlot who hosted two Israelite spies and at her own risk saved their lives. In speaking to them she – like Miriam – formulated the credo: “The Lord your God is he who is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” (Joshua 2,11). This prophetic saying became true when Israelites entered the land Kanaan. Rahab, in spite of her profession and position in society not only became a prophetess but also a member of the genealogy of the king David.

Another woman, Hagar, the Egyptian maiden of Abraham, is reported to have been sent into the desert along with her son Ismael. When she and her son almost died with thirst she discovered a fountain with god’s help. She saved herself and her son’s life and became the mother of a great people. Hagar in her “Hour Zero” was painted in two pictures by Richard Ziegler and published in his book “Biblische Weiber”, Gütersloh 1978, p. 11 and 13. In this book Richard Ziegler painted the most important Jewish women who represent persons who found a way out of a situation in which the existence of their people was in danger. In his paintings Ziegler also demonstrates how the fate of different people overlap. He himself experienced life threatening situations when he had to flee into several countries due to the persecution by German fascists between 1933 and 1945. After the war he returned to Germany and settled down in the so-called Steinhaus in Calw. Richard Ziegler portrayed himself in the faces of Abraham and Hagar. In the first picture Ziegler shows an old Abraham and a young Hagar carrying her baby. She looks beautiful with curious demanding eyes. The second picture shows Hagar grown in years with an embittered expression listening to the voice from heaven (cf. Genesis 16-21). The faces in the two pictures do not only express different moods of a melancholic Abraham and a despaired and then self content Hagar but also reflect Ziegler’s own experience of the Hour Zero after war.

Similar observations can be made by studying women in the New Testament. A woman of the same profession as Rahab called Maria Magdalene came to Jesus when he was dining in the house of Simon the leper. She poured ointment of pure nard over the head of Jesus (Mark 14,3) , and in another version she poured the nard on Jesus’ feet. People grumbled at Jesus’ behaviour that he dined with a leper and even accepted being anointed by a woman with a dubious reputation. But Jesus justified her doing and said: “You always have the poor with you, and whenever you will, you can do good to them; but you will not

always have me” (Mark 14,7 par). The scene shows how communal conventions are broken by an unconventional woman. At the same time this deed opens the door for a future in which social justice prevails. Having studied this narration it is of no surprise that Maria Magdalena and some other women were the first who met the crucified and risen Christ at the entrance of the grave and were told to spread the news. Thus women in a despairing situation became the first messengers of the Christian creed (Mark 16,1-8 par) which soon became the fundament of a global movement.

A Muslim woman who died in Basra in the year 801, Rabia al-Adawiyya, once walked through Basra carrying an enlit torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other hand. People laughed at her and asked “what are you doing?” She replied: “I want to set aflame paradise and pour water into hell to make these two veils disappear. Thus it will become obvious who prays to god out of fear of hell or hope of paradise” (A. Schimmel, *Mystische Dimensionen des Islam*, München 1992, p. 66). In this story Rabia’s love of god was regarded so pure that she pushed aside the veils of heaven and hell and lived in god’s presence only as said in Quran: “He loves them and they love him” (Sura 5,59). With her concept of love Rabia al-Adawiyya influenced not only the Sufi tradition lastingly. Islamic theologians bear her visions, f. i., the martyr Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (852-922) who became famous because of his sentence *anal-haqq*, “I am the truth”, or the famous theologian Abu Hamid Ghazzali (1058-1111). At the crucial time when Sufis had formed a rigid sectarian movement Rabia al-Adawiyya created a concept of love which could become an integral part of Sufism.

In the context of our topic we cannot leave out examples of women who stand at a new beginning India. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad Maitreyi challenges her husband Yajnavalkya to explain the ultimate reality. The dialogue ends with the saying: „He who becomes one with the brahman attains the highest knowledge” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2,4; 4,5). To reach this aim, Yajnavalkya abandons all his possession and retires into the forest. Maitreyi remains in everyday life. The woman Maitreyi challenged Yajnavalkya and became responsible for the manifestation of the ultimate truth.

A characteristic of Kerala has also to be mentioned: the matrilineal system. The matrilineal system can also be found in former Mithila, now North Bihar. Not only Hindus but also a few Christian and Muslim communities follow the matrilineal system. Due to this system the position of women in Kerala as well as in Mithila society is different.

During the severe draught in North Bihar in the 1960s men left their villages to look for work or business in towns, whereas women and

children had to stay back, many starved. In this devastating situation women started to transfer the wall paintings of their houses on paper. They came out of their houses and sold the pictures, often with the help of dealers, and earned their families’ livelihood. Today their paintings have a global market and are the basis for income of many families in the villages of North Bihar. It is amazing to observe that within a few decades Mithila women of Brahmin, Kayastha and Harijan castes alike emancipated themselves from the role as an indoor house wife into public life. Nowadays Madhubani women even themselves sell their paintings at markets throughout India, travel to foreign countries, create pictures there and become important ambassadors of Indian culture.

When translating the Jewish Malayalam Folk Songs in Jerusalem in summer 2001, I noticed that the Jewish Malayalam Folk Songs carry a spirit of realism in building a new society as well as a spirit of creating a peaceful future. The core of this creativeness is threefold: The family structure, the rootedness in the community, and the spiritual centre at the synagogue form a unity and radiate into all community levels.

In the song “Evarayi” it is described that Evarayi left Jerusalem for Malanadu. On the way he and his crew were attacked by the Portuguese. Finally they settled in Palur. The first activity in the Hour Zero was that they built a synagogue in order to praise God. Songs sung by women and the synagogue are closely related. They build the fundament for all activities in the houses, families and in the community. They guarantee that the past remains unforgotten, but is reconciled with the present.

From history we learn that peoples and individuals face catastrophes and existential menaces in spite of which women give birth to new life and motivate anew the whole society by creating an atmosphere of hope. They use songs which narrate and interpret the past, reconcile the present and create new perspectives for the future. Folk songs are a means to enrich life through vivid memories, joyful present events and a prosperous future. ▲

Ruby Daniel's Legacy: Intertextuality in Her Oral Interpretation of Malayalam Jewish Biblical Songs

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Stories must be told, because they are crying out to be told. If you know a tale, you owe it not only to others but to the tale itself to tell it. A. K. Ramanujan (1991:46).

This paper honors the legacy of the late Ruby Daniel (1912-2002), whose translations of Malayalam Jewish folksongs (MJFS) played a crucial role in the evolution of the international project that inspired the conference "Jewish Heritage of Kerala 2006". Its focus will be on her use of stories in explaining and translating the Malayalam Biblical songs, with emphasis on intertextuality in her narrative and hermeneutic process.

This remarkable woman was born in Kochi in 1912, moved to Israel in 1951, and died in 2002 just a few months short of her 90th birthday. The first young woman in the Kerala Jewish community to attend college, she was a pioneer in government employment for women in Kerala, and she spent the second half of her life living and working in a collective *kibbutz* in Israel. There she wrote the memoir and cultural history of her community, *Ruby of Cochin: An Indian Jewish Woman Remembers* (1995), which included 13 of her 25 early song translations, along with numerous stories from her own family and from the cultural and folk history of the Kerala Jews. She then devoted much of her last decade to translating about 100 more songs into English.

As is now well-documented, the Jewish women of Kerala had a large body of Malayalam songs, which they traditionally performed at parties and other public occasions connected with Jewish holidays and life cycle rituals. In addition to transmitting them orally, they

preserved the song texts in hand-written notebooks, which they took with them to the parties and passed on from generation to generation (Johnson 2005). My colleagues Scaria Zacharia and Ophira Gamliel have made a superb beginning in the linguistic and literary interpretation of the written song texts (Zacharia 2003, Zacharia and Gamliel 2005), opening the corpus for further study by other scholars in Kerala and internationally. In contrast to their work, this paper is focused not on the analysis of written texts but on intertextuality in performance, in particular Ruby Daniel's storytelling.

Ruby Daniel was a captivating storyteller – not just in writing, but also in her everyday interactions and in her explication of the Malayalam Jewish songs. Almost a third of the MJFS collection are narrative songs about events or characters in the Hebrew Bible, interwoven with references to stories from Jewish *midrash*,¹ from non-Jewish Malayalam classical and folk literature, and from the imaginations of their mostly anonymous composers. As we worked together on song translations, it became clear that the Biblical songs were her favorite genre, perhaps because she had so many stories to tell about the stories in these songs and sometimes about the songs themselves. The source for analysis in this paper is my collection of notes and tape recordings from almost 20 years of conversation and six years (1993-1999) of intensive collaborative translation work with Ruby Daniel. Working from my own limited knowledge of Malayalam, but with a wealth of information about the history and culture of her community, my role was to organize and present her with variant texts of each song, to take notes as she puzzled over the translation, to ask questions, and to listen with fascination to her comments and stories. She was a storyteller with a strong need for an audience, and it was my good fortune to be that audience, perhaps as a stand-in for the Israeli niece and nephews who were no longer a daily part of her life. Or perhaps in some way I was an echo of the curious child she had once been, back in the days when she learned these stories from her grandmother, who told her stories she had heard from her grandmother.

Ruby Daniel as song expert

In emerging as the MJFS expert of her generation, Ruby Daniel was carrying on a long family tradition. In early childhood she had learned Hebrew prayers, Malayalam songs and stories of all kinds from her grandmother Rachel (Docho) Japheth (1864-1944). Grandmother told Ruby about her great great great aunt, who had taught the Malayalam songs along with embroidery and lace-making to Jewish women in Fort Cochin in the middle of the 19th century, and whose

notebook is now preserved as the oldest in the MJFS collection housed at the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem.²

Women in both the Paradesi and Kadavumbhagam communities of Kochi respected Grandmother Docho as a song leader who set the tunes for public performances – reflecting the “bridge” identity of the Japheth/Daniel family, who belonged to the Paradesi synagogue at the northern end of Jewtown, Mattancheri, but lived in the neighborhood close to the Kadavumbhagam Synagogue at the southern end. Being in different ways marginal to both communities, they had close relationships in both and participated in the song traditions of both.³

However, performative knowledge of the songs was not always sufficient for understanding them. How did Ruby Daniel acquire her seemingly endless repertoire of stories about Biblical characters and events? Her knowledge of the Hebrew Bible came both from her family environment and from more formal education. When she was a child, each morning and afternoon, before and after attending the government primary school, she studied in the Hebrew school held in Jewtown, Mattancheri. In addition to learning the Hebrew language, she and the other Jewish girls and boys were taught the Torah portion to be recited in the synagogue each week, in both Hebrew and Malayalam.⁴ It is possible that their teacher may have included explanatory stories from *midrash*, found in written Hebrew texts that some boys would study when they were older.

When asked about her knowledge of so many stories from *midrash*, in addition to the Bible, Ruby Daniel said she hadn't learned them formally.

Many things I have not read anywhere. Nobody told me. I heard it.... Some of the men used to read these stories on Shabbat afternoon.... and the women, they would go to hear... In one or two houses they made some coffee and banana fried, things to eat, and they asked somebody to come and read for them, and all the women listened. It was going on for a long time like that. Many of the women knew all the stories because of that. That's how they learned, and they talked among themselves. (6/93)

Research is needed to discover which books of *Talmud* and *Midrash* were available in Kerala, as they may well have influenced the composers of the Biblical songs.⁵ Ruby Daniel's knowledge of such books came indirectly, partly through her learned grandfather Eliyahu Japheth, a respected *shohet* (ritual slaughterer) and teacher who was self-educated in Hebrew and English. He brought home much of what he learned:

You see, my grandfather had no money to buy books. His friend Joseph Hallegua always bought books from all over the world. And my grandfather was the one who read all these. He was always in that house... a big house with an upstairs [where] there is nobody to bother them. And the books were upstairs in that room. ... so he read all the books and heard all the news. So when he heard something from that house, we heard it from what my mother said. (7/19/95)

Whether direct or indirect, knowledge of the Biblical and *midrashic* stories was still not enough to enable her to translate the Malayalam Jewish songs. Ruby Daniel also acquired a solid knowledge of English and Malayalam. Encouraged by her mother, who began teaching her English at an early age, she was the first young Jewish woman in Kerala to attend high school and then a year of college, at St. Theresa's in Ernakulam – though she had to leave college to support her family when her father and grandfather both died in the same year. Her fluency in English was enhanced by her years of service as a clerk in the Indian Navy and in the law courts of Kochi and Ernakulam, and by her great enjoyment of reading.

The other critical ingredient in Ruby Daniel's education was her acquaintance with classical and academic Malayalam, in addition to the colloquial Jewish Malayalam that she spoke at home and with other Jews. An understanding of these different versions of Malayalam was important in deciphering the MJFS, which contain such a challenging variety of linguistic forms (See Zacharia 2003).

Ruby Daniel was unusual among educated Kerala Jews in choosing Malayalam language and literature as an optional subject in college. Her deep love for her mother tongue was apparent even as she spoke to me in English, spicing her conversation with Malayalam sayings which she would translate and explain with obvious delight in their poetry and cleverness. “Malayalam has comparisons, very beautiful, and always some parables,” she told me. “The literature is difficult. The poetry is written eight hundred or a thousand years ago, and of course it is all wisdom.” (Daniel & Johnson 1995:xxi) As we worked on translations of Jewish parrot songs, for example, she was able to set them in a larger literary context, telling me about the 16th century poet Ezhuthachan:

He was a poet from a lower caste. Everything he wanted to say, he wrote it in poetry, addressing it to a bird. Maybe from that the Jews took these songs about the parrot. (7/19/95)

She frequently consulted the Malayalam/English dictionary she had brought with her from India in 1951. With knowledge of standard grammar and spelling, she could recognize variant Jewish colloquial elements in the song texts, identifying patterns of linguistic transformation which explained such spelling variations as the frequent substitution of “t” for “zh”. In addition she was familiar with the Hebrew words and concepts that are sprinkled throughout the MJFS corpus.

Finally it was Ruby Daniel's realistic awareness of her own limitations in Malayalam that pushed me to search for a Malayalam linguist to work on the Jewish songs. When faced with inscrutable texts, she would say: “Please go to Kerala and find a professor to do this!” Scaria Zacharia was the answer to that request. When he and I met in Kerala in 1999, he began his first readings of the Jewish songs by referring to Ruby Daniel's translations; and on his first visit to Israel he traveled to the *kibbutz* to ask for her blessing.

Textualization as performance

During the years that I knew her, Ruby Daniel did not sing Malayalam Jewish songs in public. Hardly anyone did. Once most of the Kerala Jews had migrated as a community to Israel (beginning in the early 1950s), they celebrated their holidays and public life-cycle events with their own Hebrew songs. The old Malayalam songs were almost forgotten until the recent revival of interest marked by this conference. Today Ruby Daniel's younger sister Royal (Rahel) Kala and their second cousin Venus (Ziphora) Lane are active members of the Nirit Singers, a new group of about 30 “Kochini” women from different parts of Israel who perform Malayalam songs in staged concerts for mixed audiences, but Ruby's singing voice had grown rusty long before the formation of this group.

While translating the MJFS into English, Ruby Daniel sometimes performed them privately, singing them to herself or to me as she pondered their meanings. But even when she didn't know the songs or didn't choose to sing them, she followed an individual process of intertextual interpretation, like P.M. Jussay⁶ before her and Scaria Zacharia today. It was a process of “textualizing” each song by creating a likely and comprehensible version out of different texts in different notebooks, first the notebooks from her own family and eventually the others I brought to her from the ever-growing collection of manuscripts representing six of the eight Jewish communities in Kochi, Ernakulam, Chendamangalam and Parur.

While this process of textualization calls for the exercise of individual preferences and judgment, it can be usefully compared to the collective practice sessions preceding public song performances. Like the monthly gatherings of the Nirit Singers in Israel, traditional practice sessions in Kerala brought together women from different families with different notebooks, to plan in advance the songs that they were to sing in public. In order to sing together it was necessary to agree on the text and the melody or melodies for each song – a complex process when some women had competing versions of the song written in their separate notebooks and others were singing from memory or learning the song for the first time.

I first saw this inherently intertextual process at work in 1977, when I went to Kochi to record some of the songs that are heard on the compact disk *Oh, Lovely Parrot!* (Johnson 2004). Before Sarah Cohen and three of her neighbors would perform for the tape recorder, they needed to practice, and their practice involved consulting with each other and with several different notebooks, to arrive at the words and the melodies that they would sing.

The process continues in contemporary Israel when members of the Nirit Singers debate the pronunciation or meaning of words in the songs they are practicing. It also continues within Ruby Daniel's family. One afternoon in the summer of 2001 I sat with her younger sister Royal and their second cousins Venus and Honey, as they struggled to reconstruct a dimly remembered song – “Our Bridegroom, Our Bride” (II-16b)– from a piece of paper discovered in the belongings of Venus and Honey's recently deceased mother. Without another written text to consult, their memory-based disagreement over the sequence of verses and pattern of repetition was extremely lively.

In earlier years while she was textualizing and translating, Ruby Daniel sometimes consulted the Bible in addition to the different notebooks that were spread out on the dining table where we worked. While translating three songs about the holiday of Purim, she turned to the Book of Esther where the basic story is written. She occasionally chanted parts of this Hebrew text under her breath, using the Kerala melody with which the scroll of Esther is chanted each year, as well as explaining elements in all three songs by referring to other stories she knew, most of which can be traced to *midrash*. She also reminisced about rowdy celebrations of Purim in Kerala, keeping alive the cultural world of Kerala along with the oral and written texts, there in her *kibbutz* apartment.

Intertextuality in hermeneutic performance

Folklorist Lee-Ellen Marvin considers the central role of the grandmother in Indian storytelling:

Through stories, adults teach children basic principles for moral living and introduce them to important religious figures... The family structure gives special responsibilities and privileges to the grandmother as primary storyteller, which means that she can function as a cultural gatekeeper by selecting stories and editing them to support the primary moral and ethical principles of [the] family. (2003:69)

As if fitting into the prototypical role of such an Indian grandmother, Ruby Daniel used her stories and comments pedagogically, revealing to me new perspectives on important religious figures and explaining to me what would otherwise be unclear. She did want me to understand. "You know what that means?" she would ask, and often I didn't. For example, when she translated these two lines from a song about the childhood of Moses (III-65):

Because Pharaoh's daughter brought up the child,
God gave her heaven

she had to tell a story to explain what happened when Moses was an adult:

When Moses was taking all the Jews and going away from Egypt, she [Pharaoh's Daughter] didn't know what will happen to her. She said, "Son, what will happen to me?" So he took her hand and threw her into the air, and she went to Paradise, where she is still alive with the ten others who went to Paradise without dying. Her name is Batya.⁷ (10/22/96)

Then she proceeded to tell me stories about other people who were spared the pain of death. This theme was important to her personally, and she returned to it later in relation to several other songs. A more elaborate example of Ruby Daniel's hermeneutic and pedagogical skills is found in our conversation about the song "When Moshe Received Knowledge" (III-15). This was in May 1999, one of our last intensive work sessions before she fell ill and could no longer continue the translation project. Throughout most of that taped session, her voice lacks the energy of our earlier years together. She had repeatedly rejected my suggestions of songs to translate that day, but suddenly this one appealed to her. "It's not difficult," she said, brightening up, and proceeded to translate each line, with just a few crucial explanations:

The Lord Who is the First gave all knowledge to Moshe,
And with that knowledge he gave praises to God.
On Sinai Mountain God appeared in royal splendor.
On Seir Mountain, there the fire was burning.⁸

Here she paused briefly to note that Seir is another name for Mount Sinai, and then continued translating. Later in the song,

And *Mutaliyar* Moshe went up the mountain,
Mutaliyar Moshe went and spoke about it.

She knew that I was already familiar with the Malayalam term *Mutaliyar*, a title given to the leader of a community, and that Kerala Jews had sometimes applied the term to their own leaders, including one of her ancestors Shelomi Mutaliyar (Solomon Hallegua). We didn't stop to discuss its unusual application in this song to Moses, who is usually called by the Hebrew title "*Moshe Rabbenu*" (Moses Our Teacher). But I must have indicated uncertainty about the meaning of the following lines:

He spoke to his brother, Aaron Hacoheh.
"Oh Moshe, receive it - into your hands."

She quickly explained that Moshe told Aaron about the Torah and Aaron said "Take it."

Then she paused two lines later, puzzling for some time over the word *kabeda*, not recognizable as Malayalam. "*Kabeda... kabeda?*" she complained:

"One word there will be to spoil the whole thing.... *Kabeda* ... Ahhhh! It became heavy! It became heavy when they saw people worshipping idols. All the words flew away and it became heavy. That's how it fell down..... It's not because [Moshe] threw it down."

Here in just a few words, Ruby Daniel first identified the Hebrew word embedded in the Malayalam text: *kaved* or heavy (with the "v" characteristically pronounced and written as "b"), noting in an aside "The trouble with *goyim* [non-Jews] is they try but they won't know [this]." She then summarized a story from *midrash* which provides the central focus of the narrative, but which could easily have been lost without an expert to decode and explain it. Moshe was able to carry the stone tablets down the mountain because the holy letters written on them made them light in weight – but only until he saw his people worshipping the golden calf, whereupon the letters flew off the tablets and he dropped them. And finally Ruby personally defended Moshe's actions, stating that he didn't intentionally throw and break the tablets, just dropped them because they suddenly became heavy, *kabeda*.⁹

Commentary as personal evaluation

In addition to her long explanations, Ruby also taught me by way of quick evaluative comments. Some of her judgments were negative, as when she read that Jacob told Joseph to go to the fields to meet his brothers, who would then throw him into a pit and sell him as a slave (III-75): “What an idiot the father was to send him!” she exclaimed impatiently. (10/22/96) Obviously the Patriarch Jacob should have known better.

As for King Ahashverosh in one of the Purim songs (III-69), why was he called “red-faced”? “Because he was a drunkard who boozed day and night,” she proclaimed. But in another Purim song “The Document Box” (III-12), when the king finally made the commendable decision to spare Mordecai and punish Haman, Ruby gave him a bit of credit: “The king was not drunk at that time, I think.” (10/22/96)

Some of her remarks showed such sympathy to the Biblical characters, it was as if she knew them personally — which in a way she did, given the timeless connection she seemed to feel with characters in all her stories, whether tales of her own ancestors or of Joseph and his brothers. In discussing how Joseph was thrown into a pit, she reminded me that Reuben had tried to save him from death. “The eldest child feels a special bond with the youngest,” she declared. Assuming a connection to her own family experience I responded, “like you and Royal”, referring to her much younger sister – and she didn’t disagree. (7/19/95)

When translating the song about how Jacob stole his father Isaac’s blessing from his brother Esau (III-3), Ruby Daniel commented:

I feel sorry for Itzhak Abinu [our father Isaac]. It seems he understood the situation... He wanted to curse Jacob, but God showed him Gehenna [hell], so he was afraid. So he blessed him as if he didn’t know.¹⁰ This is what I heard, it’s not in the song.” (6/28/95)

Apparently she had always had a special soft spot for Isaac. In the Jewish school of her Kerala childhood, she recalled:

When we learned the translation of the *parashah* [weekly portion] where it is told about Abraham sacrificing Isaac, I used to cry. Everybody made fun of me. So every time we had to study that portion, I made an excuse and did not go to the [school]. Some sixty or more years later I went to a synagogue here in Israel for Rosh Hashanah and my old Hebrew teacher was there. The *parashah* of that day was of Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Though

so many years had passed, when my teacher Eliyahu Meyer saw me, he started showing me signs with his hand, making motions for cutting the throat and shedding the tears. (Daniel and Johnson 1995:40)

Ruby’s emotional connection to the story of Abraham and Isaac emerged also as we worked on the Malayalam song entitled “Sarah-Umma” (Mother Sarah, III-14), which recounts how Sarah fell from an upper window and died when she heard Satan’s false report of her son Isaac’s death. “If you read what happens between the father and son at that time, you will cry,” Ruby said to me, adding a story that wasn’t in the song. “Isaac said ‘Take my ashes to my mother and tell her it is the ashes of her son. She can smell it. Ask her not to cry. If she cries, I will be sorry.’”¹¹ (July 1993)

Entertainment through stories about songs

Not all of Ruby Daniel’s commentary on the songs was serious. In fact some of our work sessions became quite hilarious, especially when they included her younger sister Royal (Rahel Kala), who lived in the same *kibbutz* and often dropped by while we were working. One day in July 1997 the two of them dissolved into laughter together over a song about the messianic days to come, when there will be a great feast involving the giant fish called Leviathan (II-42). What set them off was the wording of these lines:

Your servant Jacob and his children
Will cook the big fish
For the forsaken nation to eat.

Between contagious bursts of laughing they explained that these lines create an image of the giant Leviathan being fried in a pan, like the everyday act of cooking fish in a Kerala kitchen. This reminded them of another Malayalam folksong – not a Jewish one – which also involved frying a fish, and so led us to several days of significant and enjoyable discussion about their knowledge of other Kerala folksongs.

Another very entertaining conversation unfolded in October 1996 while the two sisters worked together to translate a song about Abraham, including these lines about how he proved his faith in the one God through a trial by fire (III-27):

He went quickly to the Raja
And told him:
“Ask whatever sign you want for this belief.”

So [the Raja] made a ditch of 40 *kol* length and breadth
And put a fire in it.

.....

They invited all the people of the city,
And all the people of the city came
To witness the belief that there is only one God

.....

There came an umbrella and shade.
Michael and Gabriel became [Avraham's] friends.
The king's daughter saw with her eyes.
"Vava [Father], come and see the belief."
But he cannot see.
"Then come and touch me and look."
While he was touching her and looking, he could see.

-

Then he believed in one God.
And [Avraham] was free.
All the coverings, the shirt he was wearing and his prayer shawl,
All were smelling of good musk and camphor
And all kinds of nice smells.
The Raja gave him his daughter,
"You can have my kingdom."
"No, I don't need all these things."

This is a particularly fascinating Malayalam Jewish song in its incorporation of both Hindu and Muslim themes. The king who tests Abraham's faith (not named in the song but identified by Ruby Daniel as Nimrod) makes him undergo the trial of fire-walking in a South Indian-style fire ditch rather than being thrown into the furnace that is portrayed in *midrash*. The king's daughter who sees Abraham walking in the fire is not mentioned in Jewish versions, but appears in Islamic folklore. Ruby Daniel identified her as Hagar.¹²

Though they didn't seem acquainted with the song itself, the story of Nimrod's daughter was very familiar to both Ruby and Royal, who dramatically recounted it in detail before translating the song. They moved into entertainment mode with a narrative dialogue, as I have heard other good storytellers in the community do:

Royal: The king's daughter Hagar... was looking from the window. She was always looking into that fire ditch. Because maybe she loved him, you know, so she was looking all the time, every day... And she saw that Avraham is walking in the fire, with two angels on both sides, so she called her father, "Come and see! Come and see!" So he also came and looked.

Ruby: But he can't see! She said, "You put your hand on my shoulder and look." And then he saw Avraham walking. He called, "Avraham, Avraham, come up! Your God is..."

Royal: "Your God is the biggest God. Come out, come out." So he came out. The angels disappeared.

Ruby: That I don't know. But even his clothes didn't have the smell of smoke. That's the story... And then he went away from there.

Royal: And Hagar went with him.

Ruby: "It is better to be Avraham's slave instead of your daughter."¹³

Royal: Yes, she went away with him.

Ruby: He was asked to go out of the country.

Royal: She loved him, did you see?... She went against her father. Even years before us, she went against her father. What a strong woman! A strong woman she was.

Listening on tape to Royal's praise of Nimrod's daughter, I cannot help thinking of one of the central stories in her sister's personal repertoire – a story about how their mother defied her own father (their grandfather) in order to enroll Ruby in secondary school, for which she had to travel on her own to Ernakulam every day (Daniel & Johnson 1995:45). Nimrod's daughter may have lived "even years before us", but she was praised as a similar woman of courage and strength.

As the sisters' lively and very female-centered session about the adventures of Abraham continued, the song text moved to the story of Abraham and his wife Sarah's move to Egypt. There she was taken forcibly into the palace of the Pharaoh, when her great beauty was discovered. Ruby and Royal's commentary on this development involved puns, mutual teasing and laughter about how "people go crazy when they see a beautiful woman." Again their Kerala past and the world of the Biblical ancestors were intertwined as they told me about the traditional Travancore custom of the raja's right to sleep with young women in his kingdom – Royal mentioning with a chuckle "The Raj Pramukh, he was a good-looking man." With this story their Israeli present was also included, as they described outrageous but amusing remarks made in public by Israeli soldiers about beautiful young women in their own family.

Multiple layers of songs and stories

Folklorist Richard Bauman writes about narrative or storytelling as “doubly anchored in human events” – the events that are recounted in the story and the act of narrating those events (1986:2). As we have seen, Ruby Daniel’s commentaries deal not just with doubly anchored events but with multiple layers of stories and songs. Take for example a short song about a song, and a story that is often told about the use of that song.

One of the best-known elements in the MJFS repertoire is a short refrain that is found at the conclusion of many different songs. It seems to originate from the lengthy ballad called “Joseph the Righteous” (III-30), a narrative that culminates when Joseph meets his brothers at Pharaoh’s court in Egypt. As in the Biblical story, Joseph then sends his brothers back to the land of Canaan, instructing them to tell their father Jacob that he is still alive and to bring the elderly patriarch to him in Egypt. According to *midrash*, it was a young girl, Serah Bat Asher, who gently broke the good news about Joseph to the old man, singing it to him in a song.¹⁴ In the Malayalam song about this song, the girl sings sweetly:

Ayisotte Yosef, Misriluntu

Joseph is alive and well in Egypt!
Efraim and Manasseh are with him.
Because of the dream he was praised.
Joseph is alive and well in Egypt!

This short refrain migrates from song to song, as women use it to bless a bridegroom or a bride or a child who is being circumcised. Perhaps this is because it implicitly carries a blessing of long life from Serah bat Asher, who is not even mentioned in the refrain, but who – as all the listeners were expected to know — was granted eternal life for her role in singing the blessed news to Jacob. (10/22/96)

To add another layer to this fragment of a song about the song of Serah Bat Asher, I have heard from Ruby Daniel and several other members of her community a story about how the refrain was cleverly quoted by a Jewish soldier from Kochi named Ellis, writing back to Kerala from the front in World War II. He was serving in the British Army and no one knew for sure where he was posted, until he managed to avoid the censors and communicate his whereabouts by quoting the song in a letter home:

Ayissote Ellis, Misriluntu
(Ellis is alive and well in Egypt!)

In conclusion, let me recount another multi-layered story that was passed down in Ruby Daniel’s family from the mid-19th century. It’s a story about a song about ten songs, the Malayalam clapping song with ten verses called “the Ten Songs of King Solomon” (III-1), which includes a verse about Hannah HaNeviyah [the prophetess]. King Solomon’s “ten songs” about different Biblical personages are often referred to in *midrashic* literature, but the rabbis did not agree about exactly which events were commemorated in the ten songs.¹⁵

Ruby Daniel’s story about this song concerns a respected ancestor Benaya Benjamin, her grandmother’s uncle, who moved to Bombay before Ruby was born. There he kept a lodging house for learned men who traveled to India from the land of Israel. One day they were having a scholarly discussion and came to a disagreement about these *midrashic* songs of King Solomon.

“There are ten songs,” Ruby pointed out to me. “Ten generations and for each [generation and verse] one person.”

So the sixth was Hannah and after Hannah comes Dvorah HaNeviyah, and these people didn’t know which [came first, Hannah or Dvorah]. They had to look into a book to see. So my uncle said “Let me ask my wife.” He called her and at once she said “It is Hannah HaNeviyah.” They asked, “How is she such a learned person? And he explained how [the women] learned all these songs.... And they know more than the men! (10/21/96)

When Ruby Daniel concluded, “they know more than the men!” it wasn’t clear whether she was quoting her great great uncle Benaya, or her grandmother, who very likely told her the story about Benaya’s wife. Perhaps she was simply giving her own assessment of the meaning of the story, but I think other voices can be heard in the telling.

Folklorist Kirin Narayan has written a book about the stories told by another Indian woman, a Hindu from the Himalayan foothills named Urmila Devi Sood. Narayan notes how the very telling of the stories connects Urmila with the people from whom she learned them – how her stories are “pervaded with the presence of ... people death had taken away.” (1997:21)

At the beginning of this paper I called Ruby Daniel a remarkable woman. Indeed she was unique in many ways, not least in the pivotal role she was able to play in the project of saving the MJFS from extinction when almost her entire community migrated to Israel – moving much further from the land of Kerala and Malayalam than did Benaya Benjamin

and his wife a century earlier when they left Fort Cochin for the bustling city of Bombay.

Ruby Daniel must also be seen as a representative of many generations of Kerala Jewish song experts and storytellers - her grandmother and Benaya's wife and the great great great aunt in Fort Cochin (who was also Benaya's aunt) and the grandmothers and aunties of Jewish families in all the communities of Kerala. It was through the intertextuality of their songs and stories that the timeless mythical world of Bible and *midrash* was set free from the pages of written text (represented here in footnotes), to become a living part of Kerala's multicultural folk literature.

Notes :

- 1 *Midrash* is the Hebrew term for a vast compilation of rabbinic commentaries on Biblical texts, including additional stories about people and events from the Bible, which were composed between the 3rd and 12th centuries. Some *midrash* is included in the collection of rabbinic writing known as *Talmud*, and some is collected and edited in separate books. See Hasan-Rokem 2000 for discussion of folkloric elements in *midrash*.
- 2 Labeled BZM9, this notebook is notable not only for its age, but also for its use of an older style of Malayalam script. See Daniel & Johnson 1995:3,25,31, 174-5 for more on Rachel Japheth.
- 3 For example, women of the Japheth/Daniel family participated in the Hanukkah dance parties hosted by Kadavumbhagam women, where other Paradesi women and girls came to watch but didn't dance. In fact they hosted one of these parties every year on Ruby Daniel's birthday.
- 4 In Kochi the boys and girls studied together, whereas in other Kerala Jewish communities they were taught in separate classes, and in most traditional Jewish communities throughout the world – until recently – girls were not educated in Hebrew and Torah at all. Kerala's long history of female literacy in general (Jeffrey 1992) should be considered an important factor in appreciating its well-educated Jewish women.
- 5 Sassoon's *Ohel David* (1932) lists many Hebrew books and texts collected in Kerala, and there are early records of Hebrew books being brought from Yemen and Amsterdam. Though many of the old books were lost, given away or sold with emigration to Israel, it would be helpful to catalogue those remaining with the Hallegua family in Kochi, and with other families in Israel.
- 6 P.M. Jussay of Ernakulam is a retired newspaper editor and professor of English who was actively involved in translating and analyzing MJFS in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He also worked with multiple texts, including all those that the late Israeli anthropologist Shirley Isenberg and I had collected up to then. In addition to writing a number of articles about the Kerala Jews and their songs (e.g. Jussay 1986), Jussay established a

cross-index for all the songs, creating the framework for an index which is continually revised as more notebooks are discovered.

- 7 Ginzberg II:270.
- 8 This translation is a more recent version of the one Ruby Daniel worked out in 1999, finalized in consultation with Scaria Zacharia. (Johnson 2004:60-61)
- 9 Ginzberg VI:54, n.279 identifies a number of midrashic sources for the story of the letters flying off the tablets and indicates rabbinical speculation about Moshe's motivations in breaking them, but does not cite any argument that they just slipped out of his hands. His summary of the story (III: 129) indicates that Moshe actively broke the tablets.
- 10 Ginzberg I::337-378.
- 11 Ginzberg I:280.
- 12 Ginzberg (I,198-203,216-217;V,212-213) gives many stories of Abraham and the fire in the furnace. In one version Nimrod gives Avraham his slave Eliezer, but none mention Nimrod's daughter. For Islamic versions see Lowin 2003, an authoritative study on Abraham stories in Islamic and Jewish sources which finds no mention of Nimrod's daughter in the classical texts (Lowin, personal communication 1/24/06).
A story of Nimrod's daughter and Abraham's trial by fire – though not identical to that in the Malayalam song – is summarized in a travel guide's description of the sacred pool recalling her memory in Sanliurfa Turkey (<http://www.guide-martine.com/southeastern2.asp#sanliurfa>), but I have not yet located a textual source. I hope that scholars of Muslim folklore in Kerala may be able to shed light on this motif.
Hagar is identified in *Midrash* as the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, who gave her as a slave to Sarah or to Abraham. Ginzberg I:223, V:231.
- 13 Here Ruby Daniel has Hagar speaking a version of the words attributed in *midrash* to her father the Egyptian Pharaoh. Ginzberg I:223.
- 14 Ginzberg II:115-116
- 15 Ginzberg VI:10.

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NAMYA MOTTA

Marcia Walerstein

In the old Jewish cemetery of Cochin is a large whitewashed grave with a Hebrew inscription translated as follows:

Here rests the remains of
The famous cabbalists,
The influence of the light of whose learning
Shines throughout the country
The perfect sage, the Chassid and
God-fearing Nehemiah the son of
the dear Rabbi and Sage Abraham Motta
Our Master departed this life on
Sunday, the 25th of Kislev, 5736 (1615)
May his soul rest in peace. (L. Rabinowitz, 1952:126).

For the Malabar Cochin Jews the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month Kislev, which also is the first day of Hanukkah, became a day of pilgrimage to the grave of this revered man. Among the Jews of Cochin in India and Israel, Rav Nehemiah Motta, or Namya, as the Cochinites call him, is the only past spiritual leader within the community to be revered in such a manner. His grave is the only place which is considered a source of miracles.

This grave is described as "a mecca not only for Jews, but for Hindus and Christians" (Rabinowitz, 1952:125), according to both oral and written descriptions. The Syrian Christians, with the permission of the Jews, affix a cheap oil lamp to the large gravestone. His grave in Cochin is still considered a source of miracles by many Christians, now that most of the Jews have departed. An analysis of the customs, beliefs, and feelings of the Cochinites toward Namya Motta, however, underplay his role as miracle worker and instead reveal an attitude of reverence to a great spiritual leader, a mediator between God and the Cochin community, a tsaddik or righteous man.

The name of Namya's memorial ceremony (*choruda* in Malayalam, *neder* in Hebrew, or oath in English) implies that it is a popular custom which requires one to swear to donate food, money and other gifts to the community in order to receive 'help' from the spiritual world in combating disease, increasing fertility, or in response for having already received benevolence.

The celebration of the memorial day for Namya Motta and the customs and belief which accompany it reveal how the Cochin community expressed and continues to express the following relationships between various aspects of the cult: (1) between legend and belief surrounding the individual, (2) between legend and belief surrounding the power of the grave, (3) between folk belief of this type and its validation in Jewish mysticism, and (4) between interethnic beliefs and relations, both in India and in Israel.

In addition, this essay will explore persistence and change in ritual and belief in Namya Motta as performed in *moshavim* in Israel during the 1970s in comparison to the patterns of such practices in India by Malabar Jews before their immigration. My thesis is that this ceremony, although diminishing in importance and simpler in ritual than in Cochin, continues to have an important function within the community. Particularly in times of crisis. I see a paradox in the continuity in that, while on the one hand the customs continue precisely because Namya is considered a great and pious man without specific supernatural elements attributed to him, on the other hand it is also being strengthened by parallel customs among neighboring ethnic groups which do stress the supernatural.

THE POPULAR IMAGE OF NAMYA MOTTA

Namya Motta is the patron saint of the Malabar Jewish community. Members of the Paradesi community do not celebrate his memorial day although individuals, particularly women, are known even in the present period, to visit his grave, offer prayers, and tend the gravesite (Johnson 1985:184-5). It is Malabar Jews who claim Namya as belonging to their *jati*, or communal division of the Cochin Jews.

Although narratives and rituals showed that Namya was and is revered, honored, remembered, and called upon for spiritual help, I noticed, while attempting to collect the oral traditions connected with the life of Namya Motta, that descriptions of supernatural events associated with his life were conspicuous almost by their total absence. Tales of holy men and their graves as holy places and sources of miracles are not unusual in India (Mandelbaum 1970:411-412), in Middle Eastern, or Hassidic Jewish communities (Ben-Ami 1981, Ben-Jacob 1973, Dshen

1974, Voinot 1948). Particularly in Morocco, legends abound about miracles attributed to the graves of holy rabbis (see Ben-Ami 1981:283-344).[1]

However, few legends of Motta's life contain any supernatural element. Rather than stressing his miraculous nature, Cochini informants described Namya Motta to me mainly as a great rabbi, a religious poet, and the author of many of the hymns the Cochins sing in their book they call 'kolas'. In fact, according to one member of the White community, the term 'kolas' was given to the songs by Motta himself (interview 10.16.84). Other informants have been more specific and have attributed to him certain additional High Holiday prayers which the communities include in their service and have been reprinted (Yehoshua ca. 1960). Motta's authorship of these prayers is evidenced by the common acrostic style of signature, in which the letters of the author's name are used as the first letters of each line of the hymn. Davidson (1970 4:452) attributes six of the hymns in the Cochin liturgy to Motta, including one for the period of blowing the *shofar* (ram's horn) during the High Holidays (Davidson 3:245).

Legends of power emanating from Motta's grave, however, are more characteristic of folk narratives and folk beliefs found in other Jewish and Indian sources. Ben Eliahu, for example, claims that no one dares touch Rav Namya Motta's grave. Members of the community have related to me more graphically what happens to those who dare desecrate the site — one man bent down near the grave and was paralyzed in that position and died (see also Johnson 1985:214). He was drunk, however, the other informants assured me. Similarly, when an attempt was made to destroy the cemetery and build there, anyone who tried to construct was struck down and died (interview 10.27.75).

The most common description of the power of the grave is that it is 'cold' all the time, summer or winter (although I was there in the winter when it was about 75 degrees F. outside, and the grave did not seem 'cold' to me at all). It was, however, carefully tended, and apparently continues to be so. When I observed it in 1980, it was neatly whitewashed in white and blue. A slide shown to me a few years later by the researcher Barbara Johnson showed that it had been repainted completely in white, with the inscription still intact.

Another custom was to pray to Namya after the birth of a child, asking that benevolence be shown to the child. It is important to note, however, that almost all the Jews I spoke to hastened to mention that it was the Christians who were the most fervent believers in the power of supplications at his grave not they.

LEGENDS ON THE LIFE OF NAMYA MOTTA

According to one source, Namya came from another country, taught at Ernakulam, and married a woman from Parur, but had no descendants (interview 10.12.74). The lack of progeny is justified through the following legend:

Namya Motta was a great genius, who travelled far throughout the area, sometimes for a day, sometimes longer. He was married, but one time he came back just before the Sabbath, unexpectedly on Sabbath eve. When he returned he did not want to fulfill the mitsvah or deed of having sexual relations with his wife, (though the period of Sabbath eve is according to kabbalistic belief, the holiest and most meritorious time for marital relations {Patai 1983:65}) his wife had not prepared herself at the mikveh {ritual bath}. So the relations did not take place. Shortly after this he died at an early age.

Various members listening argued whether Namya’s age was thirty-five or forty-five at the time of his death; none refuted this legend, however (interview 1.27.75).[2]

Namya was also reputed to be able to get from one place to another instantaneously (Johnson 1985:214: interview 10.27.75). No other legends about Namya Motta’s life have supernatural elements. Another informant from Parur related that he had been told that Namya Motta passed much of his life in Parur where his wife had resided. Once Motta was jailed for some minor infringement of the law, but was let out at night. It was during this period in jail that he wrote many of the hymns that were attributed to him. These included the additional prayers used on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and which were privately printed by the narrator of these incidents since they had not been included in the larger versions of kolas printed in Israel (Yehoshua, ca . 1960).

THE RITUAL CHORUDA IN ISRAEL AND IN INDIA

The memorial day for Namya Motta, as stated, is the twenty-fifth of the Hebrew month of Kislev. I discovered this custom by asking about special customs for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which begins on this date. The first ceremony I attended was held in a private home in the settlement of Ta’oz in 1974. It was explained to me that one who had made an oath on Namya’s name would supply the place and some food, and others who had also made an oath would supply food in quantities of twenty-one, such as twenty-one pieces of chicken or the

rice and coconut juice pancakes, kalapomb. I was also told that on the preceding year, which was two months after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, so many members wanted to participate in the rite that it was held in the synagogue, instead of in a home.

In the event I observed, the men were in the main room, while the women stayed in the back room and ate later, as was the usual custom in home ceremonies. Rav Namyah was blessed with a special prayer in his memory. This is the general memorial Jewish prayer for a ‘great man’ (tov shem). A glass of sugar water, which I was told was for the dead, was on the table; (however, another leader of the community told me this was “incorrect” as a custom – sugar water was for the memorial of one who recently died, given during the seven mourning days when it is believed that the soul still has not yet been judged and is wavering between heaven and earth).

After the blessing, kalapomb (rice pancakes), chicken and strong alcoholic beverages, which are common at Cochini ceremonies, were distributed. Everyone was expected to partake of at least one item of food from those who had brought it, as this was part of the concept of choruda or oath. Partaking of the food of one who makes an oath, ensures the donor having fulfilled his duty.

Hymns were sung, although the celebrants told me they did not sing songs believed to have been written by Motta. I was told that when he died, he asked the people not to be sad, and so they celebrated his death and the memorial day in this manner.

Another memorial ceremony, which I attended a few years later at Nevatim, was similar except that it was given by one of the eldest in the village whose grandson, a young boy of six or seven was congenitally ill. Again, people brought food in sets of twenty-one pieces and the child received a blessing in the name of Namya Motta. At the same time, another ceremony took place in another house in the settlement, which was visited by younger members, although for the most part it was the over-forty generation who attended. The ceremony was held in the early afternoon, and for those who worked outside the settlement it would entail taking time off from work.

In comparison to the ritual in Cochin, these home rituals were only part of what occurred there, since in Israel there could be no pilgrimages to the grave in Cochin, where I was told ‘thousands’ participated (although the Jewish community barely numbered two thousand). In Parur, the event was held in the courtyard of the synagogue, not in private homes. Unlike the Moroccan immigrants (see Ben-Ami 1981; Deshen and Shokeid 1974) who have exhibit a psychic, social or reli-

gious 'need' to replace their pilgrimages to graves in Morocco with new destinations in Israel, the Cochini have not developed an alternative place in Israel to the grave in Cochin as a pilgrimage destination. The writer and publisher Ben Eliahu has made an appeal to bring Namy's grave to the Holy Land. This attempt was also attributed to one of the former emissaries from Israel who helped arrange their Cochini immigration, but I have not heard this matter seriously discussed by others. The Cochini usually do not participate in the pilgrimage to Meron, the reputed grave of Shimon Bar Yochai which usually attracts tens of thousands on the holiday of Lag B'omer, which they call 'Lag'. However, they do perform a memorial oath ritual in their own community that night.

The revival cult of hilullot which was happening all over Moroccan immigrant communities in Israel in the mid-seventies and eighties has had some influence on the Cochini communities, however. Although their reluctance in the past to discuss the belief in miracles may be related to their transition to a so-called modern, rational approach towards life, there are presently other cultural actors which influence the community. This is evident by the following episode which was narrated to me, as having occurred in 1981.

While interviewing the wife of the informant from Parur who told me of the legend of Namy's stay in jail (which had no element of the supernatural in his narration), I asked how they celebrated his day in Parur and in her moshav in Israel. She related that in Israel they had continued the memorial for some time in their settlement but then it had died out:

Then, however, something happened. That year the local rabbi {from a neighboring settlement which is inhabited by Moroccans from the Berber speaking High Atlas Mountain region} came to us and said he had had a dream. In the dream a man with a long white beard came to him and said he was Nehemia Motta. He asked why the people here don't honor him? "In my life I never heard of Nehemiah Motta", the rabbi said, so he came to this settlement to ask who he was. So we felt we had to do this ceremony or something bad would happen (interview 2.18.1982).

It is noteworthy that the one who hosted the ceremony at his home was relatively young and according to her had never made such an oath before. [4]

Motifs such as an old man with a white beard and dreams understood as messages from a holy man are typical of the validation system in North African Jewish folk belief (Ben-Ami 1981: 283). Since the two

communities had been neighbors for over twenty years and the rabbi would have had occasion to visit the Cochini settlement frequently, it is highly questionable that he had never heard of Nehemiah Motta. This narration validated the belief in the power of these holy men and left a feeling of guilt in those who did not continue the rituals.

This narration and the revitalization of a dying custom, exemplify the manner in which the Cochini are influenced not only by the powerful Israeli influence of modernism and rationalism on one hand, and official Rabbinic orthodoxy on the other, but also by the popular beliefs of their neighbors, regardless of the latter's status. People from the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco are generally less educated and less western than the Cochini. The Cochini are seen as more educated and more successful (ha-Sachnut ha-Yehudit 1984) however, they do not have their own rabbi certified by the Israel religious authorities.

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTINUING ROLE OF HONOR AND BELIEF IN NAMYA MOTTA AMONG COCHINI JEWS IN ISRAEL

Narrations as Traditional Legendary Configurations

The legends about Namy Motta reveal certain universal characteristics of legendary heroes (Raglan 1956). Raglan and others have noted that the hero comes as a stranger. On Motta's grave there is no mention of his birthplace, yet one author (Rabinowitz 1952:126) and some informants claimed that he was from Yemen. I was also told by informants that he was from Babylonia, the Land of Israel (Palestine), Turkey and Morocco. Although the name, Motta, may have a Spanish or Italian derivative, I was also informed that there were Motta families in Yemen. The surname Nehemiah is very rare in Yemen, however; according to a local tradition, the Yemenites were cursed by the prophets Nehemiah and Ezra because they did not return to Zion after the first exile. Therefore, they do not use these names. Conversely, it is a common name for Jews from the Iraqi region, and a very common name in Cochin among the Malabari Jews.

Although it is quite probable that a rabbi-poet, particularly one described as a kabbalist, would be from one of the larger centers of Judaism (which the above communities were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), the element of strangeness adds to the greatness of his life and to the supernatural element. Legends claim he came from some other country, but his poetry is printed under the name Nehemiah, son of Abraham only in the Cochin Hymn books, according to the thesaurus of Hebrew hymns (Davidson 1970 4:452).

Jewish Mystical Beliefs: Their Relation to Legend

Both the concept of a memorial *hillulah*, which actually means wedding festivity (Deshen 1974:96), and the tale of Motta's death may have kabbalistic interpretations. According to Deshen, the kabbalistic concept of a holy man's memorial brings on the emergence of redemption and this is like a wedding or *hillulah*. Similarly the legend of the death of Namyia as a result of not performing the commandment of intercourse with his wife on Sabbath eve should be understood within certain Jewish mystical concepts. According to R. Patai (1983:64-67), the *Zohar*, or kabbalistic Book of Splendor expresses a mythic marriage between the king Metatron and the Matronite who was his sister. This is not an incestuous union, since "up above there is no incest," (Patai 1983:64). Matronite symbolizes the people of Israel. The king and Matronite have a marriage which is consummated every night at midnight, or on Sabbath eve, when, it was explained, it is considered a great deed. According to the *Zohar*,

When the pious of Israel copulate with their wives on Friday night, this, it was taught, brings about a joyous union between the King and Matronite, which gives birth to angels and human souls (Patai 1983:65).

Thus, the omission of such a custom could indeed be believed to have dire consequences. This belief then, could provide a rationalization for Motta's untimely death.

Another interpretation of this legend is that it offered an explanation for the seeming lack of progeny of this rabbi. No one has the family name "Motta" in Cochin, nor have known records or interviews ever revealed anyone who claimed him as an ancestor. The lack of progeny of this great man may be "explained" by this legend of violation of the sexual commandment.

The Memorial as Anxiety-Reducing or Anxiety-Enhancing

The occurrence of these memorial celebrations supports the functionalist thesis of Malinowsky (1948 71-71, 79-82) that such rituals are anxiety-reducing to the community. Since it is those who are troubled through illness in the family, anxiety over sons in the army, etc., who prepare the *choruda* (oath), it would seem that the ritual is anxiety-reducing. The people who participate in the ritual offer support to the individual in time of stress. The belief in a mediator between this world and the abstract God offers a respite from the more stringent aspects of Judaism.

Although the general trend seems to show a lapse in this tradition – there were years when I could not find the ritual being performed, the practice gains support in times of stress, such as the frequent war years in Israel. Cross-cultural contact also influenced the performances of these customs, so that conversely, the lack of its ritual performance or respect given to the holy man was anxiety-enhancing. This thesis is supported by an examination of both the legends of dire consequences to those who desecrated his grave, and the statement that it would be detrimental if the ritual were not performed after one Cochini settlement's Moroccan rabbi neighbor offered a strong hint that it should be performed. These narratives reflect the concept of duty which is inherent in the custom of *choruda*, and the fear of negative consequences if the ritual were not carried out.

Interethnic Support of the Belief

Belief in miraculous powers from the grave of a holy man was common in the Jewish environment in the Middle East, particularly in North Africa, and also among Hassidim in Europe. Near Safed, in Israel, the holiday of Lag Ba'omer annually draws about one hundred thousand visitors to the reputed grave of Shimon Bar Yochai, erroneously believed to be the author of the *Zohar*. In India, pilgrimages to holy graves and iconographic sites are also common (Mandelbaum 1982:228). As related in Cochin, the Christians and other religious groups helped buttress the ritual and belief. In Israel, by the late seventies and early eighties, the Moroccan Jews were encouraging the Cochinites to continue their parallel custom. Within this context. It is not the belief in the powers of the dead which is unusual, but the low-keyed tone of the event. This is, however, characteristic of the Cochinites' general quiet, reserved nature.

Performing an Oath

The concept of an oath, *neder*, is not unusual in Jewish folk tradition. The Cochinites, like many other Jewish groups, also may make an oath which is enacted on Saturday night in the name of Elijah the prophet. Elijah the prophet is called upon to usher in the week at the *havdalah* ceremony which divides the Sabbath from the rest of the week.[4] They may also make an oath annually at Lag Ba'omer in the name of Shimon Bar Yochai. In each case a promise is made to distribute food, and thus is obligatory for the participants to partake of that food, in a form of "communitas" (Turner 1974:201). Otherwise the person who made his vow cannot fulfill it, and therefore may not get any supernatural aid. Eating is a way of intaking the blessing; it is believed this blessing passes through the food.

A significant marker in the ceremony is the use of sum of twenty-one for objects distributed. Twenty-one may be seen as simply a large 'lucky' number, made up of multiples of seven and three, both traditionally considered lucky numbers. Apparently the use of twenty-one is not restricted solely to the Jews in the area of Cochin.

Twenty-one or even forty-two are common symbolic numbers in India.[5] In a Syrian Christian wedding Twenty-one pieces of bread are distributed to priests by the bridegroom (Anantakrishna Ayyar 1926:81). In addition, one of the Cochini spiritual leaders gave me an explanation of the number in terms of gematria or the Jewish custom of interpreting Hebrew words according to the numerical value of its letters (EJ 1971:7, vi, 369-372). Twenty-one in Hebrew is Ehyeh. While in Modern Hebrew this simply means, "I will be", one of the traditionally learned men of the community explained to me that this word meant "You will be saved from troubles". This future form of the verb "to be" is used in the answer God gives to Moses from the burning bush, when Moses asks for a sign. The reply from God is Ehyeh asher Ehyeh (I will be that which I will be) (Exodus 3:14). This emic explanation through gematria, which gives the number twenty-one significant spiritual meaning, was, however, offered to me only by the one person considered by the people of Ernakulam residing in Israel to be their rabbi.[6]

The Memorial as an Ethnic cultural event

The older generation of Cochini are highly orthodox Jews. By honoring one of their own, and remembering him as a great religious poet and a learned man, they validate their own religious cultural heritage. In Israel, however, the event seems to be relatively culturally conservative or even static. I did not notice that this ceremony became a focus of continuing artistic creativity in the form of music, poetry, etc., in the community; nor did it become the focus of a fund-raising event for synagogues or community buildings, although both these patterns were evident in the Moroccan *hilulot* revivals I witnessed in the early seventies (Ben-Ami 1981). The memorial customs were also not integrated into the more reflexive ceremonies of the Cochin community – primarily designed for outsiders – as were elements of the wedding and Simchat Torah. The only exception to this is a print of a photo of the grave found on a small pamphlet about the synagogues of India (Ben Eliahu 1978).

The legends and rituals surrounding Namya Motta, like so many other communal customs, provide immediate, local comfort for the individuals and the community partaking in it. In Cochin this ritual

symbolized their connections with the Jewish world beyond the seas, the kabbalistic teachings of a holy man believed to have powers in the heavenly world, but who also left them a cultural legacy the Malabar Jews still use. In Israel the ceremony continues to function for the individual in a manner similar to the way it did in India, but the cultural symbols now reflect the memories of the Cochini's own local traditions of communal life and cultural patterns in their distant former dwelling place of Cochin.

Notes

1. This evaluation is also based on observations during the period I was participating in the Israel Folklore Research Project on ritual and belief in Israel of Moroccan (Jewish) holy men, under the direction of Prof. I. Ben-Ami (1973-74).
2. It is noteworthy to compare this with another legend printed by Rabinowitz (1952:128) about a memorable Polish rabbi named Joffe who came to Cochin around the turn of the twentieth century. This legend also deals with the sexual aspects of his life. According to Rabinowitz, a woman claimed to be Joffe's wife, stating she knew of marks on his body which only a wife could identify. He was willing to be examined, at which time they discovered he was only an impotent hermaphrodite.
This legend seemed somewhat incongruous and puzzling, even more since it was published in a book by the then Chief Rabbi of South Africa. When I was in Cochin, I asked the head of the Cochin Jewish community about the narration. Although he claimed that he had narrated it to Rabinowitz, he offered no information as to its meaning. It is possible that the legend reflects an Indian concept of a hermaphrodite as a whole, complete person (this interpretation was offered to me by Prof. David Shulman).
3. The something 'bad' that would happen, it turned out, was based on my informants hearing me speak at a community event at which I related the legends of interdictions to those who violated the sacred space of the grave.
4. Elijah the Prophet has a special cultural configuration to the Bene Israel Jews residing in the Konkon and Bombay areas of India and this has continued in Israel (Weil 1977). This configuration did not exist in Cochin, however.
5. I thank M. Helstien for this information.
6. There is a midrash or legendary explanation concerning the custom of ultimate forgiveness on the holiday Hoshana Rabba.

Why was that promise given particularly to Abraham: The rabbis reply that God said, "One of many names is Ehyeh, the numerical value of the letters which add up to twenty-one. You, Abraham are the twenty-first generation from Adam. I will designate the twenty-first day of the month of

Tishri as a day of forgiveness (from Sefer ha Tod'a'ah: Vol. 1:121, Minhage Yeshua 112, quoted in Chill 1967:234-235).

While this midrash may seem irrelevant to explaining the custom of twenty-one objects, it is, I believe, relevant to understanding the explanation given by the traditional elder.

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The Vigil Night Songs

Ophira Gamliel

Kerala Jews used to celebrate weddings in a grand manner for two weeks, during which several rituals were designed in preparation for the event itself. There are some differences in the customs of Paradesi and Malabari Jews (Jussay, 2005:93-104). For example, the Malabari custom to celebrate the wedding on Tuesday as opposed to the Paradesis celebrating it on Sunday. The Malabaris would have on Sunday, that is two days before the wedding itself, a celebration called *Kāppu Rātri*, “The Vigil Night” (Walerstein, 1987:99-100; Jussay, 2005:97-98).¹ I believe that the Vigil Night is an elaboration upon the engagement ceremony, a design for warding off the evil eye and for bestowing blessings upon the bridal couple. The secondary literature concerning the *Kāppu Rātri* is rather limited,² so I shall mainly discuss the songs to be sung during the occasion.

It would have been difficult to identify the Vigil Night songs, had there not been found in notebook B9³ a list of songs to be sung for the event on pages 80-81. The list corresponds more or less to the order of songs in some notebooks, which contain most of the songs listed in B9, with some variation in selection. There is also a textual marker inherent in the songs themselves; the word *kāṇavvē*,⁴ “Behold!” marks the ending of each verse of most of the Vigil Night songs. Sometimes a title would specify this or that song as a *Kāppu Rātri* song. In many of the notebooks, the songs appear in one running sequence, as in S14, B9, S11, B11, B30 and T1. None of these is from the Paradesi community, and understandably so, as the Vigil Night is a Malabari custom. Some Vigil Night songs do appear occasionally in Paradesi notebooks, apparently for other performative functions, and I was using them as a tool in my efforts to textualize and make sense of the songs.

The relationship between the notebooks in matters of sequence, selection of and giving titles to songs is interesting and important, yet I shall set aside this issue for the time being in favor of reading selected verses that might contribute to understanding of the Vigil Night.

Before turning to some readings and analysis, I would like to introduce two major points of reference, or parameters, essential for the analysis and the consequent hypothesis, which I wish to present below. One is the presence of linguistic markers betraying performative functions such as deictics (f.i. *i, inṅu*), tempo-spatial adverbs (f.i. *ippol, aṅṅu*), certain modus and tense categories (f.i. the imperative, the present tense), first and second person pronouns (*nān, nāṁ, niṅṅa*) and other shifters peculiar to Malayalam such as honorifics and inclusive/exclusive categories.⁵ The second parameter is based on isolating and defining “content layers”. Many songs have a complex thematic structure involving different content layers, intertwined so as to render a specific song or verse very difficult to understand. When, for example, a few lines or a verse spell out a narrative unit, these might form a content layer defined as narrational, as opposed to, say, an invocation to God, or reported direct speech of a character, which would then be defined as invocational and dramatic respectively.

The two parameters presented above are intimately related, as sometimes a linguistic marker would be the only hint for a content-layer shift. There are some minor parameters such as poetical effects (f.i. metre, rhyme, alliteration), lexemes (f.i. Hebrew words, Ancient Malayalam words, Tamilisims, archaisms, obscure words, forms or phrases), internal glossing and editing represented by and in the different variants, and a general sense of deciphering process required for making a sense out of ostensibly a mere chain of syllables, not only for the outsider researcher but also for the transcribers of the notebooks themselves, as is indeed evident upon examining the variants and their relation to each other. Let me emphasize that the latter are minor parameters only as far as it concerns the present discussion, as I shall use them in a limited way and for definite aims. They are nevertheless essential for a more comprehensive research.

The first song⁶ in the Vigil Night is II-61.⁷ The number of verses varies from five to ten. There are at least three content layers in this song: (1) Narrative contents, mainly concerned with events regarding

2a-d has no clear linguistic marker to support the claim that it frames content layer (3) of immediate context. It is on basis of the previous verses, as the third exemplified above, that we might sense the progress from content layer (1) narrativel to (3) immediate context, faintly marked with the infinitive of purpose and the form *kāṇavvē* sealing the whole verse. There is also some semantic evidence for that conveyed by the negative participle *pokātē*, “without going”, which suggests an invitation for the “pious people” gathered to stay and enjoy the feasting alluded to in 2a. By the time we reach the last line of the song (tenth verse appearing only in S14, S11, and T1), the invitation is plainly marked by a polite imperative (non-finite + *kōllām*):

ūṇarāyil kkōṇṭa poyi irinnu kōllāvu.

Please get into the dining room and be seated there.¹⁶

Before we turn to the next song in the sequence, let us examine the first, and problematic, verse. The first two lines of this verse are a good example for the “liquid” state of the whole song, owing to the multi-layered thematic structure. Comparison of the different variants results in two different readings, which depend on different possible interpretations of the verb *camakkuka*, and subsequently on different possible complementation of subject and object. It is not only the modern scholar who faces the need to textualize such songs according to speculated contextual meaning. Upon comparing the different variants, it is apparent that the transcribers, and indeed the performers as well, were struggling to produce intelligible lines during the process of transcribing the songs. A good example is the first two lines of the song, which appear as two different reconstructed readings.

Reading A:

mānavuṃ bhayavuṃ mikk¹⁷ uḷḷat eḷḷām /a/ māṛātē kaṇṭu
ccamapputuṃ cēytu//b//1

Reading B:

mānavuṃ mayyavuṃ dikk uḷḷat eḷḷām /a/ māṛātē kaṇṭu
ccamapputuṃ cēytu//b//1¹⁸

Reading A:

With so much of pride and fear unaltered, [it] has been composed.

Reading B:

Sky, water and all the directions - changelessly [He] had created them.

As is evident, 1b in Malayalam is the same in both readings, while 1a, listing the nouns as direct objects for the following verbs, is slightly altered in reading B. This change affects both the understanding of the syntactic relations of nouns and verbs, as well as the completion of a subject hidden beneath the context surface, and added in brackets to the translation. The result is two different content layers, both possible and fitting for the song as a whole. Reading B, though, slightly deviates from an alliteration pattern of repeated labials by giving *dikku* instead of *bikku* or *mikku*.

The meaning of the verb *camakkuka* is generally “to prepare”, for example a literary composition, as in *veda-vyāsan ... camaccu bhāgavatam*, “Vedavyāsan has composed the Bhāgavatam”.¹⁹ In this sense the above verse might refer to the context content layer (3) in way of metapoetic statement, and the completion of subject and object might be of the poet and the composition respectively. However, *camakkuka* might also mean “creating the world” in Jewish Malayalam (Jussay, 2005:120), and so the completion of a subject might be God, He, which would then render the line fitting into content layer (1), a founding event in the world’s history, i.e. the creation. Isn’t it an auspicious way to start a wedding song by referring to creation? Once these two options are taken into account, the nouns listed in the first line might be read in the two different ways given above. In this case, we have no linguistic markers that might help us to judge in favor of reading A or B, though the past tense does give more weight to the latter.²⁰ These two different readings are a result of the interwoven content layers governing the song as a whole. The lexical items listed in the first line of each reading suits the metre as well as the alliteration scheme, and this enables the fluidity of their meaning - *mānaṃ / vānaṃ* (pride / sky), *bhayaṃ / mayyaṃ* (fear / *mayyim*,²¹ Hebrew for “water”), *mikk / dikk* (so much of / direction). The negative participle *māṛātē* might refer either to the noun list preceding it or to the subject, depending on the way we interpret the two lines unit; if we take the subject to be the poet (and subsequently each performer thereof), the negative participle must refer back to the list of emotions, accompanying the poet (and the performers) in the attempt to produce a good literary composition (and a successful performance). On the other hand, if we take this two line unit as alluding to creation, it is the subject that governs the negative participle. Though it is indeed tempting to embrace reading B, we have yet to look into the

next *Kāppu Rātri* song, to see that reading A might still be the more relevant of the two.

The next song we shall read, IV-16, is not listed in B9. It consists of one single verse, and is taken in some notebooks as a prologue for III-52.²² Since it is marked by *kānavvē* as the other Vigil Night songs, I take it as an integral part of the series. This one single verse is abundant with linguistic markers directed at the immediate context, content layer (3) of the Vigil Night:

*ippaḷḷē cēyṭat ḍrikkale uḷḷu/a/ imbamāy keṭṭu kuṛikkōḷvōr āka//b//
epoḷum ī makaḷ tanne tuṇayā/c/ ekānta-nerattu kāvalum
tannu//d//1*

Now it is done, once and for all.
Listen delightfully and remember!
Always help this very girl,
Protecting her when she is alone.

The first word leaves no room for any other interpretation; the immediate situation is referred to by the temporal adverb, *ippol*, “now”. Next comes a series of imperatives in the familiar form (which is the usual address to God in all Indian languages), *keṭṭu kuṛikkōḷvōr āka* and *tuṇaya*, “listen and be attentive” and “help”, which set a functional frame for the text, that is asking God to protect the bride, deictically represented by *ī*, “this”, and emphasized by *tannē*, “itself”. Thus we encounter a new content layer (5) of invocational character marked by the familiar imperative form and intimately connected to content layer (3), the immediate context.

With the next line, we move on to another content layer, not exactly narrational, and not exactly directed to the immediate context. I think it has a kind of a representational function marked by the adverb *ippaṭi*, “in this manner”, and by the mention of *sātikki*, “the righteous one”, i.e. Joseph (whose story is about to unfold in the following verses):

*tappātē cātrattiḷḷ²³ ippaṭi ccēyṭu/a/ sātikkiyumu tanna camattāy²⁴
kōṇṭu//b//
appanmār mūvērum cēyṭu savvōtā/c/ aruḷālē ākkampēr²⁵ ēllām
kānavvē//d//2*

[He] did thus unflinching according to the scriptures.²⁶
Joseph²⁷ himself had acquired dexterity.

The three fathers²⁸ cheered.²⁹
By [Your] blessing all are contented.³⁰ Behold!

I believe that this verse is a prologue for the next song, III-52 because of its invocational content layer (5), the fleeting reference to Joseph, the protagonist of III-52, and the phrase *ippaṭi cēyṭu*, which builds up an expectation for a story to unfold.

Song III-52 consists of five verses in most notebooks. Some, however, have five more, which will amount to ten verses.³¹ Upon reading the first verse the repetition of *kānavvē*, “Behold!”, becomes clearer:

*uṇṭu kkaḷicc aṇṇu irikkumu cilaru/a/ uḷḷattil kāppān naṭakkumu
cilaru//b//
kaṇṭu kkaḷivāstrī kaṇṭām cilarkku/c/ kayyivila naṇṇi viṭumān³²
cilarkku//d//1
ōṇṭ annu viṇṇu kayyil ākki vaccu/a/ ḍṭṭum illātē ḍṇṭ ākkiyumu
vaccu//b//
ēntu cēyyām tānum³³ ḍṇṇ āyi ninnu/c/ ēllār viḷayāṭṭam kāpunnār
avvē//d//2*

Some will eat and enjoy the play.
Some will keep it in mind.
Some might pay attention to the woman actress.³⁴
Some will only think of the cash money
That they got that day having sold [Joseph].
[Joseph] came with nothing, and got it all.
“What can I do all alone? [They] have [all] joined together.”
Everyone is watching the play. Behold!

This whole verse is not too clear, but it certainly contains enough linguistic markers to allow examination and analysis. I take it as a prelude teasing the audience by describing the different reactions of the hearers/spectators to the performance about to take place. 1a-d is marked as relating to the immediate content layer (3) by the future/habitual tense. 2a shifts to the past tense further marked by *annu*, “that day”, and hence progresses to narrative content layer (1). Since the previous song has just announced the beginning of Joseph’s story, which is to be told in the coming verses, I have conjectured that Joseph and his brothers are at the center of this scene. 2c seems to be reported speech marked by an interrogative and an abilitative, *entu cēyyām*,

“what can I do?” dramatic content layer (4), which I take as Joseph’s reported speech.³⁵ 2d, however, is clear enough and consistent through all the variants, to indicate that the song is taken as a dramatic performance. It is further marked by the present tense, *kāṇunnār*, “are watching”, indicating its reference to the immediate context, content layer (3). Thus, any verse in the following songs that is to be taken as part of this drama is marked by the form *kāṇavvê*, or its abbreviation to *avvê*, as in the verse above.

Let us for a moment take a step away from the text, from the story, and from what we know (or perhaps what we do not know would be more to the point) of the Jewish life in Kerala. Let us consider the literary milieu of Kerala, which has produced an impressive body of literature in many genres, and in fact in more than one language, for the past ten centuries, if not longer than that.³⁶ This body of literature has a close affinity to the stage, and the stage in turn is also a ritual space (Nair, 1971:56-7). That is true for the classical *Kuṭiyāṭṭam*, and the (relatively late) *Kathakali*, the “folk” *Tullal*, as well as for the *Muṭiyerṛū* and *Teyyāṭṭam* possession performances. The stage is an arena in which merit is obtained, purification, magical protection and pacification of Goddesses and Gods are sought after. One can see the performers worship the performance ground and the drums, the faithful companions for each performance. Some of these theatrical genres include a text classified as *pāṭṭu*, “song”, such as the *torraṁ pāṭṭu*, which introduces in length the *Teyyāṭṭam* performance. Such *pāṭṭus* are often multi-layered with contents in a similar way to what I was demonstrating above, incorporating different thematic contents, ideologies and aims (Menon, 1993:207ff.). The songs in the list found in B9, with its selection variations in the other notebooks, are all titled as *pāṭṭus*.³⁷ This generic definition is recognized and analyzed already in the 14th century *Lilātilakam*, which defines a *pāṭṭu* of the “classical” poetic type in terms of rhyme, alliteration and metrical patterns (Nair, 1971:93; Freeman, 1998:54ff.), which we have witnessed above, and which prevail all through the verses we were examining, as well as those we are about to read.³⁸

While keeping this in mind I would like to suggest the hypothesis that the production of the *Kāppu Rātri* songs (and perhaps even of most of the songs in the corpus) originated also in a ritual space. As might be deduced by its name, the *Kāppu Rātri* might have been

originally designed for guaranteeing protection and prosperity for a couple about to start a new family, a new house, in a very small community. Also Hebrew poetry owes its creation to ritual space, that of the synagogue. By the 10th and 11th century Jewish communities in the Diaspora had prayer books, with obligatory prayers as well as poems of famous and anonymous poets specifically composed to be inserted in liturgical “niches”. Their selection and appreciation was left to the tastes and aesthetical needs of each praying community (see Fleischer, 1975 and Elizur, 1999:14ff.). It is quite likely that the Jewish community, which received the famous copper plates (Narayanan 1972 and 2002), had such prayer books as well.³⁹ Any Jew is very well acquainted with the length and elaboration of Hebrew prayer and liturgy during the many year-cycle events scheduled in the Jewish calendar. It might be that for this reason new events such as the *Kāppu Rātri* had to be created around life-cycle events, so that new ritual space might be formed to imbibe elaborated poetical and aesthetic creation according to the Kerala standards and tastes.

On basis of the first verse of III-52, which specifically mentions a play, spectators and an actress (but see my reservations in regard of the latter term in fn. 34 above), I believe that the event had indeed a play for its axis, and not merely a fish dinner and a sing-a-song gathering as reported by Walerstein (1987:99-100), who takes the Vigil Night as an event following the engagement ceremony held earlier on the same day. According to Jussay (2005:97-8), however, the engagement rituals during the day and the festivities following it during the night are one continuous event. He describes how both bride and groom, along with their family members, were present at the occasion. The ceremony would start with presenting the silver and gold for the wedding ring and pendant (*tālī*) respectively. The songs for the occasion would be sung after some ceremonial procedures. Feasting and partying would conclude the event. Both Walerstein and Jussay were depending on informants for describing the *Kāppu Rātri*. If anybody had ever witnessed the songs as part of a play, he or she might very well be reluctant to describe it as such, lest the Malabari community be devalued for following such “un-Jewish” practices.⁴⁰ It is also possible (and perhaps more likely so) that the self image and the consequent practices and customs of the community were radically altered after the Portuguese invasion in the beginning of the 16th century, when the

Paradeśi community was founded, and the bitter struggles for dominance over Jewish prestige and pedigree erupted and attracted the attention of later colonial rulers and of Jews from other countries (Johnson, 1975:24-25, 84ff.; Mandelbaum, 1986:67ff.; Walerstein, 1987:41ff.; Narayanan, 2002:6, Jussay, 2005:33ff.). If there was indeed a dramatic performance at the core of the *Kāppu Rātri* event, it might have been altered during that time to eventually take the form of a celebration with fish dinner and a sing-a-song gathering as its focus.

I believe that further philological study might yield more textual evidence supporting my hypothesis. That more songs in the corpus are affiliated with ritual space was shown also in Johnson (2005:215-216). Take for example song I-12 (Zacharia, 2005:40-41, 141; Gamliel, 2005:32-33, 144), which is classified in the index as “historical”, but is told by an informant to be performed on the occasion of taking a vow, *nercca*, on the grave of Namya Mutta, the 16th century Malabari Jewish saint. Interestingly some other informants were quick to deny that any “Malayalam songs are sung during the serious religious occasion of a *nercca*.” (Johnson, 2005:216; for Namya Mutta as a saint and a poet, see Walerstein, 1987:155ff., and also in this TAPASAM issue). It is also important to keep in mind the complex content layer structure of many of the songs, especially the longer ones, in the Jewish Malayalam folk songs corpus. It is very tempting to highlight the narrative content layers in the songs, as they do portray a fascinating world view through their retellings of Biblical events or their historical narratives. Yet one must not ignore the more difficult lines and verses that relate to the immediate performative context usually indicated by linguistic shifters, as I have shown above. For this reason I have presented at length the first two lines of the whole series, discussing the two possible readings based on the interpretation of the verb *camakkuka*. I do have inclination towards reading A, which relates to the immediate context of the performance, to the recitation of the text. However, an immediate context content layer might be merely hinted by a subtle emphasis on a motif or a detail in the story, where semantics play a role more important than shifters, as in the case of the word *nercca* in I-12.

Let us conclude this paper with some more verses sung for the Vigil night. As Walerstein convincingly argues, the Kerala Jewish women, like their homeland fellow women folk, “chose to portray their private concerns through the narratives and symbols of their Great

Tradition”, and for that reason, unlike “Kurdish [...] and Yemeni women [...] they sang [wedding songs] about Joseph being sold in Egypt, and finally revealing himself to his brothers and eventually to Jacob [...]” (Walerstein, 1987:20). And so we have Joseph’s story unfolding during the Vigil Night, whether in a full fledged drama or a sing-a-song gathering, and its implication to the performative context is worthy to be examined. Let us briefly examine two more verses of the Vigil Night songs. The fifth verse of III-52, and the last in most notebooks, obliquely deals with the dowry system and connotes the selling of Joseph for twenty pieces of silver with a ceremony conducted earlier that same evening of marking a silver coin destined for the preparation of the wedding ring (Jussay, 2005:97). The narrative up to this point follows more or less Genesis 37:1-14, and it continues in the following verse:

cāttēra-vaḷi pakkār vannatu kkaṅṅu/a/ tambor aṭiccu nām it
ēllāmm ḍttu//b//
cattu poyāl namakk ḍnt or anubhaṃ⁴¹/c/ caraticcu vaccu cērippinot
ērum⁴²//d//1
cāttēra ppōṅṅeyavaru⁴³ avara viḷiccu/a/ yōṣēvinē kkōṅṅu poyi
karayil kāṭṭi//b//
ittarē ḍnnu vilayum paraññu/c/ irumbatu vēḷḷikku
viṅṅāru kāṅavvē//d//2

[They] saw travelers arriving.

“We hit the younger brother.⁴⁴ All turned out well.

If he dies - what shall we gain out of it?”

[They] carefully divided two [silver for each] for sandals.⁴⁵

[They] called those travelers.

They brought up Joseph and displayed him.

They set this much of price.

They sold him for twenty silver. Behold!

By and large this verse is focused on the narrative content layer (1), in which dramatic content layer (4) represented by reported speech (1b-c) is embedded. But also the immediate context content layer (3) is present, hinted as it were by two markers, one linguistic, the deictic *ittarē*, “this much”, and one semantic, *vēḷḷi*, “silver”, which alludes to the silver coin given by the groom to the bride in a ceremonious manner earlier on the occasion. It is not accidental that most notebooks have this verse

for concluding the whole song. The story is not retold for entertainment, for neither informative nor didactic reasons. It is fragmented so as to fit the ritual and the performative context. That is the reason for stopping it at this point.⁴⁶

Fragmenting well known stories for aesthetic as well as for ritualistic purposes is a common practice both on the Kerala stage, and in the Hebrew poetry recited in the synagogue. This fragmentation is yet another marker, which might serve as an analytical tool. One of the most popular fragments in the corpus of Jewish Malayalam songs is re-sung again and again in different textual and ritual contexts. It is, for example, serving as the last verse of four songs, III-30, II-9, II-11 and II-10 (Zacharia 2005:65, 92, 94, 95; Gamliel 2005:66, 92, 94, 97). It is a small Biblical scene (Genesis 45:25-28), where Jacob receives the news that his son Joseph, thought to be dead for so many years, is still alive and is ruling Egypt. Later Hebrew sources elaborate on this scene, narrating that it was Jacob's granddaughter who delivered the good news. One source adds that she was playing the violin while speaking to Jacob to soothe his spirit (Zacharia, 2005:169; Gamliel, 2005:164-5).

tambirān tann aruḷālē nī cēnnu/a/ tāne taniccē parasina keṭṭu//b//
pēmbuḷḷa pāṭiya pāṭṭinē keṭṭu/c/ pēsakātē yoseppū ṅnarṇnu
cēlli//d//1
imbam āy keṭṭū keṭṭū ēkannū⁴⁷ irunnu/a/ iṅṅu vā ēnnu makaḷa
viḷiccu//b//
tambirān tann aruḷālē nī cēnnu/c/ sākēḷā⁴⁸ ēnn aṅṅu
vāstinār avvē//d//2

“You have come by God’s blessing!”

You alone listened to the child.

You listened to the song a girl child sang.

Calmly she said that Joseph has awoken.

Listening again and again in delight [Jacob] was rising.

“Come here!” [he] called the daughter.

“You have come by God’s blessing!

[You] shall not die.” There [Jacob] blessed [her]. Behold!

Note the emphasis in this verse on Jacob’s addressing the girl as a blessing from God. It is brought up as the opening line of the verse and indeed of the whole song. One can almost imagine the old dejected Jacob, still grieving for his lost son, listening to a young girl singing

such unimaginably good news. The small scene has the dramatic content layer (4) dominant in reporting Jacob’s speech. But it is also dominant through actual direct speech addressed to Jacob in the narrator’s voice, the performers in the immediate context layer (3). These two lines, 1b-c, give the impression that this whole verse is a chorus, which might partially explain its tendency to disengage from the song and wander all around the corpus attaching itself to many other songs, not necessarily connected with Joseph’s story. But there might further be a solid pragmatic reason behind the emphasis on Jacob’s direct speech. Anybody who had ever witnessed a wedding in Kerala might have observed the lengthy parade of elder family members blessing the bride or bridegroom before they take off to the wedding hall. The blessing is given by holding the hands, and the youngster might also bow down to touch the feet of the elders blessing him or her. If that is indeed so, any occasion for elders to bless youngsters might be an occasion fitting for recollecting Jacob blessing his granddaughter, and consequently, an occasion for singing this verse.

This verse also stands at the beginning of the next song in the *Kāppu Rātri* series, III-55, which retells how Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and got them to live with him in Egypt for sustaining them while famine was tormenting Canaan and Egypt (Genesis 42-45, 47). This song too has short and long versions.⁴⁹ The shorter version has the fifth verse as its last, concluding with two lines how they all, Joseph and his brothers, settled in Egypt and conducted business there:

ayyāṅṅa kōṅṅ iṅṅuv illutakkam⁵⁰ ēllām/a/atinnu kōṅṅ ēllām ṅru
sittiti⁵¹ vaccu//b//
payyālē ṅru sittiti vēpputuṅ cēytu/c/ paṅṅiya
taṅṅaḷḷku tēṅṅam ēṅṅuttu//d//1
ayyvēruṅ mikkōḷḷa paitaṅṅaḷ ēllām/a/ ā vaṅṅamē kuṅa
kkōṅṅ⁵² pōṅṅnāmē⁵³//b//
cēyyuṅ tōḷḷil ēllām cēyputuṅ cēytu/c/ cēmmē irunṅ
aṅṅu irunṅār⁵⁴ kāṅṅavvē//d//

“For five more years there will be famine here.

Therefore all have settled [here].”

Because of hunger [they] had settled [there].

For the beloved relatives [Joseph] had taken high measures.⁵⁵

Most of the five boys⁵⁶ have migrated in this manner and joined together.

They have conducted all business⁵⁷ they were doing.

They have settled there comfortably.⁵⁸ Behold!

It seems that the story serves in the song as an allegory of the bride leaving her house only to end up with a prosperous reunion of her extended family. There are also connotations of the exile in which the whole community leaves in, away from the “Promised Land”, and justification for them doing so. After all, the word used in Malayalam, *tōḷil*, “business”, has much more to do with the immediate “here and now” of the community than with the shepherds’ milieu of the Biblical ancestors.

The second verse of the song focuses on the animosity between Joseph and the brothers before Joseph’s identity is revealed.

pattu perum tambirānoṭ ḗrannu/a/ parkkān yōsevinoṭu yevudā//b//
mantaram⁵⁹ tammil aṅṅi eṛumār āyi/c/ vāvātu cēnnu
pēramānattālē//d//1
ōttu balam āy irinnu irivērum/a/ ormmayil irunnu palam
illa ēnnu//b//
ētrayum manaṁtātam⁶⁰ āyi kōṅṅu/c/ verē avar ōru sattiyam
cēytār kāṇavvē//d//2

Ten people begged with the king.⁶¹

Judah had approached Joseph.

There was a pungent animosity between them.

They came because of their father’s command.

Both had the same strength.

“[He] fails remembering [me],” [Joseph thought].

And because of great remorse

Each had been forgiven.⁶²

Probing in detail into this song as well is beyond the scope of this paper. However, I would just like to give my impression that it is addressed to both bride and groom in an attempt to ease the tension between two people about to start intimate relations destined to last for the rest of their lives. They might very well know each other from childhood, as the community is indeed too small to have complete strangers getting married. So the themes of alienation, hiding of the self, weeping in solitude (elaborated in the third verse) and eventual self revelation leading to reunion and to the founding of a business community in a foreign land, seems to be appropriate for the occasion

of a pre-marriage ritual performance among Kerala Jews, whose traditional occupation was trade (see Narayanan, 2002:7-11).

In this paper we dealt with a series of songs integral to each other, and even marked as such by a lexeme repeated at the end of each verse of the series, *kāṇavvē* (sometimes abbreviated to *avvē*). I have identified these songs as performed during the Vigil Night, and raised the possibility that the event has had the function of providing protection and assuring prosperity and success for the bridal couple through the performance of these songs. I am also obliged to emphasize that there are many more songs associated with the *Kāppu Rātri*, whether by their title or by being listed in B9. As the selection of songs is not consistent all through the different notebooks, I shall avoid for the time being discussing all the songs in the list. Lastly, it is important to repeat that these songs display generic characteristics of classical *pāṭṭus*, which along with complex thematic structure as subject to linguistic analysis reveal the possibility that they were (at some time in the past perhaps beyond the memory of contemporary community members) performed as a drama. The songs, whether in theatrical form or a vocal performance, occupied a ritual space that was opened up, possibly especially for their performance, by designing the Vigil Night as a celebrated communal event.

Notes

- ¹ Walerstein could not establish a clear etymological derivation nor a meaning to the word *kāppu*. She suggests two possibilities, which do not satisfy her. She was told *kāppu* meant “fish” signifying the traditional fish dinner served to the participants in the event. Some informants further suggested a Hebrew derivation for this word, *hofef*, “washing the hair”, justifying it by referring to the custom of accompanying the bride to a ritual bath earlier that day. The word *kāppu* is derived from the verbal root *kākkuka*, which has two major meanings: to keep, defend, watch, or to wait, expect. As a verbal noun derived from the above root, it has also the meaning of an amulet or charm, that is of magical protection, especially one designed for a bridal couple (Gundert, 1872:230-1). In this sense of “protection”, it might also be suggestive of the silver coin given as a sign of betrothal, for basically the occasion is an engagement ceremony preceding the wedding. The etymology of the word suggests also connotations of expectation, an emotion familiar to anybody on the verge of a rite of passage, about to change one’s life drastically.

- ² As far as I am aware of, the two sources cited above are the only ones to describe the Vigil Night and some of its customs. Altogether they amount to three paragraphs.
- ³ The notebooks are numbered with an initial signifying the collector's name and a serial number (B=Barbara Johnson, J=P. M. Jussay, and S=Shirley Isenberg). The notebooks collected from 2003 onwards are numbered B after the Ben Zvi Institute, which have been in charge of Xeroxing, cataloguing and keeping original notebooks and copies. The latter begin with serial number 29. There are two incomplete notebooks in the possession of a private collector, Joseph Turjeman from Jerusalem, T1 and T2.
- ⁴ "Behold!". *kāṇavvē* is an obscure derivation of the root *kāṇuka*, "to see". It is ostensibly a "while-" form, a durative, which doesn't really fit in metrically and syntactically. It might be some colloquial representation of *kāṇvin*, the II pr. pl. imperative ("please watch!"), or, as MGS Narayanan suggests, of *kāṇām*, the hortative ("let us watch!"). In any case the translation "Behold!" is adequate. Moreover *kāṇavvē* conveys the sense of expectation, which might be connoted also to the word *Kāppu*, as mentioned above.
- ⁵ For shifters and their performative functions, see Silverstein, 1976.
- ⁶ I follow hereby the song sequence as given in B9, reflected also in S14, S13, S11, B11, B30 and T1. This is not to say that other songs or song sequence were not performed for the Vigil Night. I shall treat it as the Vigil Night songs for the time being, until further research yields different results.
- ⁷ The songs have been indexed by Jussay and Johnson according to five thematic categories: I=historical, II=occasional, III=Biblical, IV=devotional, V=miscellaneous.
- ⁸ I am most grateful to MGS Narayanan for the precious consultation and guidance he gave me in translating this song, as well as IV-16 and III-52. I have incorporated many of his insights and understandings. However any mistakes or inaccuracies are my own. Further more, some lines or verses of these songs are yet to be analyzed and scrutinized in relation to other songs in the corpus and in other Malayalam compositions.
- ⁹ *cēytu kōṇṭāluṃ* and *cēyyalla* literally mean "please do", and "please don't", but in this context they are appellations referring to the two major categories in the 613 observances, translating from Hebrew: mišvot 'aseh v-'al ta'aseh.
- ¹⁰ = *kurram illātē*.
- ¹¹ The majority of the Vigil Night songs follow a metrical pattern, where

each half line is divided into four sections. The first three sections have a combination of syllables amounting to five metrical units, *mātras* (usually a combination of two long and one short syllables), and the last section is to be composed of three *mātras* (f.i. one long & one short syllable).

- ¹² All variants spell *karim*.
- ¹³ B9: ḏnninoṭ ḏnnū poyi ḏnnil ḏriccu.
- ¹⁴ H: mēnuḥah, "rest".
- ¹⁵ Note B11 which replaces *nayimayil* with *mikadāšil* (H the temple, which was destroyed in 70 AD).
- ¹⁶ As most variants stop at the sixth verse, it makes things even more difficult. The translation here leaves out something, as the addressees are asked to take something into the dining hall, and it is unclear what it is. It might be an address to the bridegroom to take the silver coin signifying the engagement to the bride waiting in an inner room at the house (see Jussay, *op cit*).
- ¹⁷ I follow here the glossing in B9, which seems to be the most reasonable. Other variants give also *vikku* and *bikku*, which might be derived phonetically from *mikku*.
- ¹⁸ The main difference is in reading *mayyam*, "water" instead of *bhayyam*, "fear", and *dikku*, "direction" instead of *mikku*, "the bigger part". This is the case in three variants, B5, J2 and T1, all from Cochi. As a result there is also a shift in meaning of *mānaṃ*, "sky" instead of "pride".
- ¹⁹ From the opening verses of the 15th century Malayalam composition Śrīmahābhāgavatam (Tuñcattēluttacchan 2005:17). See also Gundert, 1872:347.
- ²⁰ I am under the impression that this specific past construction, i.e. a participial noun + particle *-uṃ* + past tense of *cēyyuka* (i.e. *camappuṃ cēytu*) stands for narrative past in the songs. This hunch might be established, or alternately forsaken, after collecting and analyzing enough data. See also Ayyar, 1983:117, where this construction is said to be common in the Bhāgavatam Bhāṣā-gadyam, Keralōlpatti and Brahmāṇṭa-purāṇam, all Old Malayalam works dated 13th century.
- ²¹ For the use of this Hebrew word in another song (I-12), see Zacharia, 2005:40, 206 and Gamliel, 2005:145.
- ²² In S14 it is considered as the first verse of III-52.
- ²³ <*śāstrattil*
- ²⁴ <*sāmarthyam*
- ²⁵ An obscure word, perhaps from Tamil *ākkam*, "contentment". Many variants drop the nasal, which might give a participial noun derived from

ākkuka, perhaps as a finite verb relating to *appanmār*, “the fathers”.

- ²⁶ The syntax is not transparent, and it is not clear whether this line is to be taken as another non-final action relating back to the immediate context. I thought it is better to understand this line as subordinated to Joseph, for it is his doings that are about to be narrated in the following verses.
- ²⁷ “*sātikki*”, H“*zadik*”, the righteous one
- ²⁸ Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who are the ancestors of the Jewish nation.
- ²⁹ Literally: did “*savotr*”, i.e. health. See Jussay, 2005:58, note 63. Others associate this word with H *se`udah*, meal. See Zacaria, 2005:186, 207. Community members use it as a synonym for “cheers!” when drinking alcoholic beverages (Barbara Johnson, personal communication).
- ³⁰ This translation is conjectural. See fn. 25 above.
- ³¹ S14, B3, S2, S11 and T1 are all from Cochi. One of them is from the Paradesi community (B3), and the others are from Kadavumbhāgam. T1 was found in the *genizah* of a synagogue in Israel. On one of its pages there is the name of the owner (“this notebook belongs to Benjamin Meyer...”) and an address in Cochi. Since it shares many features, such as the number of verses, titles for and selection of songs with the Kadavumbhāgam notebooks, I assume it used to belong to a member from that community. The location, in which it was found, near Beth Shemesh, further supports this assumption as many Kadavumbhāgam members who migrated to Israel settled in that area.
- ³² I take *viṭumān* as an archaic future form, see Ayyar, 1983:92. It seems to be serving as an aspectual verb modifying the non-finite *naṇṇi*.
- ³³ *tāne*, “alone”
- ³⁴ This might be a reference to an actual actress, or a dancer, who might be playing the whole array of characters in the song. Note, however, that this line is reconstructed according to the best of my judgement. The word *strī* appears only in B5. Others have *sar*, *saṛu*, *śar* and even *śrī*. Reconstruction of *kōṇṭāṁ* is also somewhat doubtful, as most variants have *kōṇṭān*, which does not make much sense to me.
- ³⁵ This verse somewhat functions as a verbal screen, like the actual one used in *Kathākālī* and *Muṭiyēṛru* and the like, behind which the first character gradually shows up.
- ³⁶ The beginnings of Malayalam are traced to the tenth century. But also before that, there was a well spread literary production in both Sanskrit and Tamil. Other community languages were present too, such as Pali and Prakrit (for the now extinct Buddhist and Jain communities), Aramaic and Arabic (for Syrian Christians and Muslims), and Hebrew (for Jews).

As for the latter, there was indigeneous literary production in Hebrew evident in the collections of Hebrew poems, which were produced among and preserved by the Kerala Jews for at least four centuries (for the time being the most eminent recognized indigeneous poet is Namya Mutta, see Walerstein in this TAPASAM issue). Its extent and appreciation are yet to be dealt with.

- ³⁷ Excluding some stray verses, like IV-16, which are either untitled or titled as *kaṭappu*, “passage” (S14) or as *kuṛukkan*, “briefing” (f.i. T1).
- ³⁸ But see also Freeman, 2003:465-468, for genre variations and innovations, as the literary scene in Kerala is ever changing and renovated, as well as thematically complex. Note that the metrical, rhyming and alliteration schemes in the above verses are not pedantic. It might be that some modifications occurred during the process of transmission.
- ³⁹ There are some 1000 Jewish traders known to have travelled to or traded with the Malabar coast from the Genizah records. Some of them would stay for many years overseas, and request in their letters to the Middle East wheat, wine, paper and other substances required for their ritual. See Goitein, 177ff. With the publication of the India Book (forthcoming, Ben Zvi Institute) of the letters from and to these India traders more data might surface. I firmly believe they also took prayer books with them, and they might very well be the founders of the Jewish community in Kerala.
- ⁴⁰ There is of course nothing “un-Jewish” in watching or producing a play, and there are some Jewish communities, especially among the Yiddish speaking Jews, who are very proud of their theatrical heritage and its influence on modern American showbiz.
- ⁴¹ <anubhavaṁ
- ⁴² <irum
- ⁴³ <pokunnavar
- ⁴⁴ The meaning here is unclear. An alternative translation might be “we hit the drum”, perhaps for a metaphoric expression, something like “bull’s eye!”, or perhaps it has something to do with the performative aspects involved in a play. The textualization too is not certain, as the first part of this line varies greatly in the notebooks. This textualization is based on B9 and B30. Most other variants would render *nambar aṇiccu nām*. The word *nambar* might stand for *nambiyar*, “actors”.
- ⁴⁵ I have translated this somewhat obscure and elliptical line according to a story given in two Midrashic sources. According to these sources each of the brothers used two silver (coins) to buy footwear, and they further comment that this story is the source for the Biblical verse in Amos 2:6: “Thus said God: I shall not give clemency to Israel for three and four of their crimes, for they have sold for silver a righteous man, and a poor man

for shoes.” [My translation] See Pirkey d-Rabbi Eli`ezer (Heger) - ḥorev, 37, and Yalkut Šim`oni, torah, vayısev, 247, 142 (Hebrew).

⁴⁶ I am grateful to my colleague and friend, Yehoshua Granat, who was the first to suggest to me that a shorter version of a song might be the original one, having its concluding line as the ritual point of reference. This he suggested during a discussion we had on the two versions of the song about Sarah-Umma (III-14 and III-14a) published in Malayalam and Hebrew in Kārkuḷali-Yefefiah (Zachariah, 2005:56-61, and Gamliel, 53-61).

⁴⁷ uyarṇnu

⁴⁸ cākilla

⁴⁹ Also in this case, it is notebooks only from Cochi Kadavumbhāgam and Paradesi which give the long version.

⁵⁰ <illāyṭṭam? See Genesis 45:6: “For another five years there will be no ploughing nor harvest.”

⁵¹ There are many different spellings for this word in the variants. B9 even gives *ōru kastūri*. Perhaps the reference is to *sthiti* in the sense of existence. Another possible interpretation is *sthirata*, in the sense of security of livelihood.

⁵² kuṭi-kōṇṭu = immigrated.

⁵³ <pōrunnuka

⁵⁴ So according to B9, whereas the other variants read more or less: *cēmme inṇu pōn irinnār*.

⁵⁵ I take *tēṇṭam* in the sense of high measures of provisions. See Genesis 47:11.

⁵⁶ Joseph had presented to Pharo five of his brothers, see Genesis 47:2.

⁵⁷ That might be a referrene to Genesis 47:1-4, where Joseph’s family immigrates to Egypt with their cattle.

⁵⁸ I base the translation of this verse on Gen 47, as a summary of that chapter concluding the story of Joseph.

⁵⁹ <malsaram

⁶⁰ <manastāpam? <manamṭā]ṭṭam?

⁶¹ I believe that the word *tambirān* here is in the sense of “king” rather than of “God”. See Genesis 42:3, 6.

⁶² This verse and the one that folows seem to be a paraphrase of a Midrashic story elaborated in Breshit Rabah, 93, 6 - 9, where Judah approaches Joseph in order to fight him.

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APPENDIX

കാപ്പുരാത്രിലെ പാട്ട് - II-61

①
മാനവും ഭയവും മിക്കുള്ളതെല്ലാം. മാറാതെകണ്ടുചുമപ്പുതും ചെയ്തു.
ഊനമായ് തോഴമയി നിന്നു പാവത്തെ. ഊക്കുമായ്¹
നിങ്ങൾ ആറികേയും വെണം.
ദീനമായുള്ളക്കുലത്തെയൊ എല്ലാം. സീമിയാവേറെക്കളിപ്പുതും ചെയ്തു.
തൊയമായുള്ള ഓരുചാത്തരതന്നു. നാം ഇന്നു
അതു പാടുകുടുവാൻ കാണവെ.

②
ഓടും മുഗവും പാലും പതക്കിയും². ഒപ്പില്ലമറ്റത്തിരിശങ്ങക്കെല്ലാം.³
നേടുന്ന നിറുമാല കേൾക്കുമൊ ഞങ്ങൾ. കേൾക്കാം
നമൾക്കൊന്നു ചെയ്യാൻ നലമ.
നേടുന്ന നയിമെയിൽനിന്നു⁴ പാവത്തെ. നിശ്ചയം നാമിതാറിഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടാലും.
കുടി മാനസുകൊണ്ടു അവണ്ണം ചെയ്തു. കുറുള്ള നന്മയിൽ
കുടുവാൻ കാണവെ.

③
ആറും കടലും മലകൾ കുലുങ്ങി. അൽഭുതമായോരു ഞായൻ എറങ്ങി.
ആറുനൂറ്റിപതിമൂന്നു ഉള്ളവ വേല. അതിനായ് ചിലതുണ്ടു
ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടാലും.
വേറെ ചിലതുണ്ടുചെയ്യല്ല എന്ന്. വേറിട്ടു നാമിതു അറിഞ്ഞുകൊണ്ടാലും.
കുറിട്ടുനാമിതുചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടാലും. കുറ്റമാതിവത്തികുടുവാൻ കാണവെ.

④
ഇത്തരമെ ചെന്നോരുമക്കപ്രപ്പുറാവ്⁵. എട്ടുനാൾ ചെന്നോരാടയാളം കാട്ടി.⁶
വാസ്തീയത്താൻ മൂന്നി ചൊല്ലിയ വചനം. പാർത്താലെ
പുത്തിത്തിരിയും നമ്മൾക്ക്.
സത്തിയമെന്ന് വിളിപ്പോരു താങ്കൾ. ചാർന്നോരാം കയിക്കോരടയാളം കാട്ടി.
ചിത്തത്തിൽ എപ്പൊഴും ചിന്തിച്ചിരിക്കും. ചീരിയെ വാഴുപെരെല്ലാം കാണവെ.

⑤
ഒന്നെ മുതലായിക് ആറുനാളോളം. ഒന്നങ്ങു വേണ്ടു കരിമണ്ടോ⁷ ചെയ്തു.⁸
എന്നു കുഞ്ഞും ഗുണം നല്ലതെന്നിക്ക്. എകകാര്യമങ്ങു ചെയ്യാൻ പലതു ആക്കി.
അന്നുള്ളൊരു തിന്നുംകുടിയും സ്തുതിയും. അയിമ്പുറ്റമാളർ പലരൊത്തകുടി.
മെന്നുകോ എന്നുപ്പൊരുന്നൽ ഒരിച്ചു. പോകാതെ നയിമയിൽ കുടുവാൻ കാണവെ.

⑥
സിങ്ങം തുറന്നാൽ ഭയപ്പെട്ടിരുന്നു. സിങ്ങതോ വേറെത്തിരിഞ്ഞ് വലിഞ്ഞു.
തങ്ങൾ മനസ്സിൽ തെളിമുററിയിരുന്നു. തന്നെയും പിമ്പെയും നാളന്നിരുന്നു.

പാങ്ങോളള നാളും തൊടച്ചുപൊരുന്നി. പറ്റിയ തങ്ങളു് തലയും പിടിച്ചു.
മുങ്ങിയ ഉറയിൽ കളിച്ചങ്ങു് നിവിർന്നു. മുലെന്ന് അരുൾ
പെറുവാഴുവാൻ കാണവെ.

കടാപ്പു - IV-16

ഇപ്പളെ ചെയ്തൊരിക്കലെ ഉള്ളു. ഇമ്പമായ് കേട്ടു കുറിക്കൊൾപൊരാക.
ഏപ്പോഴുമീ മകൾതന്നെ തുണയാ. ഏകാന്തനേരത്തു് കാവലും തന്നു്.
തപ്പാതെ ചാത്രത്തിൽ⁹ ഇപ്പടിചെയ്തു്. സാതിക്കിയും¹⁰ തന്ന
ചമത്തായ്¹¹ കൊണ്ടു.
ഒപ്പന്മാർ മുവെരും ചെയ്തു സവ്യാതാ¹². അരുളാലെ ആക്കംപെർ
എല്ലാം കാണവെ.

ഉണ്ടുകളിച്ചപ്പാട്ടു - III-52

①
ഉണ്ടുകളിച്ചങ്ങു് ഇരിക്കും ചിലർ. ഉള്ളത്തിൽ കാർപ്പാൻ നടക്കും ചിലർ.
കണ്ടുകളിവസ്ത്രീ കൊണ്ടാം ചിലർക്കു്. കയ്യിവില നണ്ണി വീടുമാൻ ചിലർക്കു്
ഒണ്ടന്നു വിററു് കയ്യിലാക്കി വച്ചു. ഒട്ടുമില്ലാതെ ഒണ്ടാക്കിയും വച്ചു.
എത്തുചെയ്യാം താനും ഒന്നായിനിന്നു. എല്ലാർ വിളയാട്ടം കാണുന്നാരവെ.

②
വാവായിരുന്ന് ദേശത്തു് പോയി പൂക്കു്. മക്കളെ കല്പിച്ചൊരു ആടു മേയിപ്പാൻ.
ദേശവുണ്ടു യൊസെവിനൊടു് വാവായിക്. തങ്ങളെട മക്കൾ എല്ലാവരും കാട്ടി
നാബാദ ഗൊലമ്മിന¹³ കണ്ടാലറിയാം. നടക്കു നീ പോരു് സാതക്കക്കു് ചെയ്തി.
ആവൊലു വേഴു ഒണ്ടായവർക്കു് എല്ലാം. അന്നു പാറകോന¹⁴
പിടിച്ചാർ കാണവെ.

③
ആടു മേയിപ്പാൻ പോയി സാതക്കു എടോ. ആറാഴ്ച ചെയ്തങ്ങു
യൊസെവിനോടേകി
കാടങ്ങു ചുതർ നടപ്പുതും ചെയ്തു. കണ്ടക്കൊന്നാപ്പു ഒക്കെ¹⁵ ദൂരമെ വച്ചു.
കുടിപറിഞ്ഞു നാം മീഴു എല്ലാം ഓർത്തു. കുർമയാ കൊന്നുകള പുരം¹⁶ നണ്ണി.
പെടിയെന്നി ചെയ്തു അണയാമായികൊണ്ടു. പിശകാതെ പൊത്തി¹⁷
പിടിച്ചാർ കാണവെ

④
കൊന്നുകളപ്പാൻ തുണിത്താർ ചിലർ. കൊല്ലല്ല എന്ന് തടഞ്ഞു മറ്റേതു.
നാമി നിന്നച്ചതെല്ലാറ്റിലും മുപ്പു . ഞാൻ ഇതിലൊന്നു പിഴപ്പിപ്പൻ എന്നു.
ഒത്തു ഞാൻ കൊന്നതു ഏറയും വേണ്ട. ഓരുമിച്ചാർ
പൊട്ടകിണറിൽ ഇടുവാൻ.
എണ്ണിയ¹⁸ തണ്ണിയ കിനറിലുള്ളു . ഇട്ടങ്ങു കൈപണ്ടം ഇരുന്നാർ കാണവെ.

⑤
ചാത്തരവഴിപോക്കാർ വന്നതുകണ്ടു. തമ്പോരടിച്ചു നാമിതെല്ലാംമൊത്തു
ചത്തുപോയാൽ നമക്കെന്തോരനും¹⁹. ചരതിച്ചു²⁰ വച്ചു ചെരിപ്പിനോടൊരും²¹.
ചാത്തരപ്പൊന്നെയവരു²² അവര വിളിച്ചു. യൊസെവിനൊക്കൊണ്ടുപോയി
കരയിൽ കാട്ടി.
ഇത്തരരെ എന്നു വിലയും പറഞ്ഞു. ഇരുമ്പതു വെള്ളിക്കു വിററാരു കാണവെ.

കടാപ്പു - III-83

കണ്ട കെനാവിന ചൊല്ലുവിൻ നിങ്ങൾ. കർത്താവു തന്റെ പൊരുളു
അറിവിപ്പാർ.
പണ്ടു ഞാൻ പോരുൾ പാടിപ്പോരുമാരെ. പരശിനാ²³ കണ്ടാൽ
അതിനാൽ ഒരിവം.
തെണ്ടികെ കിനറിക്കൽ കണ്ടു മറേറവൻ. ചെമ്മെവരുംപെറകാരം വിടുമ്പ.
വീട്ടിൽ ഇരിന്നു എന്ന കൊള്ളുമാറുള്ളു. വീരിക്കെന്നപ്പേൻ
എന്നാർ കാണവെ.

തമ്പുരാൻ തന്നരുളാലെ - III-55

①
തമ്പിരാൻ തന്നരുളാലെ നീ ചെന്നു. താനേ തനിച്ചെ പരസിന കേട്ടു.
പെമ്പുള്ള²⁴ പാടിയ പാട്ടിനെ കേട്ടു. പെശകാതെ യോസേപ്പ് ഒണർന്നു ചെല്ലി.
ഇമ്പമായ് കേട്ടു കേട്ടു എകന്²⁵ ഇരുന്നു. ഇങ്ങുവാ എന്നു മകളെ വിളിച്ചു.
തമ്പിരാൻ തന്നരുളാലെ നീ ചെന്നു. സാകെലാ²⁶ എന്നങ്ങു വാസ്തിനാരവെ.

②
പത്തുപേരും തമ്പിരാനോടൊരന്നു. പാർക്കാൻ യൊസേവിനോടു യേവുദാ.
മത്തരം²⁷ തമ്മിൽ അങ്ങേരുമാറായി. വാവാടു ചെന്നു പെറമാനത്താലെ.
ഒത്തു ബലമായിരിന്നു ഇരിവെരും. ഓർമ്മയിൽ ഇരുന്നു പലമില്ലാ എന്നു.
എത്രയും മനംതാതമായ്²⁸ കൊണ്ടു. വേറെ അവർ
ഒരു സത്തിയം ചെയ്യാർ കാണവെ.

③
പെഴുവാക്ക ചെല്ലുന്ന കീഴേല കണ്ടു. പെഴുപ്പിച്ചെഴുന്നെററകം പൂക്കടിച്ചു.
ആറമ്മറിയാതെ കെൾവുതും ചെയ്തു. അപ്പളെ തങ്കാതിലിക്കി²⁹പ്രപ്പിട്ടു.
ആരെ പെറകാരം ഓരോന്നു എണ്ണി. അവർ കളവിട്ടങ്ങു വാതൽ അടച്ചു.
പോര വിളിച്ചങ്ങണയാമായികൊണ്ടു. പൊരുത്തം തന്നെ അറിവിച്ചാരവെ.

④
ഞാനല്ലെ യോസേപ്പ് നിങ്ങൾ പെതാക്ക³⁰. നടുങ്ങാതെ കേൾവിൻ
ചൊല്ലുന്ന വാർത്ത.

ഊനം വരുത്തല്ലെ എന്നുള്ളിവാർത്ത. ഊരിലെ
 യാവാലികൾക്കെ³¹ന്ന വിററു.
 ദീനമായുള്ളതൊ എന്നു നിനയാതെ . തിരിവെള്ളം പെറ്റാറെ വന്നതുകണ്ടു.
 വാനമുടൈവൻ തന്നരുളാലെ . മാളവരെ³² പെഴപ്പിച്ചാർ കാണവെ.
 ⑤
 അയ്യാണ്ടകൊണ്ടിങ്ങുവില്ലുതക്കമെ³³ല്ലാം. അതിന്നു കൊണ്ടെല്ലാം
 ഒരു സിത്തിതി³⁴ വച്ചു.
 പയ്യാലെ ഒരു സിത്തിതി വെപ്പുതും ചെയ്തു. പറ്റിയ തങ്ങൾക്കു³⁵
 തെണ്ടം എടുത്തു
 അയ്യുവെരും മിക്കൊള്ളപെതങ്ങളെല്ലാം. ആവണ്ണമെ
 കൂടക്കൊണ്ടുപൊർന്നാമെ.
 ചെയ്യും തൊഴിലെല്ലാം ചെയ്യുതും ചെയ്യു. ചെമ്മെ ഇരുന്നങ്ങു
 ഇരുന്നാർ³⁶ കാണവെ.

Notes :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. B9 : ദുഃഖമായ് | 2. പക്ഷിയും |
| 3. ദർശനങ്ങൾക്ക് | 4. നന്മയിൽനിന്ന് |
| 5. പുറപ്പിറാവ് ? B4 : മാടപ്രാവ് | 6. See footnote 21 |
| 7. കാര്യം | 8. B9 : ഒന്നിനോടൊന്നു പോയി ഒന്നിൽ ഒന്നിച്ചു |
| 9. ശാസ്ത്രത്തിൽ | 10. Hebrew tzaddik, i.e. the righteous one |
| 11. സാമർത്ഥ്യം | 12. Portuguese : health ? Hebrew : Meal ? |
| 13. Perhaps from H : prophetic dream : നാബി = prophet (Navi'), ഹൊലമ് = dream (halom). | |
| 14. Pharo (H. Par'o). | 15. B9 : കണ്ടെ പെഴപൊക്കർ |
| 16. പൂർവ്വം ? | 17. പുത്തി < ബുദ്ധി |
| 18. S2 and B30 : എനികെ | 19. അനുഭവം |
| 20. ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചു | |
| 21. Possibly this is a refrence to a Midrashic story narrating how the brothers divided the money to buy a pair of shoes to each of them. | |
| 22. പോകുന്നവർ | |
| 23. പരസിന, പരശിന = child. Derivation is unknown | |
| 24. പെൺപിള്ള | 25. ഉയർന്നു |
| 26. ചാകില്ല | 27. മൽസരം |
| 28. മനതാപം ? | 29. തകൾ അതിലേക്ക് ? |
| 30. പിഴായ്ക്ക | 31. വ്യാപരികൾക്ക് |
| 32. < മാളുക ? | 33. ഇല്ലായ്മത്തം, See Genesis 45:6 |
| 34. സ്ഥിതി | |
| 35. Compare with II-61 verse 6 second half of 3 rd line. | |
| 36. So according to B9. Most variants read : ചെമ്മെ ഇങ്ങു പൊനിരിനാർ. | |

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“Today is Purim”: A Cochin Jewish Song in Hebrew

Shalva Weil

Research into Kerala Jewry

Research into Kerala Jewry has taken unexpected turns in recent years.¹ Whereas some years ago, some observers predicted the end of an era,² the past few years has been witness to an upsurge in research and cultural preservation. Research has followed two paths: horizontal and vertical. On the one hand, research, which traditionally focused upon the Cochin Paradesi community,³ is finally including the study of other Malabar Jewish communities and thereby reaching out horizontally.⁴ On the other hand, the extant research has deepened vertically to include trade with Kerala in ancient times and in the Middle Ages,⁵ archival research from and Portuguese period,⁶ and material culture.⁷

The field that has appeared to progress more than any other is the comparative study of song, and particularly women’s songs.⁸ Due to the international efforts of a group of scholars, scholarship has flourished.⁹ Songs and poetry can often epitomize the relation between community and social representation. The repertoires of Cochin Jewry, documented earlier by A. I. Simon¹⁰ and then in the 1980’s by Jussay¹¹ and Weil,¹² have recently attracted international attention, the focus being on the gendered community and performative tradition. The recording and examination of women’s songs in Malayalam has emphasized the prominence of women in South Indian society, not just among the Christians and Hindus, but also among this unique community of Jews.

In the focus on Malayalam women’s songs, however, attention has been diverted somewhat from the study of Hebrew songs and the wide repertoire of Cochin Jewish liturgical songs. This conference paper is intended to redress the balance by focusing on a single Hebrew song, of which there are literally hundreds, in order to bring the attention of

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scholars to the rich repertoire of Cochin Jewish Hebrew songs, *piyyutim* (liturgical compositions) and folk songs, which enriched the liturgical and semi-liturgical calendrical events and rites of passage of the Jews of Cochin. The paper thus takes its lead from the insurgence of interest in Cochin Jewish songs composed in Kerala. However, instead of presenting a song or songs in Malayalam, we examine here an "indigenous" song in Hebrew, composed in Cochin in the liturgical (and today national) language of the Jews. Instead of focusing on the gendered transmission of songs, we demonstrate here how a local song and poem, as an example of a genre of cultural creativity, promoted a sense of community, which Veena Das defines as a shared culture.¹³

The short song that is the object of this paper is sung on the carnival-like Jewish festival of Purim. In the paper, I shall discuss the use of the Hebrew language and the frequency of Hebrew poetry among Cochin Jews, in general, and then analyse Purim and Purim songs in Cochin Jewish heritage. Finally, I shall analyse the specific Purim song, which I have selected as the object of this paper, from the point of view of literary style and sociological/anthropological meaning.

The Use of Hebrew among Cochin Jews

All eight Cochin Jewish communities (*juthapalli-Yogam*) were familiar with Hebrew, which was used both in commerce, and in liturgy.

Ezekiel Rahabi (1694-1771), the principal merchant of the Dutch East India Company, who acted as a broker between the Dutch and the Indians, signed his name in Hebrew. For example, in a 1733 contract which Weinstein found in Holland, Rahabi signed a pepper deal in Cochin in Hebrew letters. It should be noted that his son, David Rahabi, compiled a Hebrew treatise on the calendar, comparing the Jewish, Hindu and Muslim calendars (David Rahabi, 1785).¹⁴

Both Ernakulam communities – Tekkumbhagam and Kadavum bhagam - used Hebrew in commerce. According to reports both from members of the Jewish community and interviews with local market vendors in Ernakulam, the Jews used to have a secret method of calculating prices in the bazaar, which they negotiated in Hebrew.

Further evidence of the prominence of Hebrew in the Cochin Jewish community is the clock tower erected in 1760 above the Paradesi synagogue at the end of Jew Town, which has Hebrew numbers on one of its four faces.¹⁵ Since Cochin Jewry never suffered anti-Semitism (except a brief spell under the Portuguese), they had nothing to hide by concealing Hebrew; on the contrary, they proudly displayed the Hebrew letters on high for all local inhabitants and visitors to see in the area.

As with other Jewish communities, Hebrew was the major liturgical language. All the prayer books and Torah scrolls were written in Hebrew, although from the nineteenth century on, a few prayer books were translated into Malayalam. The Jews followed the Sefardi liturgy, but prayed according to the "Shingli rite."¹⁶ According to P.T. Nair, "The kingdom of Shingly (a corruption of Tiruvancikulam where the Perumals had their seat of Government in ancient Kerala) is that part of Crangagnore town which goes by the name of Kottapuram today".¹⁷ In 1341, after the harbour of Cranganore silted up (in a tsunami-like tidal wave), the Jews of Cranganore moved to Cochin, but they continued to pray unto this day according to the Shingli incantation and texts. As Segal writes: "The hypothesis that the source of the Shingli pronunciation is Mesopotamian is strengthened by an analysis of the melodies peculiar to the Shingli texts. They are employed in services at the end of every festival, on Purim night, on Sabbaths in the middle of Passover and *Sukkot*, *Hanukkah*, on the Sabbath after *Tisha b'Ab* and in part on *Tisha b'Ab* itself" (1969:98).¹⁸ According to the ethnomusicologist Spector, the Shingli rite bears close resemblance to the Yemenite cantillation both in structure and in rhythm.¹⁹

The Hebrew liturgical book *Huppat Hatanim*, a collection of prayers according to the Shingli rite, was published in Amsterdam in 1769 and in Livorno in 1849.²⁰

As is well-known, the Jews of Kerala, men and women alike, had a high literacy rate (as did their non-Jewish counterparts). Members of the Paradesi community, as well as some members of the Malabar communities, knew how to read Hebrew and to follow the Hebrew prayers. Men took part in reading the Torah in the synagogue and a selected few acted as cantors (*hazanim*), although Cochin Jewry never produced any Rabbis. From 1826 until the twentieth century, Cochin Jews officiated as *hazanim* (cantors) and *baalei koreh* (readers) in the synagogues among the Bene Israel of Bombay,²¹ and other Indian cities, including Pune and Ahmedabad,²². Until their mass emigration in the early 1950's, the Malabar Jews never needed to hire outsiders to read for them or to lead their services in Hebrew; the same is true of the Paradesi community to this day.

The Cochin Jews were the forerunners of Hebrew printing in India. The first Hebrew press in Calcutta was established in 1840 by Eliezer ben Aron Arakie, a Cochin Jew of Yemenite descent. In the same year, another Cochin Jew, Solomon ben Salem Sharabi set up the Hebrew printing press in Bombay.²³ In 1877, Joseph David Hacoheh opened the first Hebrew publishing house in Parur, Cochin.

Cochin Jewish *Piyyutim*

In addition to the religious texts and original prayers, all of the Cochin Jewish communities produced religious singers (*paytanim*) and lyricists. They also wrote their own unique *piyyutim* and prayers, such as *Seder Azharot*, written by Adenese-Cochini song-writer (*paytan*) Elia (Elijah) Adeni, which was published in Amsterdam in 1688 (1684?), and "The Book of Poetry for Shabbat and Festivals", published in Amsterdam in 1757.²⁴ Hacothen's printing press at Parur printed six prayer books and *piyyutim* in Hebrew and Malayalam in five years until 1882.

Over the centuries, the eight Jewish communities in Cochin composed hundreds of Hebrew songs that they sang on festive occasions, on Sabbaths and on festivals.²⁵ On *Simhat Torah* (The Rejoicing of the Law) (which falls on the eight day of *Succot* (Tabernacles)), there are dozens of different songs recited on the festival. These songs were either sung as part of the synagogue service or at the end of the formal part of the prayers, or in the home.

In Israel, several collections of what are known by the Cochin Jews as *kollas*²⁶ have been collated among Cochin Jews. In 1963, members of the agricultural settlement Nevatim published a collection of *kollas* under the name "Book of Songs and Praises", which also included *Huppah Hatanim*. This book was used by members of the Ernakulam, Chennamangalam and Mala communities. In 1980, a collection entitled *Areshet Sefateinu* was published in Ashdod by two ex-members of the Parur community, Meir bar Menahem and the late Eliahu Hai Tiferet, who settled in Israel in 1955. A further book was published in Rishon le-Zion and Ramat Eliahu entitled "The Prayer Order and Songs for Sabbaths and Festive Occasions".

Purim in Cochin

The ludic festival of Purim was one of the favourite days in the annual ritual cycle for the Jews of Cochin, possibly because they felt some geographic proximity to the original events of the festival, King Ahaseurus' kingdom stretching from "India to Kush". The festival, or even carnival, which falls on the thirteenth day of the twelfth Jewish month Adar, commemorates the time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination and they prevailed over their adversaries (Book of Esther 9:1). On this festival, all Jewish communities read the Book of Esther, in which the Purim story unfolds: Esther, a beautiful young Jewess, was taken to the house of Ahaseuerus, King of Persia, to become part of his harem. King Ahaseuerus loved Esther more than his other wives and concubines, and crowned Esther Queen.

The king was unaware that Esther was a Jew, because Mordechai, her uncle who had raised her as if she were his daughter, told her not to reveal her identity. The villain of the story is Haman, King Ahaseurus' favourite, who hated Mordechai for refusing to bow down to him, so Haman plotted to destroy the entire Jewish people. Mordechai persuaded Esther to intervene on behalf of the Jews, and she told Ahaseurus of Haman's plot. The Jewish people was saved, and Haman was hanged on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordechai. Jewish communities, with the Indian community being no exception, hold carnival-like celebrations on Purim, perform plays and parodies, and even hold beauty contests in fancy dress. Religious Jews organize a Purim feast, reminiscent of the royal feast mentioned in the Book of Esther, in which, for one day in the year, Jews are allowed to get drunk "until they cannot distinguish between Haman and Mordechai". At these banquets, families and friends sing Purim songs and enjoy the revelry.

In a rare description of Purim among the Malabar Jews, Hacco describes the festival thus: "In the evening, after the fast, everyone attends the synagogue to hear the reading of the scroll of Esther... Cochin Jewish children were given shiny coins by the adults. They were kept busy carrying the full plates of tasty homemade pastries to friends, neighbours, and relatives; and tasting them as well. Moreover, there was the thrill of making an effigy of the cruel Haman, the enemy in the Book of Esther, and burning it in a bonfire. In my community of Chendamangalam²⁷ in the early 1950's, there was also a community party, a fancy-dress competition, and traditional charity-giving to the local poor".²⁸ Among the Paradesi community, Katz and Goldberg similarly describe the Purim banquet, the social reversals on the holiday reminiscent of the Hindu celebration Holi at the same time of the year, and the silver rupees the children would receive from the adults. "All of these joys have passed into memory", they wistfully wrote. In 1987, the Purim they observed was subdued and the communal festive meal had been reduced to drinks and snacks "although everyone participated enthusiastically, and a jovial spirit prevailed".²⁹

Purim Songs

Purim songs, which are just some of the hundreds of songs sang by Cochin Jews on ritual and life-cycle occasions, are sung before and during the festival. The *piyyutim* were in no way intended to replace the set versions of prayers, but represented embellished poetic literature, which adorned the liturgy of the festival. Two Purim songs in Malayalam are recorded in the book "Karkulali-Yefefiah-Gorgeous!"³⁰ One entitled "Ahashverosh Song" (M23, H20) recounts some of the

Purim story of Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus. The second song designated "The Certificate Box" (M24,H21, CD26) is composed by the Cochin Jew Daniel Haim (d. 1935) and sung by the women (and men) in Malayalam. This song is based on a story from the *Midrash* (corpus of Jewish legends) about Haman's daughter. When King Ahasuerus ordered Haman to bring Mordechai on horseback to the palace to announce Mordechai's brave deed, Haman's daughter mistook her father, leading the horse with Mordechai riding on top of it, for Mordechai, and emptied a chamber pot on her own father's head. She then fell from her window and died.

In the collections of *kollas*, several other Hebrew Purim songs are recorded. To the best of my knowledge, "Today is Purim" was published by Malabar Jews in Israel once only in the collection "The Prayer Order and Songs for Sabbaths and Festive Occasions" (n.d.), with no mention of the identity of the composer.

The Purim song "Today is Purim, Purim is for Us" was brought to my attention on my last visit to Cochin in January 2005 when Samuel Hallegua, head of the Paradesi community in Cochin today, gave me a copy for my interest.³¹ In this paper, I shall focus on the actual poem and its sociological context, without referring to the musical notation.

"Today is Purim"

The Poem in Translation

The Purim poem, which lies at the core of this paper, is written in Hebrew (see Appendix 1). However, it is reproduced here in English translation, as it was published in Katz and Goldberg in 1993; next to the title is written the name of the author – I.E. Hallegua (d.1941) and below is written the name of the translator.³²

Today is Purim/ Purim Hayom I. E. Hallegua (d.1941)

- 1 Today is Purim, our Purim.
- 2 Drink, My brothers, drink unto intoxication.
- 3 Rejoice today. The Almighty has wrought for us a miracle.
- 4 In the time of King Ahashverosh when Haman the Terrible rose (to power)
- 5 The God of Israel took revenge on our behalf
- 6 He blocked the tyrant's designs.

- 7 The enemy (Haman) became enraged
- 8 When he saw Mordechai the Yemenite spit contemptuously at him,
- 9 When all the others bent their knees (to him).
- 10 In consultation with Zeresh (his wife) and friends,
- 11 He erected a scaffold so that he might hang Mordechai,
- 12 And after that kill all his enemies (the Jews).
- 13 But when she heard the Mordechai was a Jew,
- 14 (Zeresh) said to Haman,
- 15 " I feel pity for you, pity indeed".
- 16 The King's lips hissed, " Will he even insult my Queen?"
- 17 From that moment on (Haman) couldn't even raise his head
- 18 And they covered his face.
- 19 The never-widowed nation sang songs
- 20 When they hanged Haman and his sons on his own gallows,
- 21 Like on the day the Pharaoh was drowned.
- 22 (All of Israel) sang and rejoiced around Mordechai and Hadassah (Esther).
- 23 So today let us enjoy and rejoice sevenfold
- 24 Because on that day the sun shone forth with sevenfold brightness.

Translated by Jacob E. Cohen

The late Jacob Cohen, better known as Jackie, was a beloved member of the Paradesi community, whose Hebrew knowledge was excellent. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out, there are several minor differences between the Hebrew text and the English translation.³³

The Composer

The song was almost undoubtedly composed by one of the greatest Cochin Hebrew poets and *paytanim*, Isaac Elias Hallegua (1868-1941), probably in the year 1905. It could be argued that the composer felt special affinity to the Purim festival since his wife's name was Esther (1870-1957), the heroine of the festival. Isaac Hallegua (1868-1914) was the father of eight children and 16 grandchildren, including the above mentioned Samuel Hallegua.³⁴ In 1886, I.E. Hallegua graduated from the British University of Madras and afterwards worked in real estate and commerce. He was fluent in Malayalam, English and Hebrew and

composed several songs and poems in Hebrew, including a hitherto unpublished Hebrew text on Dolly, his youngest daughter Rivka, who drowned in 1909 at a young age.³⁵

It is noteworthy that the authorship of the song was challenged during my recent research on the *piyyut*. When I enquired with a member of the Malabar (non-Paradesi) community as to the identity of the composer, she told me that it was anonymous. When I remarked that I thought that the composer was Isaac Elias Hallegua, she angrily remarked that “the Paradesi always take all the credit”.

Nevertheless, Barbara Johnson reports in personal correspondence (13.3.2005) that in a conversation with Ruby Daniel, with whom she wrote a book on her memoirs of Cochin,³⁶ Ruby mentioned that the Purim song was written by I.S. Hallegua’s grandfather (father’s father), Isaac Hallegua.

Structure, Genre and Theme

The song is 16 lines written in rhyming couplets with references to well-known Jewish texts, particularly from Purim texts, such as the Book of Esther read by Jews on Purim, but also from the Book of Proverbs, Psalms and the Prophets (Isaiah and Jeremiah). One can conclude that the composer was well-versed in the Torah, *Midrash* and the Holy Books, as well as the Jewish commentaries. The *piyyut* is similar to other well-known *piyyutim* from other Jewish communities.³⁷ I guardedly state that it appears not to be too influenced by local Malayali poetry of the period, but it should be pointed out that the Purim theme recounted in the song of destroying one’s enemies and turning round fate is one that would appeal to any Indian audience. So too are the themes of king and courtiers, wicked men and good men, beautiful queen and distressed people, and love and betrayal. Attention should also be drawn to the fact that although the Purim song is liturgical and ritually-rooted, the name of God does not appear once (as it does not appear once in the Book of Esther). The poem keeps the deity in the sidelines, as the major players in the poem act out a ludic drama. As in medieval south Indian poetry, there is a fascination with “becoming more alive”, as Shulman phrases it, with liberation from stasis, with unexpected outcomes.³⁸ It is significant that the heroine of this poem is a female, Esther the Queen, and that Zeresh, Haman’s wife, receives unusual prominence as her husband’s advisor and subsequently, a woman of independent spirit. One could surmise that such a “feminist” theme resonated in the south Indian state of Kerala, the country of the famous matrilineal Nayers.

Style

The composer utilizes several literary techniques familiar in *piyyutim*. Salient among these is the alliteration with the repetition of initial consonant sounds in neighboring words. For example, “*Ziftei [melech] zifzfu*” (“The king’s lips hissed”). in line 11 of the Hebrew version (line 16 of the English). “*Mar li Mar*” (“It is bitter for me”) in line 10 of the Hebrew version and line 15 of the translation, resonates with the word “*Hemar*” in the previous line 9 of the original poem (which is not translated in the English version), and is also a pun on the word “*Mar*” (Mr.) referring to Zeresh’s wicked husband Haman.

The song is replete with dual meanings. For example, “*Yarok, yarak*” (“Spat contemptuously”) in line 6 of the Hebrew version (line 8 in the English) refers both to the emotion “anger” expressed by God towards Miriam (Numbers 12:14) and to the direct word “to spit”. The author thus both referred to the fact that Mordechai spat at Haman instead of bowing down to him and to the anger (“Hema”) mentioned in the previous line that Haman felt towards Mordechai.

A literary analysis of the Hebrew song will be published in Hebrew elsewhere, since it is difficult to convey the Jewish references and play on words in Hebrew in an English paper.

The Community Affiliation of the Song

As mentioned, the song was given to me by a member of the Paradesi community. During my 2004 visit in Jew Town, several Israeli cousins were visiting, past members of the once thriving Paradesi community. When we mentioned the Purim song, everyone spontaneously broke out into song; both the men and the women knew the tune and the words off by heart.

I then asked many Malabar Jews, both in Kerala and in Israel, if they knew the song. Past members of both Ernakulam communities, the Mala and Parur congregations, the Chennamangalam community and even the Cochin Tekkumbhagam congregations, who used to reside some metres from the Paradesi synagogue, were unfamiliar with the song, although they all knew other Purim songs in Hebrew (such as “Purim, Purim Purim for us” with similar references to Ahaseurus and Hadassah, the Queen). However, ex-members of the Cochin Kadavumbhagam synagogue, which used to be located in the same road as the Paradesi synagogue and has been transferred to the Israel Museum,³⁹ knew the song well; again, men and women sang it spontaneously off by heart. However, they did not know who composed the

song and simply said that they had known it for years. It was suggested to me by more than one Malabar Jew that all the Cochin Jews, except for the Cochin Kadavumbhagam, banned the song precisely because it was a Paradesi song!

Conclusion

This paper has examined a Purim song, which provides supplementary knowledge to research carried out so far on Cochin Jewish songs. The Purim song is a song written and sang in Hebrew; it is sang in community and familial contexts and does not represent the 'property' of one or other gender, although it is composed by a male.

It is significant that in the context of Cochin Jewish women's songs, artistic composition did not necessarily take place under patriarchal conditions, as is in most societies. Raheja and Gold's outstanding study of women's songs show that women succeed in subverting patriarchal relationships within the domain of kinship through song.⁴⁰ In the case of Cochin Jewry, however, women occupied relatively prestigious positions in society, and feminine discourse was equally valued as masculine discourse in most contexts. Even in the synagogue, where traditionally women were forbidden according to the *halacha* (Jewish law) from reading from the Torah or acting as cantors, women's presence in ritual acts, including in the synagogue, was salient. In every Cochin Jewish synagogue, the Torah was read from a podium upstairs so that the women could hear perfectly from the women's gallery; and women participated in the services singing in loud voices.

In the case of the Purim song, and other similar compositions, the *piyyut* and its expression are distinctly communal, acting as boundary-markers of particular communities and demarcating the boundaries with other Jewish communities.

"Today is Purim" is a Paradesi song, composed by a learned and influential Paradesi male, yet sung to this day almost exclusively by members of their community. It is known by members of the *meshuchrarim* (manumitted slaves), attached to the Paradesi community (like the late Ruby Daniel mentioned above), and by members of the Cochin Kadavumbhagam community, who enjoyed a special relationship with the Paradesi, while still being excluded in the past from communal worship with them. From a sociological/anthropological point of view, then, the simple Hebrew Purim song analysed in this paper represents a boundary-marker defining who belongs to a 'shared culture'.

APPENDIX

"Today is Purim" in the Hebrew original

Notes

- ¹ Cf. B.C. Johnson, "New Research, Discoveries and Paradigms: A Report on the Current Study of Kerala Jews", in N. Katz, S. Weil and K. Ranabir eds. *A View from the Margin: the State of the Art of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006 (forthcoming).
- ² Nathan Katz and Ellen S. Goldberg, *The Last Jews of Cochin: Jewish Identity in Hindu India*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993. In 2001, Barbara Johnson predicted (incorrectly, as it happened) that Cochin Jewish Malayalam folksongs would not be preserved as a significant element in the cultural life of Cochin Jews in Israel. See: Barbara C. Johnson, "Till the Women Finish Singing: An Historical Overview of Cochin Jewish Women's Malayalam Songs," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 4, 2001, pp. 7-22.

- ³ B. C. Johnson, "Our Community in Two Worlds: The Cochin Paradesi Jews in India and Israel," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1985;..N. Katz and E. S. Goldberg, *The Last Jews of Cochin: Jewish Identity in Hindu India*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993. J.B. Segal, *A History of The Jews of Cochin*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993.
- ⁴ G. Hacco, "The Ritual Cycle of Cochin Jewish Holidays: a Malabari Perspective," in S. Weil, ed., *India's Jewish Heritage: Ritual, Art and Life-Cycle*, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002 (2nd edition 2004), pp. 68-77.
- ⁵ M. Bar Ilan, "India and the Land of Israel: Between Jews and Indians in Ancient Time," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 4, 2001, pp. 39-77; B. Weinstein, "Jewish Traders in the Indian Ocean-Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries: A Review of Published Documents from the Cairo Genizah," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 4, 2001, pp. 79-94.
- ⁶ Jose Alberto Rodrigues da Silva Tavim, "Une presence portugaise autour de la "nouvelle synagogue" de Cochin," in *Les Juifs Portugais: Exil Heritage Perspectives, 1496-1996*, Aldina da Silva, Andre Myre and Tereza Pinto, eds., Montreal: Mediaspaul: 1996, pp. 67-81.
- ⁷ A. Amar and R. Jacoby, *Ingathering of the Nations: Treasures of Jewish Art: Documenting an Endangered Legacy*, Andrew Lang and Michel Oren, trans., Jerusalem: Center for Jewish Art, The Hebrew University, 1998; O. Slapak, ed., *The Jews of India: A Story of Three Communities*, Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995.
- ⁸ B. C. Johnson, "They Carry Their Notebooks with Them: Women's Vernacular Jewish Songs from Cochin, South India," *Pe'amim* 82, 2000, pp. 64-80. (Hebrew); B. C. Johnson, "Till the Women Finish Singing: An Historical Overview of Cochin Jewish Women's Malayalam Songs," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 4, 2001, pp. 7-22.
- ⁹ B. Johnson, "After word: The Songs and the Project", in S. Zecharia and O. Galmliel eds. *Karkulali-Yefefiah-Gorgeous!-Jewish Women's Songs in Malayalam with Hebrew Translations*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 2005, pp. 208-226. The book is accompanied by a disk: *Oh Lovely Parrot: Jewish Women's Songs from Kerala*. The Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2005. A book in German was also published: Albrecht Frenz and Scaria Zacharia, *In meinem Land leben verschiedene Volker: Baustein zu einem Dialog der Kulturen und Religionen, Texte alter judischer Lieder aus Kerala, Sudindien*, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2002.
- ¹⁰ A. I. Simon, *The Songs of the Jews of Cochin and their Historical Significance*, Cochin: Pangal Press 1946, pp. 43-44.
- ¹¹ P.M. Jussay, "The Song of Evarayi," in *Jews of India*, Thomas Timberg, ed., New Delhi: Vikas, 1986, pp. 145-160.
- ¹² S. Weil, "Symmetry between Christians and Jews in India: the Cnanite Christians and the Cochin Jews of Kerala," *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1982, pp. 175-196.
- ¹³ V.Das, *Critical Events: an Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.13.
- ¹⁴ B. Weinstein, "Jewish Pepper Traders of the Malabar Coast: The Rahabis," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 5, 2002, pp. 40-54.
- ¹⁵ I.Weil, "The Paradesi Cochin Synagogue Architecture," in S. Weil, ed. *India's Jewish Heritage: Ritual, Art, and Life-Cycle*, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002 (2nd edition 2004), pp. 50-59.
- ¹⁶ A. M. Lesley, "Shingly in Cochin Jewish Memory and in Eyewitness Accounts," *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, Vol. 3, 2000, pp. 7-21.
- ¹⁷ P.T. Nair, "Jews of Cennamangalam and Paravur", *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. 2, Part 4, 1975, p. 487.
- ¹⁸ J.B. Segal, *A History of The Jews of Cochin*, London: Vallentine Mitchell and Co. Ltd., 1993, p.98.
- ¹⁹ J. Spector, . "Shingli Tunes of the Cochin Jews', *Asian Music* 3/2, 1972, pp. 23 – 28.
- ²⁰ I thank Samuel Hallegua for endowing me with a copy.
- ²¹ H.S Kehimkar, *History of the Bene Israel of India*. Tel Aviv: Dayag Press, 1897.
- ²² The grandfather of Elias Madai of Ramat Eliahu, Israel served as *hazan* of the Bene Israel Ahmedabad synagogue.
- ²³ W. Fischel, "The Literary Creativity of the Jews of Cochin on the Malabar Coast", *Jewish Book Annual* 28 , 1970/1, pp. 25-31.
- ²⁴ For a detailed survey of Cochin Jewish *piyyutim*, see: Edwin Seroussi, "The Singing of the Sephardi *Piyyut* in Cochin (India)," *Piyyut in Tradition Series*, 2, Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2001.
- ²⁵ Some of these can be seen and heard on a wonderful new web-site [<http://www.piyut.org.il/cgi-bin/search.pl?Expression=%E4%E5%E3%E5&x=23&y=13>].
- ²⁶ The etymology of this word is unknown. It is not Malayalam, but the word is definitely part of the Jewish dialect known as Judeo-Malayalam, distinct to Cochin Jews. According to Cochin Jewish informants, the derivation of the word is Hebrew and is a corruption of two words: "Kol" ("voice") "Hass" ("quietly"), namely, "the recital of poetry quietly".
- ²⁷ Chengamangalam and Chennamangalam (as spelled in this paper) are alternative spellings in English. Nair op. cit. spells the village Cennamangalam (sic).
- ²⁸ G. Hacco , "The Ritual Cycle of Cochin Jewish Holidays: a Malabari Perspective," in S. Weil, ed., *India's Jewish Heritage: Ritual, Art and Life-Cycle*, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002 (2nd edition 2004), pp.74.
- ²⁹ N. Katz and E. S. Goldberg, op.cit. pp.195-197.
- ³⁰ S. Zacharia and O. Galmliel eds. op. cit.
- ³¹ The purpose of the visit was to re-inspect the Malabari synagogues and, in particular, the newly renovated Chennamangalam synagogue in preparation

for the exhibition to be opened in Chennamangalam on Friday, February 24, 2006. My thanks to the Koret Foundation for financing that trip.

- ³² N. Katz and E. S. Goldberg, op. cit. pp.196.
- ³³ Firstly, in the Hebrew version the poem is 16 lines, whereas in the English translation it is 24. Secondly, the translator explains to his English-speaking audience to whom the Hebrew text refers. He thus places in parantheses the name Esther after Hadassah, since, according to Jewish tradition, Hadassah is Esther. Similarly, he fills in the names Zeresh, Haman's wife, and Haman, which would be obvious to any Hebrew reader. Thirdly, perhaps most interestingly, the translator concludes the poem with the 'sevenfold' mentioned twice in the last two lines, although 'sevenfold' does not appear in the Hebrew original. Seven is both a Jewish and an Indian lucky number.
- ³⁴ See: S.H. Hallegua, "The Marriage Customs of the Jewish Community of Cochin", in S. Weil, ed. *India's Jewish Heritage: Ritual, Art and Life-Cycle*, Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2002 (2nd edition 2004), pp. 61-67.
- ³⁵ I am currently working on the text on Dolly, with a view to publishing the entire document. This research is supported by the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East.
- ³⁶ D. Ruby and B. C. Johnson, *Ruby of Cochin: An Indian Jewish Woman Remembers*. Philadelphia, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1995.
- ³⁷ I thank Meir Buzaglo, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who has pointed out to me that the *piyyut* also contains references to well-known *piyyutim* in other Jewish communities.
- ³⁸ D. Shulman, *The Wisdom of Poets*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 8.
- ³⁹ Iris Fishof, "Moving the Cochin Synagogue from India to the Israel Museum: A Curator's Perspective," *The Israel Museum Journal*, Vol. 13, 1995, pp. 19-28.
- ⁴⁰ G. Raheja and A. Gold *Listen to the Heron's World : Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Appendix

Ledgers of the Jewish Community of Karachi

Michael Glatzer

The purpose of this paper is to report on the serendipitous discovery of ledgers of the Jewish Community of Karachi by an intrepid American Jewish tourist named Harriet Samuels who happened to pass through Karachi on the way to Islamabad in 1989 and came upon the ledgers covering the period of 1961 to 1976. In 2004 she presented the ledgers for safekeeping to the Library of the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, where they are available for research.

I would like to describe how these ledgers from Karachi reached Jerusalem, what they contain and their use for the study of the Jewish community of Karachi, which was comprised of Bnei Israel Jews, Cochin Jews and others.

I. Harriet Samuels

In 1989 Ms. Harriet Samuels, an American Jewish woman from West Hartford, Connecticut, whose pastime is meeting with Jews in various parts of the world, visited Bombay and met with members of the Bnei Israel community there. When she told them that she would be traveling to Pakistan to visit a friend who worked at the United States Embassy in Islamabad, but that she would be changing planes and staying overnight in Karachi, her acquaintances in Bombay told her that they had something important for her to investigate for them in Karachi. They told her that rumor had it that General Muhammad Zia ul Haq had given an order to knock down the synagogue in Karachi. However Zia was killed in a plane crash in 1988 and they had not heard whether the order was carried out or perhaps the synagogue was saved by chance as a result of Zia's death. Would she be willing to pass by the street where the synagogue was located and verify what had become of it? She promised to look into it for them.

She arrived in Karachi, took a hotel and asked the following morning for a driver to take her somewhere. She showed the driver the address she was given and he took her there. After some time he found Synagogue Street, the name of which appeared in Urdu and English on the street sign. Ms. Samuels got out of the car to take a few photos and then after a few minutes the driver urged her to get back into the taxi, saying “you see that man on the motorcycle, we’re gonna follow him he knows where the things are that you want.” She was perplexed by the fact that she wanted to photograph what was left of the synagogue, and he was taking her to see undefined “things”. A foreigner in a hostile land, she was left with little alternative than to do what the driver said.

He followed the cyclist to a house somewhere in Karachi, and in the yard she saw first a *bima* (lectern for reading the Torah) and afterwards an *aron qodesh* or *heikhal* (ark that holds Torah scrolls). The man who lived there had been entrusted with these few artifacts after the synagogue was destroyed. He let her glance inside the ark where she found a case for a Torah scroll. But there was no scroll inside it, only three ledgers containing the accounts of the synagogue.

She offered to buy them from him and he told just to take them and the Torah case as well. Putting them in the taxi she returned to her hotel and started to think how she could get them out of Pakistan. She realized that it would be highly dangerous to try to carry items of Judaica and manuscripts on an international flight out of Pakistan where she would have to pass through customs and passport control.

That afternoon she flew to Islamabad carrying the Torah case and the ledgers as hand baggage. The flight was a harrowing experience, but she did arrive safely and entrusted her cumbersome packages to her friend from the embassy. She had the ledgers sent to her home in Connecticut via a postal service and her friend in Islamabad repaired the Torah case and sent it out in the diplomatic mail.

After consulting friends what to do with the ledgers, Ms. Samuels decided to donate them to the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, a research institute in Jerusalem that collects material on all the Jewish communities in Asia and Africa. She brought them with her on a visit to Israel in 2004 where she entrusted them to the library of the Institute.

II. The Ledgers

There are three ledgers, 34 x 22 cm. They are all written in English in longhand. It appears that the predominant language in the community was Marathi, but English was the common language among the

different ethnic groups. It is also not unlikely that a local non-Jewish clerk was hired to record the bids on the Sabbath and festivals, when writing is proscribed. This seems to have been the case in other communities as well. Nathan Katz refers to this practice in the synagogue in Cochi in the 1980s. The three of them cover mainly donations and subscriptions to the synagogue during the period between January 1961 and June 1973, but with a gap between September 1966 and January 1969.

The categories of donations, as described in the first volume (January 1, 1961 to September 9 1965) are:

Date
 Receipt no.
 Subscription (membership)*
 Bids (for honors in the synagogue)*
Misheberakh = prayers on behalf of the living and on behalf of the ill
Hash Kaba = memorial prayers
 Oil
 Illumination of Lights (presumably this is a donation to help cover the electric bills of the synagogue)*
 Fees for Circumcision (payment to the *mohef*?)
 Donation*
 Fees for Vow Naming (i.e. naming of daughters)
 Changes of marriage certificate
 Fees for wedding
 Stones for graves
 Shroud cloth account
 Use of Halls
 Remarks

*Only four categories were frequently used during this period: Subscription, bids, Illumination of lights and donation.

This fact may reflect the age of the congregants, since very few births are recorded in this period. A brighter moment in the ledger is when the category “shroud cloth account” is replaced by “Charges for Birth Certificates,” written in by hand.

There are some very interesting remarks, such as the fact that a circumcision was held in the synagogue June 3, 1962 (no name is given). Another circumcision, this one in the family of Pinhas Shalome Wakintker, was performed on September 22, 1963.

A number of weddings are mentioned, such as two in the Mhedekar family, one in 1963 and the other in 1964.

A donation of 40 Rupees was made on October 6, 1963 by M. Gedin for “two young men for blowing the shofar [the ram’s horn].” This may indicate that the community had to draft qualified people to fill this important function on the Jewish New Year.

On March 3, 1964 a 14 Rupee donation was made, equivalent to “weight of hair”. This donation may remind us of the case of the Nazarite on one hand, and Hindu customs on the other.

Some of the notable contributions were for “full light” on important festival evenings, such as Hoshana Rabba (the last night of the feast of Tabernacles) or Simhat Torah (The Rejoicing of the Law), when there is an elaborate celebration in the synagogue and circuits are made carrying all of the Torah scrolls. This may indicate that at other times, when the lighting was not subsidized by some generous member, the synagogue was only partially lighted in order to save on electricity.

Volume 2 (October 2, 1961 – September 10, 1966) is particularly edifying, since here the bids are listed by name. The meaning of bidder here, is people who offered a certain amount for a particular honor on a particular day, such as opening the ark, being called to the Torah, or reciting the passage from the Prophets (*Haftara*). The most prestigious of these honors were “opening of *Ekhal* [the ark]” reading of *Mashlim* (the last passage in the weekly Torah portion), reading of *Haftara*. Notable also were the donations for “*Misheberakh* [the blessing of family members]”, “*Haskaba* [prayers for the deceased]”. Some of the *misheberakh* donations were characterized as “special *misheberakh*”. These often made by women and particularly after the fifth reading, were presumably prayers for the ill.

From these lists we can reconstruct the ethnic composition of the community. The great majority of names are Bnei Israel: For example, Bhorpher, Kharvilker, Warulker, Mhedeker, Dighorker. Other could be from Cochin: Mashiya Ben Daniel. Some names could be Cochini or Bagdadi (Indian Jews of Iraqi extraction): Moses Samuel, Cohen Ephraim (perhaps of Yemenite extraction). Other names are non-Indian, such as A.M. Davidson. One name is particularly intriguing and its origin needs to be clarified: Rahamim ben Matitya.

This book enables us to identify the most honored members of the community, or at least those who bought the greatest honors, such

as opening the ark on Simhat Torah and taking part in the first circuit with the Torah scroll that day, such as Enoch M. Daniel Bhapuker.

Other interesting remarks in this ledger are the sale of the *lulav* (palm branch and presumably the other three species that were taken on the Feast of Tabernacles) for 325 Rupees on September 29, 1964. Judging by the amount, it would appear that the community prepared and sold sets of the four species to members. Elsewhere the sum of 50 Rupees appears as income for a *lulav*. So we may presume that in 1964 about 6 sets were sold.

A lady name Mrs. W.J. Hertz donated 50 Rupees for a “special *misheberakh*” on April 12, 1966. Where did she come from? For whom was she asking that this prayer for the ill be made?

Some of the most interesting facts are found in the third volume (Jan. 1969-March 1976). This volume contains lists of subscriptions, i.e. memberships. It is notable that there were four classes of subscriptions. The first class paid 5 Rupees a month, the second 3, the third 2 and the fourth 1 Rupee. Here is the breakdown according to class in 1969:

5.00 Rs.	13	subscriptions
3.00	2	“
2.00	10	“
1.00	41	“

There were also 14 “non-members” whose donations are listed. Notable among them Ruby M. Daniel, a namesake of the Ruby Daniel, known to us from Barbara Johnson’s extensive collaboration with her and the book *Ruby of Cochin* that tells her story. This other Ruby Daniel “expired October 26, 1968, leaving her account in arrears by the sum of 359.50 Rs.”

In the list for 1969 we find the names of some individuals (Hannah Joseph, Benjamin Elijah, Naomi Reuben, Enoch R. Joel, Joseph R. Joel) with the remarks “resigned 1969.”

By contrast with 1969, in the period of January to June 1973 there were only 15 subscribers, among them nine who are listed as “left Karachi.” A community of six can hardly function and operate a synagogue.

In this way the ledgers allow us to trace the decline of the community in its last years.

The third ledger has many blank pages, indicative perhaps that there were no more donations to record.

III. The Jews of Pakistan

From other sources it is well known that the Jewish community in Pakistan comprised about 2500 Jews at the beginning of the 20th century. Most of them were Marathi speaking, i.e. Bnei Israel. Their main institution was the Magen Shalom Synagogue in Karachi built in 1893. There was also a community in Peshwar. After partition of India and founding of Pakistan (1947) and the partition of Palestine and founding of the State of Israel (1948), many Jews emigrated to India as a stepping stone to Israel and the UK. The community in Peshwar ceased to exist.

By 1968 only 250 Jews were living in Karachi.

From the testimony of Harriet Samuels (1989) we learn that there were only about seven Jews in Karachi at the time of her visit and they kept a very low profile.

It is also known that Pakistan has served as a transfer point for Iranian Jews, emigrating via Pakistan to India and from there to Israel or other countries.

However two interesting reports from 2000 and 2005, keep the memory of the Jews in Pakistan alive.

The first is a report by Kamal Siddiqi in the *Indian Express*, Bombay (December 17, 2000) describing the efforts an 82 year old woman named Rachel Joseph for “compensation and the right to build a synagogue on the site of Magen Shalom, Karachi’s last synagogue, which was demolished in the 80s to make way for a shopping plaza.” The government never honored its promise to provide an apartment for Ms. Joseph in the new building along with a site for a smaller synagogue. In the year 2000 Ms. Joseph went to court to ensure the preservation of the Bnei Israel graveyard, a small part of the Cutchi graveyard.

The second is a letter to the *Jerusalem Post* from December 2005 in which an individual named Ishaq Moosa Akheer introduced himself as a Jewish doctor working in a Karachi hospital. He claimed that he is a member of one of the 10 remaining Jewish families in Karachi. He claimed that they pose mostly as Parsis in public, but are now willing to reveal their true identity after the meeting of the Pakistani and Israeli foreign ministers in Istanbul and President Pervez Musharraf’s address to the American Jewish Congress in Washington, both in late 2005.

Some doubts have been cast regarding the authenticity of this letter, and indeed the facts he gave about the history of the community could all be found in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, but if the letter is authentic and the writer is who he says he is, then we have an additional bit of information on the fate of the few Jews who did remain in Karachi after all the turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s, the time of Zia’s Islamization program.

IV. Conclusion

There is obviously more work to be done on this subject, such as tracking down the families mentioned in the ledgers – in Israel and in the UK – and filling out the stories of their lives in Karachi, their emigration, where they live today and if they are still in touch with each other.

Most important is to say that even something appears to be the most prosaic material and nearly worthless – records of receipts and donations to a synagogue – can be of great value in reconstructing the history of a community. Anyone who has access to such material should give it to the libraries of research institutes and universities where scholars in the future will be able to glean information from it.

Jewish Musicians in the Lands of Islam: An Overview

Edwin Seroussi

Recently I pointed out that due to the Israeli-Arab conflict that spans throughout the 20th century, Jewish and Arabic cultures are generally perceived as being in collision (Seroussi 2000). This political conflict spilled over the religious issue, creating a sense that Judaism and Islam are in conflict too. Yet, since the inception of Islam and at least until the 16th century, the majority of the Jewish people dwelled in the Arab and Persian, and later Ottoman, Empires. This close physical contact led, in spite of religious differences, to diverse types of cultural syntheses, such as the various Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian languages and literatures. It appears though that music is the field in which Jews and the peoples of Islam (Arabs, Persians, Turks, etc.) achieved their closest and most fertile cultural exchange.

Several authors have already observed the role of Jews as transmitters of the musical traditions of the lands of Islam, i.e. as composers and performers of generally urban musical genres since the inception of Islam and until the recent present. Yet, the reasons behind this phenomenon and particularly its wide scope and geographical spread (from the Maghreb to Central Asia) are still to be assessed. The present article is a general overview of this issue aiming to set the basis for more detailed studies of this subject in the future.

At the outset, one must make a differentiation between the music made by the Jews of Islamic lands for their internal needs, especially the music related to the synagogue liturgy and the music produced by professional Jewish musicians on behalf of the surrounding Islamic society. This methodological division between internal and external spaces and occasions of performance does not necessarily imply differences in musical materials (e.g. the same modal systems of the external music

scene apply to internal repertoires). Yet, it has an undeniable influence on the choices of musical genres and on the manners of performance. A clear example is the role of instrumental music, which is much more noticeable in the music for external rather than internal consumption. The present article focuses only on the involvement of Jews in the music of the external society.

Another methodological observation to be made pertains to the differentiation between the Jewish involvement in musical practice as opposed to their role in the development and transmission of music theory and philosophy in the Islamic countries (for an overview, see Werner and Sonne 1941-1943; Shiloah 1993; for source texts see Adler 1989). The acquaintance of Jewish thinkers with Arabic music theory and thought can be traced back to the times of Rabbi Saadyah Gaon (882-942) in Baghdad. Rabbi Saadyah's passage on the rhythmic cycles in his *Sefer emunot ve-de'ot* is apparently indebted to Al-Kindi (836-901). Many more examples of this involvement can be found in Islamic Spain. Yehuda ibn Tibbon's Arabic translation of Yehuda Halevy's (1075-ca. 1141) famous passage on singing in the *Sefer ha-kuzari* is indebted to the terminology of Al-Farabi's (873-951) *Kitab al-musiqi al-kabir*. The source of a passage on music in the *Sepher ha-mevaqqesh* by Shem-Tov ben Yossef ibn Falaqera (1225-1295) appears to be the "Epistle of Music" composed by members of the Brotherhood of Purity (*Ikhwān al-Safā*) sect (see Shiloah 1978).

Traces of the austere attitude to music in Islamic orthodoxy, especially towards instrumental music and women's song, can be found in Jewish writings on music. An important example is the *reponsum* (a legal opinion by a religious authority) of Rabbi Hayya Gaon (939-1038) to the members of the Jewish community of Gabes (today in Tunisia) who asked him whether it is permitted to perform Arabic music in Jewish weddings. In his response Rabbi Hayya maintains that songs and hymns praising God are admitted and "no man from the People of Israel in the whole world abstains from them" but "songs of love of a person for a person to praise human beauty for its beauty, to laud the hero for its heroism, etcetera, such as those called by the Arabs *ash'ar al-ghazl* ('songs of love'), and... women that play the drums and dance, there is nothing worse than this and even [worse] if this occurs in a drinking party of men, [then] they are totally prohibited". Echoes of this strict position against instrumental music, women's song, and music associated with drinking are found in the opinions of later rabbis from Spain, most notable in the famous *responsum* concerning music by the great Maimonides (see Cohen 1934).

Contacts between the Jewish and the Islamic ideologies of music are also found in the mystical streams of both religions, i.e. in Kabbalah and Sufism (Fenton 1977, 1981, 1984). It is known that Jews had direct access to the teachings of Sufi masters such as Al-Ghazali (d. 1111). A notable example of this influence is found in the writings of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia from Spain (13th century) and his disciples (Idel 1984). The book *Sha'are tzedeq* written probably in Palestine by one of the disciples of Abulafia includes a detailed description of the Sufi "path". In 14th century Egypt one finds even more tangible evidence of this Sufi influence. Rabbi Abraham ben Moses ben Maimon, son of Maimonides believed that the Sufi kept the traditions of the Biblical Prophets, and even related the musical practices of the Sufis with those of the Levites and King David.

Yet, this ideological affinity between Judaic and Islamic thought concerning music (see the articles in Shiloah 1993) cannot conceal that Jews were proportionately more active than Muslims in the development of music as a profession. Their status as a tolerated religious minority in the lands of Islam created a space for their dedication to music on behalf of the non-Jewish majority. For this reason, the Islamic musical heritage is carried with extreme care until the present by the descendants of the Jews from Islamic countries scattered around the world (see, for example, the case of the Syrian Jews in the USA in Kaufman Shelemay 1998).

Jewish musicians at the service of the surrounding non-Jewish society

Professional Jewish musicians performing outside their communities in the lands of Islam are documented since the medieval period. In general, the social contexts for such activities were the palaces of rulers and the aristocracy. Unlike musicians of other religious and ethnic denominations active in Islamic courts, the Jews were generally not slaves. However, they were compelled to appear at the courts whenever the monarchs ordered it. This status is reflected in a Jewish folk tale found in various versions and variants throughout the Islamic countries. According to it, a Jewish musician is ordered to play or sing in the midst of a Jewish holiday against the religious precepts, thus creating the dilemma of whether to remain faithful and face the consequences, or to betray his faith. Sometimes the Jewish musician commits suicide; in other cases he saves his life by intoning a song of the corresponding Jewish holiday.

Several names of Jewish musicians serving at the Muslim courts of Spain are recorded. For example, in the semi-mythological history of

Zyriab, the founder of the Western Arabic School, a Jewish musician, Al-Mansur al-Yahudi, who was active at the court of Alhakim I and Abderrahman II in Córdoba, is sent to Algesiras to receive the great musician coming from the Eastern Caliphate. Rabbi Eliyahu Capsali (1483-1555) from Constantinople relates the story of a Jewish musician, a refugee from Spain, called Abraham who was nominated by Sultan Bayazid II (1481-1511) to the highest musical position at the seraglio after the monarch in disguise heard him play at the Jewish quarter (Capsali 1976, vol. 1:91ff). Sometimes, Jewish musicians served as the link of the Jewish community to the centers of power. In Libya Jewish men gained access to the palace "by virtue of their abilities as singers" (Goldberg 1990:26).

The role of Jews in instrumental music performance and composition in the urban centers of the Islamic empires from the 18th century onwards, is particularly remarkable. The bias of Islamic orthodoxy against instrumental music may be one cause for this phenomenon. Despite the rabbis' predisposition against instrumental music, their attitude was more lenient than their Muslim counterparts, perhaps because playing music was a source of income for underprivileged Jews. Still, the status of Jewish instrumentalists in the Jewish community was considerably low. Jewish ensembles, sometimes including non-Jewish musicians or accompanying Muslim male and female singers, perpetuated the repertoires from the various classic music traditions in North Africa (Ben Ami 1970), the Middle East, Iraq (Warkow 1987), the Caucasus (Eliyahu 1999), Persian (Nettl and Shiloah 1978) and Central Asia (Slobin 1982), serving as agents of musical exchange between the different parts of the Islamic world. In most cases Jewish ensembles served both the Jewish and the Muslim audiences in life cycle events (notably weddings) and for pure entertainment (e.g. playing in coffee-houses and private residences). Although "Jewish musicians" in the present context refers to male performers and composers, there are cases of Jewish women who crossed the barriers of their traditional communities and became performers of instrumental music in Jewish and, more rarely, non-Jewish events.

Jewish musicians were active in the practice of the Arabo-Andalusian music traditions in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. In earlier periods there is still evidence of instrumental music performances by gentiles for Jews in North Africa. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Musa (Tetuán ca. 1680 Tunis 1733) testifies: "I witnessed a scandal...[Jews from Tunis] bring to their houses in holidays, and sometimes on week days, gentiles that play *kinnor* (*kamanja*) and *nevel* ('ud) and *tof* (drum, probably *tar*) and *halil* (wind instrument, perhaps the *ghaita*)... and men inter-

mingle with women...” (Ms. British Museum 440, fol. 164v). However, since the 19th century the Jewish instrumentalists appear to attain prominence, as testified by travelers such as the Italian Jew Samuel Romanelli and the French painter Eugene Delacroix, as well as by the esteem of the Sultans towards Jewish musicians, e.g. ‘Abd el-‘Aziz (ruled 1894-1908). The cities Marrakech and Mogador have a history of Jewish performers of *al-ala* (Moroccan Andalusian music). Among the famous ensembles from Marrakech in the early 20th century was the *Arba’a al-kbira* (lit. “large or double four”, because it included twice the number of each instrument: ‘*ud*, *rebab*, Western viola and *tar*) headed by Samuel ben Dahan. In Mogador the leading ensemble was that of Yosef Zdidi, whose musicians were trained by the Muslim master Mahdi ben Sota (Ben Ami 1970).

Jews were also active in the perpetuation of Andalusian musical traditions. Edmond Nathan Yafil (1877-1928) was a leading figure in the renaissance of the Arabo-Andalusian music of Algeria (*gharnati*) in the early 20th century and published a landmark collection of the literary repertoire related to this music. Founder of the musical society and school Al-Moutribia, Yafil is considered until the present as a central figure in the renaissance of Algerian art music (Bouzar-Kasbadji, 39-86). He was assisted in this task by other Jewish talented musicians and scholars, such as Alfred Lebrati (b 1885). Another major figure was the violin and rebab player Saul Durant, nicknamed Mouzino (1865-1928), who used to accompany the great Muslim singer Mohamed Sfindja (d 1908). Among the Jewish instrumentalists of the Algerian *nawba* in the 20th century were Saud El Medioni, called Saoud l’Oranais. In Constantine Sheikh Raymond Leyris and Sylvain Ghrenassia continued to excel in the performance of the local Andalusian tradition. Jewish and Muslim Arab musicians still shared performances in North Africa in the 1970s, as for example in the Island of Jerba (in Tunisia; see Davis 1999). The peace process in the Middle East has allowed for a tentative renewal in the relations between Muslim and Jewish musicians from Morocco, with mutual exchanges and performances being staged in Israel and in Morocco.

Ottoman Jewish musicians from Constantinople (Istanbul), Edirne, Saloniki and Izmir were involved in the development of Ottoman classic music since the early 17th century (see Seroussi 1990, 2001). Among them are *miskali* (player of *miskal*, an Ottoman panpipe) Yahudi Yako and *tamburi* (player of the string instrument *tambur*) Yahudi Kara Kaş and the composers Çelebiko (an instructor of the famous Ottoman musician Prince Cantemir), Moshe Faro (known as Musi or *tamburi hakham* Muş, d. 1776) a leading musician in the court of Sultan

Mahmud I, Aharon Hamon (known as Yahudi Harun, died after 1721) and Isaac Fresco Romano, known as *tamburi* Izak (1745-ca.1814), the most prominent Jewish musician of the Ottoman Empire ever, who served at the court of sultan Selim III. Among the distinguished Jewish musicians and composers of more recent generations in Turkey are Shem Tov Shikiar (1840-1920) from Izmir and Abraham Levy Hayyat (Missirli Ibrahim, b. 1881) who was active in Istanbul.

Iraqi Jews were conversant in all musical genres practiced in this country. They played a particular role in the development of the traditional *al-maqam al-Iraqi* in the 19th and 20th centuries (Warkow 1986, 1987). The instrumental ensemble established by Jewish musicians, called *al-chalgi al-Baghdadi*, consisted of a singer (*qari al-maqam*) accompanied by a *santur* (a version of the Persian 72-string box zither activated by two wooden sticks), *jawsa* or *al-kamana al-Baghdadiya* (three or four string spike fiddle), *dumbek* (clay drum) and *duff* (small frame drum with cymbals). More modern ensembles incorporated the Western violin, *qanun*, *nay* and ‘*ud*. At the International Congress of Arabic Music held in Cairo in 1932 almost all the official Iraqi delegation consisted of Jews. They were headed by the famous ‘*udi* Ezra Aharon (‘Azzuri Effendi) who was involved in the introduction of “modern” (i.e. Egyptian) music to Iraq. Another prominent Iraqi Jewish musician of that period was the violinist and composer Salah al-Kuweiti, a founding member of the Iraqi Radio Orchestra in 1936 who worked in close cooperation with his equally successful brother Daud al-Kuweiti. Aharon left Iraq for Palestine in 1934 to become a leading figure in the development of modern Arab music in Palestine/Israel and the leader of the “Oriental” Orchestra of the British-sponsored Palestinian Broadcasting Authority. Later on he was joined by the Al-Kuweiti brothers, as well as by many other remarkable Iraqi Jewish musicians expert on the local *maqam*. They founded the Oriental Music Orchestra of Kol Israel, the Israeli Radio that included Jewish immigrants from Iraq and Egypt as well as local Muslim and Christian Arab musicians. In this context it is worth mentioning the modernist Jewish composer Selim Al-Nur, known after his immigration to Israel as Shlomo Ziv-Li (b 1920).

Interpreting of the Iraqi *maqam* was not a male privilege. Skilled Iraqi Jewish female singers performed this repertoire as well, as Selima Murad (1900-1972) who was honored with the prestigious title of “Pasha”. She was probably the most renowned female Iraqi singer of the 20th century. Another impressive female *maqam* singer of Jewish descent whom some recordings have been preserved was Sultana Youssif (1903-1981), who converted to Islam and later on appeared under the name of Hajja Sultana Youssif (see Van der Linden 1999).

In the Kurdish territories of Iraq, Jews shared the instrumental repertoire for *zurna* (double reed oboe) and *doira* (large barrel drum hanging on the shoulder and activated with sticks) with their Muslim counterparts. This instrumental music accompanies group dancing in weddings and other family celebrations (Squires 1975).

Persia was another Muslim country where Jews played a substantial role in the conception and transmission of art and folk music. This phenomenon was particularly noticeable in Shiraz (Loeb 1972). A census of 1903 counted sixty professional Jewish instrumentalists and singers in this community of 5000. Jewish experts on the Persian *dastga-ha* are known by name since the late-19th century. The *kamancha* virtuoso Musa-Khan Kashani (1856-1939) who served under Prince Thal Al-Sultan was considered one of the great creative geniuses of Persian classical music. In the 20th century the outstanding Jewish name was Mortaza Ney-Davud (b ca 1904), a disciple of Aqa Huseyn-Qoli and Darwish-Khan, who recorded his *radif* in the 1970s on behalf of the Iranian government (Netzer 1984).

In the Eastern Caucasus, from Baku to Nalchick, it was customary for Muslims to engage Mountain Jewish musicians in their festivities (Eliyahu 1999). The music profession was handed down among the members of one family and therefore the Jewish ensembles consisted of relatives. Among the musical genres performed by Jews are sections of the Azeri and Daghestani *mugham* repertoire. Suites consisting of a *mugham* (improvised section), *tasnif* ("song") and *rāng* ("dance") were regularly played at weddings. Among the outstanding Mountain Jewish musicians we can mention the *garmoshka* (Asiatic accordion) virtuoso Shamil Navakhov (1920-1981) and the members of the Avdalimov and Izrailov ensembles from Derbent.

Outstanding Jewish performers were also involved in the transmission of the *shash maqam* tradition from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The old Jewish style of *shash maqam* was chamber-like, being performed only by the Uzbeki *tanbur* accompanied by the *doira* (large frame drum). Under Soviet influence, larger ensembles were constituted consisting, in addition to the traditional instruments, of *dutar* (two-string lute), *chang* (hammered zither related to the Persian *santur*), *ghijak* (upright spike fiddle), *nay* (traverse flute) and clarinet. Among the distinguished *shash maqam* Jewish performers in the 20th century are Levi Bobohonov, Gabriel Mullokandov, the Talmasov brothers, Berta Davidov, Barno Izhakova and the Eliezerov family of Uzbeki musicians reached Palestine in the 1930s and perpetuated their tradition there (Slobin 1982). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Jewish musicians from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, who comprised a relatively large percentage

of the professional performers in their countries of origin, resettled in Israel and in the New York area where they continue to develop their art.

Jewish female instrumentalists in the Islamic world include chiefly percussionists who accompanied ensembles of female singers. From the 19th century on there is evidence of Jewish women playing other musical instruments, always in internal gatherings. The traveler Victor Guerin witnessed in mid-nineteenth century Rhodes Sephardi girls and women who met regularly at the fountain in the main street and knew how to play "a guitar that resembled a Spanish mandolin and accompanied singing and dancing at celebrations" (1856). Playing string instruments such as *'ud*, mandolin, and even the *qanun*, was customary among Eastern Sephardi women in the early 20th century, as part of the modernization processes affecting their communities during this period.

Examples of semi-professional female ensembles are the *daqqaqat* from Iraq, a group of four to five drum players who entertained audiences at weddings and parties. Similar to them are the *tañedoras* in the Sephardi communities of the Ottoman Empire. Jewish women performing outside their community was frowned upon phenomenon. A rabbinical responsum by Rabbi Moshe Israel from the Island of Rhodes (d 1782; see *Moshe yedabber*, fol. 57a) recalls two Jewish merchants who witnessed a group of non-Jewish men and women leaving a social gathering playing drums and wind instruments. Among them were two Jewish women, who were singing and rejoicing along with the others. The merchants reported the incident to the Rabbi who summoned the women to a meeting at which he warned them about their inappropriate conduct. The women replied that while they did indeed attend the gentile's parties, they did so solely in a professional capacity, not to socialize with the non-Jews, but to sing for pay.

Jews in the modern art and popular music of Islamic countries

European colonialism in North Africa and the Middle East since the 19th century granted the Jews a more secure status as citizens and created for Jewish artists new opportunities in the musical life in the major cities of these areas. The development of the recording industry, publishing houses, broadcasting and the film industry boosted this Jewish presence. Jews were also actively involved in live musical performances in the coffeehouses. An English Jewish witness writing from Tunis in 1847 reports: "There are about sixty musicians in this city, who get their livelihood by playing in the different coffee-houses, for which they are paid by the landlord; fifty-three out of the sixty are Jews,

and are distinguished from the minority by their superior skill of their art" (Margoliouth 1850, vol. II: 47-48). Thus, while Jewish musicians and music entrepreneurs continued to be involved in the performance of the classical traditions as in the past, they also commanded the emerging secular popular music styles stemming from the recording industry and the movies.

These phenomena were prominent in the Maghreb. In the popular Algerian styles one may mention the blind singer and 'ud player Reinette Sultana Daud, known as Reinette l'Orainase, Raymond Leyris from Constantine, the violinist Sylvain Ghrenassia, Edmond Atlan, and Enrico Macias, son of Sylvain, who attained a great success in France (see, Teboul 1987; Shiloah 2002 and 2002a). On lighter musical styles, including the Algerian-French *chanson*, excelled the Jewish artists Blond-Blond, René Perez and Lili Boniche.

In Tunisia, the French- and Egyptian-influenced popular song of the city of Tunis was composed and performed since the early 20th century mostly by Jews, such as the sisters Shamama and Leila Qfez, Hbiba Msika (Salama c 1893-d 1930), composer, 'ud and violin player and singer Bishi Slama (Khaisa Salama, 1891-1958), Louisa Al-Tunisiyya (1905-1966), Simon Amiel (born in Egypt), Raoul Journo (d. 2003), and the outstanding cantor Asher Mizrahi (1980-1967), who came from Jerusalem, and also recorded secular songs in Arabic (Taieb 1989; Shiloah 2003).

Among the performers of popular music genres in Morocco one finds Zohara Al-Fasiyya, Ibrahim Suiiri, Elma'alma Nejma and Sami Elmaghrebi. The latter became a prominent performer for the immigrant communities of Moroccan Jews in France, Canada and Israel. Another prominent Moroccan Jewish singer, Salim Halali, influenced him.

Less common was the participation of Jewish artists in the popular music of the Middle East. Yet, there were exceptions. For example, the Jewish singer and 'ud player Rachel Smuha (1895-1955), who became known as Fayruz Al-Halabiyya, was one of the most important figures of the Syrian song in the early 20th century.

That Jewish participation in the European influenced popular urban culture of the Islamic countries in the 20th century is one of the many signs of the weakening of traditional Jewish life and of the authority of the religious leadership during this period. As a means to avoid the influence of the entertainment industry and of the coffeehouses, some rabbis allowed the composition of Hebrew sacred songs texts set to the melodies of the most popular songs of the day. An expert in this craft was Rabbi David Buzaglo from Morocco.

There were cases in which the deep involvement of Jewish artists in the entertainment industry, coupled with the nationalist policies of the mass media of the Islamic countries, forced them to convert to Islam as a means to reach the summit of success, as for example the great Egyptian Jewish singer Layla Murad. Those who refused to abide to this trend had sometimes no choice but to leave. Such appears to be the case of cantor Isaac Algazi (1889-1951), an expert on the Turkish *ghazel* and a favorite singer of President Kamal Atatürk, who immigrated in the early 1930s to South America (Seroussi 1989).

Concluding statement

Our brief overview of Jewish musicians in Islamic lands shows that this neglected subject needs a much more detailed treatment. There are certainly many sources from different historical periods and geographical provenance that deserve to be investigated. These new sources may certainly expand our knowledge about other points of contact between Jewish and Islamic musical cultures.

At the present we can state that such contacts were intense and lasted for many centuries. Moreover, it appears that due to the austere attitude to music-making in Islamic thought and practice, Jews (together with other religious and ethnic minorities, such as the Christian Greeks or Armenians) were active carriers of Islamic musical traditions. The dedication of Jews to the music profession helped also to develop rich traditions within the walls of the Jewish community itself. It is plausible, for example, that venerable Islamic traditions of the past are kept alive in the liturgical practices of the small remnants of Jews in the Islamic countries (such as Iran, Turkey and Morocco) and of their descendants nowadays dispersed in the Western Hemisphere.

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THE RHYTHMS OF KERALA

A Cultural Study with Special Reference to Ekachuzhati Rhythms

Manoj Kuroor

In spite of being a small geographical area, Kerala is enriched by hundreds of traditional art forms. It may be the result of the convergence and conflicts of various religions, castes and races that have immigrated to this land through several centuries for various historical reasons. This hybridity of cultures had its reflection in the literature and artistic devices used in these art forms. The lack of historical evidence is a real hazard that compels us to refrain from making objective statements about the formulation of most of these art forms.

Classification of Rhythms

In a conventional manner, these art forms are divided into two genres i.e. Classical and folk. *Kathakali*, *Koodiyattam* and *Krishnanattam* belong to the classical genre¹ while *Theyyam*, *Padayani*, *Mudiyettu*, *Poorakkali*, *Kanyarkali*, *Kummattikkali*, *Margamkali*, *Dufmuttu*, *Sanghakkali* etc. are grouped as folk.² In a cultural perspective, it is important to note that these art forms are marked by the presence of numerous varieties of rhythms (*talas*). In other words, rhythm is the dominant factor among the artistic devices used in each and every traditional art form. A cultural study of these rhythms will strongly denounce the conventional classification of rhythms into classical/folk. Unless the adjective 'folk' helps to announce the existence and identity of some of these art forms by differentiating them from the classical tradition, even the classical art forms themselves were derived from the same folk tradition through the methods of stylization or standardization, the classification will allow the classical art forms to remain 'pure' and elite.

As far as the presence of rhythm is concerned, the same rhythm is used in various art forms and rhythms belonging to different systems of rhythm are practised in one art form despite the conventional division into classical/folk. A scholar and practitioner of these rhythms, the famous *Arjunanritham* artist, late Kurichi P. S. Kumaran said in a private conversation: "There are no classical rhythms; all rhythms are folk."³ This statement offers the possibility of comparison with the observation made by Edward W. Said on Western classical music: ". . . I accept the existence of a relatively distinct entity called 'Western classical music,' although at a later occasion perhaps I'd like to show that it is far from coherent or monolithic and that when it is talked about as if it meant only one thing it is being constructed with non-western, non classical musics and cultures very much in mind."⁴

Every art form flourishes in the cultural continuum of its own region while the regional culture is being nourished by the presence of these art forms. Though sometimes the cultural factors inherent in these arts are not so visible on the surface, it is possible to elucidate them by analyzing the techniques or devices - like rhythms, tunes, gestures and footsteps - used in them. In the works of Kunjan Nambiar, the 18th century poet and exponent of the art form *Thullal*, who had traveled and lived in many parts of Kerala, we can see the rhythms belonging to different regional cultures.⁵ He used the rhythms that consist of various systems of rhythm and defined some of them, even though he employed the criterion of classical music.

The ancient books on Indian music had divided the rhythms - generally music - into two categories. They regarded the rhythms belonging to a pan-Indian tradition as *Marga Talas* and rhythms practised in different regions as *Desi Talas*.⁶ But *Marga* is divine and only used by *Devas*, the deities and *Gandharvas*, the semi Gods.⁷ Still all the rhythms that were in practice, whether classical or folk, belonged to 'human' art forms demarcated as *Desi*! So many *Desi* systems of rhythms such as 120 *talas*, 101 *talas*, 108 *talas*, and *Suladi* system of 35 *talas* are some examples.⁸ Even the classical music and classical dance use these systems of rhythms.

Carnatic music, the most dominant form of South Indian classical music, has been practising *Suladi* system since the 16th century. This system consists of seven main *talas*. *Dhravam*, *Matyam*, *Roopakam*, *Champa*, *Tripata*, *Ata* and *Eka*. Each of them has five divisions (*Jaties*): *Thryasram*, *Chaturasram*, *Khandam*, *Misram* and *Sankirnam*. Then the total number of *talas* is $7 \times 5 = 35$.⁹ All other ancient rhythms are replaced by these rhythms for the eminent scholar-writers like Purandaradasa, Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri had written several

compositions in these talas. The wide acceptance of these compositions and rhythms in the modern age and the tendency among the traditional scholars to measure all other rhythms by using the criterion of this system put aside other rhythms practised in several regional art forms as well as the rhythms belonging to ancient systems.

The domination of a single system is not only a technical fallacy but also a question of cultural power. It gives a universal definition to rhythm and determines the other rhythms as synonyms or parodies of the dominant rhythm by means of some peripheral similarities between them. For example, some rhythms, even if they belong to different systems, have the same number of *matras* or same duration. *Chathurasra jathi dhruva tala* of *Suladi system* and *Marma Tala* of *Ekachuzhati system* have the same duration of 14 *matras*. A traditional scholar of classical music may identify the *Marma tala* as *Chathurasrajathi Dhruva Tala* irrespective of the differences between them.

The rhythms of every art form must be analyzed by placing them in their cultural context and the conventional approaches that could lead to a cultural domination of any aesthetic ideas or ideologies must be resisted for Kerala has been a land of diversity- the diversity of social groups as well as rhythm structures. The presence of rhythms belonging to various systems such as 5 rhythms described in *Natyasastra* (e.g. *Chachatputam* and *Shatpitaputrakam* used in *Arjunanritham* and *Garudanthukkam*), 120 rhythms (*Vishamam* used in *Thekkan Chendamalam* and *Mallatala* practised in *Koodiyattam*), 108 rhythms (*Karika* used in *Sastampattu* and *Thullal*), 35 rhythms of *Suladi system* (*Tripata* used in *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Koodiyattam* and *Krishnanattam*), and *Ekachuzhati* rhythms (used in *Mudiyettu*, *Padayani*, *Theyyam* and *Sastampattu*) is evident in the art forms of Kerala. In addition to them several rhythms that belong to none of these systems (e.g. *Ganapathy*, *Lakshmi*, *Kundanachi*, *Mutakkutalam*), various unnamed rhythms (e.g. the rhythm for *etuthukalasam* of *Vishnumurti* in *Theyyam*) and a large amount of orally rendered rhythms (used in *Poorakkali*) are being performed in them.¹⁰ When a rhythm belonging to a particular system is absorbed by an art form, it transforms its structure, so that it could be appropriate for the aesthetic or cultural need of that art form. To enter into the complicated realm of these rhythms, it will be helpful to understand the relatively simple structure of *Ekachuzhati* rhythms.

Ekachuzhati system consists of seven main rhythms i.e. *Ekam*, *Roopam*, *Champata*, *Karika*, *Panchari*, *Marmam* and *Kumbham*.¹¹ *Balyutbhavam Sitankan Thullal* of Kunchan Nambiar refers to the first two of them, *Ekam* and *Roopam*.¹² *Harineeswayamvaram Thullal* of the same poet has given the examples of *Karika*, *Kumbham* and *Marmam*.¹³

The practice of *Ekachuzhati* rhythms is limited neither to the performances of *Arjunanritham* nor *Thullal*. They are being used in various artistic contexts by the artists who are often unaware of this system, even though the names and structures of rhythms are almost same. But the fact that these rhythms used in different art forms have an order in position and they are unified in a simple method, unknown to the contemporary cultural scenario, will be helpful to an eager student to raise some questions in relation with rhythm and culture.

Sangitachudamani defines rhythm (*tala*) as “*tala* signifies measurement of time through the *matras* produced by (sounding and unsounding) actions.”¹⁴ There are various methods to perform rhythm viz. actions by hand like slapping and fingering, oral rendering and tonal variations made either on a percussion instrument or on a symbol. These devices are important for defining a particular rhythm. The same rhythm may be performed through these different devices, though, in a subtle way of analysis, the differences may compel us to consider each form of them as unique entities. Here I am trying to define these rhythms by using two basic actions: sounded and unsounded. *Matra* is a term indicating the time taken for each action. In *Ekachuzhati System*, the time taken for a sounded action is similar to that of an unsounded action. In a way *Ekachuzhati* rhythm system is a threshold to the perplexed realm of various rhythms as well as their formulations and combinations.

Definitions and applications

Ekachuzhati Rhythms

(Digit-Number of beats. ‘1’ indicates first beat, ‘2’ indicates second beat- so that. X-Gap)

1	<i>Eka Tala</i>	1x
2	<i>Roopa Tala</i>	12x
3.	<i>Champata Tala</i>	123x
4.	<i>Karika Tala</i>	1234x
5.	<i>Panchari Tala</i>	12345x
6.	<i>Marma Tala</i>	1x12x123x1234x
7.	<i>Kumbha Tala</i>	123451/2x1231\2x1x1x12x

Eka Tala

Eka Tala is a simple rhythm of one beat (sounded action) and one gap (unsounded action). When the rhythm repeats, the gap is taking place between two beats. This rhythm is used almost in every

art form of Kerala such as *Arjunanritham*, *Garudan thukkam*, *Thayampaka*, *Theeyattu*, *Theyyam*, *Thitampunritham*, *Koodiyattam*, *Krishnanattam* and *Kathakali*. This rhythm has some similarities with the *Eka Tala* of 108 rhythm system.

Roopa Tala

Roopa Tala has a form of two beats followed by a gap. This rhythm is used in *Garudanthukkam*, *Arjunanritham* and *Theyyam*. In contemporary Carnatic Music, this rhythm is practised instead of *Chaturasrajathi Rupaka Tala*, which has a form of one *Drutham* and one *Lakhu*.

Champata Tala

Champata is a pattern of three beats succeeded by one gap. This is a popular rhythm for it is used in several art forms like Kathakali, Krishnanattam, Koodiyattam, Chendamelam, Thullal, Theyyam, Theeyattu, Padayani, Sastampattu, Maranpattu, Garudanthukkam, Arjunanritham, Mudi yettu and Mudi yeduppu. There are so many different patterns used even in a single art form, though the name is same. For example, in Kathakali, in addition to the form mentioned above, some other patterns are used. The Sangitachudamani defines rhythm (tala) as “tala signifies measurement of time through the matras produced by (sounding and unsounding) actions.”¹⁴ There are various methods to perform rhythm viz. actions by hand like slapping and fingering, oral rendering and tonal variations made either on a percussion instrument or on a symbol. These devices are important for defining a particular rhythm. The same rhythm may be performed through these different devices, though, in a subtle way of analysis, the differences may compel us to consider each form of them as unique entities. Here I am trying to define these rhythms by using two basic actions: sounded and unsounded. Matra is a term indicating the time taken for each action. In Ekachuzhati System, the time taken for a sounded action is similar to that of an unsounded action. In a way Ekachuzhati rhythm system is a threshold to the perplexed realm of various rhythms as well as their formulations and combinations.

Definitions and applications

Ekachuzhati Rhythms

(Digit-Number of beats. ‘1’ indicates first beat, ‘2’ indicates second beat- so that. X-Gap)

- 1 *Eka Tala* 1x
- 2 *Roopa Tala* 12x
- 3. *Champata Tala* 123x
- 4. *Karika Tala* 1234x
- 5. *Panchari Tala* 12345x
- 6. *Marma Tala* 1x12x123x1234x
- 7. *Kumbha Tala* 123451/2x1231\2x1x1x12x

Eka Tala

Eka Tala is a simple rhythm of one beat (sounded action) and one gap (unsounded action). When the rhythm repeats, the gap is taking place between two beats. This rhythm is used almost in every art form of Kerala such as *Arjunanritham*, *Garudan thukkam*, *Thayampaka*, *Theeyattu*, *Theyyam*, *Thitampunritham*, *Koodiyattam*, *Krishnanattam* and *Kathakali*. This rhythm has some similarities with the *Eka Tala* of 108 rhythm system.

Roopa Tala

Roopa Tala has a form of two beats followed by a gap. This rhythm is used in *Garudanthukkam*, *Arjunanritham* and *Theyyam*. In contemporary Carnatic Music, this rhythm is practised instead of *Chaturasrajathi Rupaka Tala*, which has a form of one *Drutham* and one *Lakhu*.

Champata Tala

Champata is a pattern of three beats succeeded by one gap. This is a popular rhythm for it is used in several art forms like *Kathakali*, *Krishnanattam*, *Koodiyattam*, *Chendamelam*, *Thullal*, *Theyyam*, *Theeyattu*, *Padayani*, *Sastampattu*, *Maranpattu*, *Garudanthukkam*, *Arjunanritham*, *Mudi yettu* and *Mudi yeduppu*. There are so many different patterns used even in a single art form, though the name is same. For example, in *Kathakali*, in addition to the form mentioned above, some other patterns are used.

- The First tempo:
- 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 - 1 x 1 x 1 x x x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 - 1 x 1 x 1 x x x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 - 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 - 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 - 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
1 x x x 1 x x x 1 x x x 1 x x 1
 x x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

Second tempo:

1 x 1 x 1 x x x 1 x x x 1 x x x
 1 x x x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x 1
 x x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

Third tempo:

1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x
1 x 1 x 1 x x x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1
 x x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

Fourth tempo:

1 x 1 x 1 x x x 1 x x x
1 x x x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

Fifth tempo:

1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x 1 x x x

The bold digits indicate the open beats and normal digits represent stifled beats on a Valanthala, a percussion instrument used to keep the rhythm patterns and tempo.

Marma Tala

Marma Tala is a combination of Ekam, Roopam, Champata and Karika, the first four rhythms of this system. The pattern of this rhythm is one beat, one gap; two beats, one gap; three beats, one gap; and four beats, one gap. The exclusive structure of this rhythm gives us a new idea about the combination of rhythms; hence the Ekachuzhati rhythms themselves are rhythms as well as the units of creating new rhythms. This rhythm is used in Arjunanritham, Padayani, Thullal, Sastampattu and Theyyam.

Kumbha Tala

Kumbha Tala, the last one of Ekachuzhati system, is different from the above mentioned rhythms in form and order: therefore it gives some notions about the formulation of rhythm system which becomes more complicated in their structure. This rhythm is used in Thullal, Padayani, Arjunanritham, Garuda thukkam and Sastampattu. The

orally rendered form of this rhythm, which is used in Sastampattu, is given below:

Thi thi thi thi thithe i x thi thi thithe i x thei x thei x thi thei

This rhythm offers a way to enter a field of orally rendered (Vaithari) rhythms which are huge in number.

Some other rhythms

Champa Tala

Despite of a common name Champa, this rhythm is used with various patterns in various art forms. This rhythm is used in Chendamelam, Kathakali and Thullal in the form of four beats, one gap; two beats, one gap and one beat, one gap (1234x12x1x). The pattern of this rhythm in Padayani is different: one beat, one gap; two beats, one gap and four beats, one gap (1x12x1234)¹⁷. Yakshaganam, an art form performed in the far northern parts of Kerala employed this rhythm in the form of five beats, one gap and three beats, one gap (12345x123x). Each of these forms has the similarity in the number of Matras i.e. ten.

Atantha Tala

Atantha Tala is used in many art forms of Kerala, like Thullal, Kathakali, Jeevithanritham, Chendamelam, Sastampattu, Theyyam, Thitampunritham, Padayani and Koodiyattam. One form of rhythm is four beats, one gap; four beats, one gap; one beat, one gap and one beat, one gap (1234x1234x1x1x). Different rhythms which share the common name Athantha like Valyatantha and Chattatantha are practised in Padayani.¹⁸

Lakshmi Tala

Lakshmi is a Vaithari rhythm which is practised in Padayani, Thullal, Arjunanritham, Ayyappantheeyattu, Koodiyattam, Sastampattu and Garuda thukkam. The form of this rhythm is shown below:

Thi thi thei x thiki tha thei x thi thei thikithe i thithe yitha thikitha thei x x x

Kundanachi Tala

Kunchan Nambiar has given a definition to Kundanachi Tala but it is rarely used in contemporary performances. It has a Vaithari form as under:

Tha dhim x dhim x tha dhim x dhim x dhim x Tha dhim x dhim x tha dhim x dha x tha x

This rhythm is used for *Jeevithanritham* and *Chendamelam* especially in southern parts of Kerala.

Ganapathy Tala

Many rhythms are used in various art forms under the common name *Ganapathy*. This is used in the beginning of a performance as a ritual for an unbroken conclusion since *Ganapathy* is considered in Hindu mythology as the deity of impediment. The form of this rhythm in *Sastampattu* is given below:

Thei x x x thei x x x thei x x x ki ta ta ki tha x ku thi x ku tha ka thim x tham x

Dhi x dhi x dhim x ga ne x ka dan x tham x ki ta tha ki tha kkam thi mmi thei x

Combined rhythms

As mentioned earlier, *Ekachuzhati* rhythms can be used as units to create new rhythms. There are some rhythms performed in different art forms which may perhaps identified as the combination of *Ekachuzhati* rhythms. *Roopamchampata*, a combination of *Roopa Tala* and *Champata Tala* (12x123x) is used in *Sastampattu* and in the *Chendamelam* of southern Kerala. *Marmampanchari*, a blend of *Marma Tala* and *Panchari Tala* is practised in *Jeevithanritham* (in the form 1x12x123x12345x1234) and in *Chendamelam* of southern Kerala (in the pattern 1x12x123x1234x12345x). The combination of *Ekachuzhati* rhythms with some other rhythms like *Champa-Panchari* of *Jeevithanritham* (1234x12345x12x1x) or *Panchari-Champa* of southern *Chendamelam* (12345x1234x12x1x) and *Panchari-Atantha* of Southern *Chendamelam* (12345x1234x1234x1x1x) are present in the vast area of the systems of rhythms.

The study of these rhythms arises some questions about the conventional classifications as well as the interconnections between various rhythms. The awareness of the association of the rhythms with the regions of their performance urges one to rethink about the conventional methodologies of aesthetics.

Notes

1. See, for example, A. K. Nambiar, "NatanKalakalkku Oramukham", *Keralathile Natankalakal* (Kottayam: National Book Stall, 1989):23.

2. See *Folk Arts Directory*, ed. Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi (Trichur: Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, 1986): 113, 135,200,170, 42, 61, 196, 240, 224.
3. An Interview with Kurichi P. S. Kumaran on 19. 06. 1995, Manoj Kuroor (Unpublished audio Cassette).
4. Edward W. Said, "Introduction", *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1992): xiv.
5. See *Kunchan Nambiarute Thullalkathakal*, ed. P. K. Sivasankara Pillai (Trichur: Kerala Sahithya Akademi, 1976).
6. Sarngadeva, *Samgitaratnakara Vol.I*, ed. S. Subrahmanya Sastri (Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1992):17.
7. M. R. Gautam, *Evolution of Raga and Tala in Indian Music* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1993): 35-37,221-22.
8. Arun Kumar Sen, *Indian Concept of Rhythm* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1994): 59-60, 115-19, 141-64.
9. A. K. Raveendranadh, *Dakshinendian Sangeetham* (Thiruvananthapuram: D. C. P., Govt. of Kerala, 2004): 56.
10. The rhythms mentioned in this essay were collected from these artists:

Kurchi P. S. Kumaran:	<i>Arjunanritham</i>
Neelamperoor P. Ramakrishnan:	<i>Garudanthukkam</i> percussion
Kuravilangad M. N. Bhaskaran Nair:	<i>Sastampattu</i>
Katammanitta Vasudevan Pillai:	<i>Padayani</i>
Kuroor Vasudevan Nampoothiry:	<i>Kathakali</i> Percussion
Kannan Peruvannan:	<i>Theyyam</i>
Kanathoor K. V. Kannan Vaidyar:	<i>Theyyam</i>
Cheruvathoor Rajan Panikkar:	<i>Theyyam</i> percussion
Balusseri P. Janaki Amma:	<i>Maranpattu</i>
Harippad K. Vishnu Nampoothiry:	<i>Jeevithanritham</i>
Harippad S. Sivadasan:	<i>Jeevithanritham</i> percussion
Kaviyoor Sadasivan:	<i>Thekkan Chendamelam</i>
Kandalloor Unnikrishnan:	<i>Thekkan Chendamelam</i>
Bakel Sreerama Aggithaya:	<i>Thidampunritham</i>
Keezhillam Gopalakrishna Marar:	<i>Mudiyettu</i>
Vazhappally Krishna Pillai:	<i>Mudiyeduppu</i>
Kanjangad Jayan:	<i>Poorakkali</i>
Kasaragod Gopalakrishna Bhatt:	<i>Yakshaganam</i> .

11. The primary notions of these rhythms are given by Kurichi P.S. Kumaran, an *Arjunanritham* artist. Interviews and performances of some other artists helped me to get a lucid idea about these rhythms.

12. Kunchan Nambiar, "Balyutbhavam", *Arupathu Thullalkkadhakal*, ed. P. K. Narayana pillai, Cheppattu Achyutha Warriar (Kollam: Sreeramavilasam Press, 1958): 105.
13. Kunchan Nambiar, "Harineeswayamvaram", *Arupathu Thullalkkadhakal*: 76-78.
14. M. R. Gautam, *Evolution of Raga and Tala in Indian Music*: 228
15. Kunchan Nambiar, "Harineeswayamvaram", *Arupathu Thullalkkadhakal*: 77.
16. See P. S. Warriar, "Pancharimelam", *Keraleeyamelakala* (Thiruvananthapuram: D. C. P., Govt of Kerala, 1992): 45-99. A. S. N. Nambisan, "Pancharimelam", *Thalanga Thalavadyangal* (Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academi, 2000): 155-56.
17. Katammanitta Vasudevan Pillai, *Padeniyute Jeevathalam* (Thiruvananthapuram: State Institute of Languages, 1997): 105.
18. Katammanitta Vasudevan Pillai, *Padeniyute Jeevathalam*: 107-13.

LOCALISATION OF NATIONAL TRADITIONS: A case study with special reference to the Kutiyattam theatre of Kerala

K. G. Paulose

Sanskrit theatre originated and flourished in North India. It came to the South rather late; perhaps by seventh c. CE. When introduced in the South the Sanskrit theatre closely followed the national pattern inherited from Natyasastra (2 c. B.C.). The pan-Indian Sanskrit tradition could subjugate the local South Indian culture in all walks of life. Theatre was an exception. Kutiyattam, the only surviving relic of the National theatre regionalized the national trend and grew up as an autonomous art-form in Kerala.

This paper attempts to trace the evolution of this theatre in Kerala and the process of its localisation. Primary source relied for this study is the Vyangyavyakhya, the stage script for the two dramas of Kulasekhara, prepared under the instruction of the dramatist himself. The other materials are drawn from the indigenous tradition of Kerala.

The contribution of Kulasekhara to Sanskrit theatre, which marked the first deviation from the national stream, can be summed up under three heads.

I. i. Retrospection (*purvasambandha*)

This is a new device introduced by Kulasekhara for the presentation of Sanskrit dramas. Every character at the time of his/her first appearance narrates his/her past up to the present point, thus connecting the present to the past. Only after establishing the character he begins to act his textual role. Later the kutiyattam theatre adopted this technique and developed it. There it is called *nirvahana* – carrying to the end.

The story here is told in the third person, though the actor is impersonated as the character. In other words, the actor here is a narrator and not an imitator. In course of his narration, at times, he turns out to be an interpreter too. Kulasekhara is responsible for super-imposing the roles of narrator and interpreter on the actor. This too had far reaching consequences on the Kerala stage.

No words are used for narration; everything is done by gestures. The method is that of remembering (*ityasmara*) of the past incidents. Now it will be interesting to enquire as to how the actor would have presented the role of Narada, Draupadi, Vidushaka, Gada and the sages as recollected by Arjuna. To present a reflected character the imitated character might have transformed himself, as in mono acting, to the different characters and presented by gestures their respective roles. What we see here is the earliest germs of the process of evolution of the much celebrated transformation/intermixture (*pakarnnattam*) of roles adopted later by the kutiyattam stage. The actor thus is given the freedom for imaginative acting (*manodharmabhinaya*). The improvement assigned new roles to the actors. Bharata's actor was imitator; Kulasekhara bestowed the functions of narrator and interpreter on him.

I. ii Blend of suggestive sense (*dhvaniyojana*)

Expansion of meaning is a major innovation of Kulasekhara. It has two phases: thematic and psychic; the former is expressive and other suggestive.

I. ii. (a) Expressive: Let us take for example the story of the Chamberlain¹. A theatrical situation is developed from an insignificant anecdote in the dramatic text. The point there is to tell the audience that the ascetic waiting is none other than Arjuna. Kanchuki draws this conclusion from the clue he has. One is the smile of Lord Krishna. It reveals that the one who saved Subhadra from the demon was Arjuna. The second clue is the use of the word paramahansa to qualify the sage. The Lord had used this epithet earlier to refer to Arjuna. The most interesting aspect of the elaboration is that the smile is sarcastic on Arjuna for disguising himself for the sake of a woman.

The point to be noted here is that the theme is expanded taking stories from different sources including Mahabharata and *puranas*.

I. ii. (b) Suggestive: The other expression is deeper; it is this that we call *dhvani*. *Vyagyavyakhya* uses the word *dhvani* in a variety of meanings. It comprehends by this term what ever is beyond the direct expression. In this context *dhvani* is used to suggest the *bhava*, the emotional state of the character.

Kulasekhara recognises two meanings to be communicated. One is the *kevalartha* (the primary meaning) and other is *bhavartha* (the emotional meaning). Very often we get instructions in *Vyagyavyakhya* distinguishing these two senses. Eg.

- i From here onwards there is *dhvani* in the words of the hero till he sees the heroine².
- ii Now the suggested sense is the expression of the inner self of the character³.

This attachment to the inner self distinguishes this from the thematic expansion. Eg.

In the first act of Subhadradhananjaya the Vidushaka runs here and there for water to quench his thirst. At last he runs after a mirage taking it to be a lake. The running and pretension of thirst are to please the ordinary man. What he conveys to the learned is that Arjuna who has a wedded wife waiting for him is running after Subhadra whose marriage is already being arranged with Duryodhana by her elder brother. He is not going to get her. He is running after a mirage⁴. Vidushaka's action is only a device to warn Arjuna that his efforts are not going to succeed. This the *preksaka* learns through the ocular movements of Vidushaka.

Introducing different levels for acting as also for appreciating and harmoniously blending the two in a single unit was the greatest contribution of Kulasekhara to the world of theatre.

I. iii. Spectator - actor interaction (*preksaka prayoktrsambandha*)

This is the third contribution of Kulasekhara. Actually this is an extension of the second, since presentation of suggestive sense through subtle ocular acting pre-supposes an audience equipped to follow the intricacies of this kind of acting. The meanings were *bahyartha* (external sense) for *nanaloka* and *sukshmartha* (suggested sense) for *prekshaka*. The mode of presentation is fourfold acting for the former and *netrabhinaya* for the latter. *Vyagyavyakhya* is full of references to the distinction of the multiple levels of enjoyment. Developing such an intimate relation with an inner circle without disturbing the harmony with the larger audience is really an achievement of the royal dramatist. He might have perhaps in his mind the inner cabinet wherein he shares all the secrets and the larger population to whom he conveys the most agreeable things.

If we follow the evolution of theatre in the post-Kulasekhara era one thing that strikes us most is the abundance of instances developed in the direction of thematic expansion. Even in the first act of

Subhadradhananjaya three verses were taken for detailed acting - *sikhinisalabha*, *chalakuvalaya* and *saundaryam sukumarata*. Vyangyavyakhya makes only a passing reference to these verses failing to note their acting potential. Many such situations were developed later in all the dramas.

But the tragedy is that the other pattern of expressing the *kevalartha* - *bhavartha* meanings respectively through *samanyabhinaya* - *netrabhinaya* mode of acting failed miserably in the hands of his successors.⁵

II

Kutiyattam as we see today evolved in the two centuries that followed Kulasekhara. Kutiyattam in its present form has three components - the preliminaries, retrospection and presentation of dramatic text. Preliminaries are comparable to the *purvaranga* of Natyasastra. Retrospection is the expansion of *purvasambhandha*. Presentation of the drama part generally follows the canons of Bharata. The inflation of the role of Vidushaka is the most notable feature in this transition.

II. i. The local tradition of Vidushaka

The hero is in the limited circle of the three wicks of the lamp. The Vidushaka knows no limits. He occupies limitless space with no boundaries. The hero is static like the face of a clock; Vidushaka like the pendulum keeps moving and provides life and energy to the stage.

The Meta theatre managed by Vidushaka acquired its wares not from the classical arts but from the unique folk tradition of *mutiyettu*, *teyyam*, *tira*, *patayani*, etc. It won't be wrong to say that the relationship between hero and friend has a parallel in the *kali* and *kuli* of *mutiyettu*. Even in the matter of costume Vidushaka reveals the Kerala traits. Vidushaka, by all accounts, hails from Kerala soil.

The drama portion of Kutiyattam is a classical tradition. Local language is added to it. It is this local strength that sustained Kutiyattam and made it a live form. Otherwise it would have turned out to be a museum piece.

III

The changes introduced by the Kerala actors in the performance of Sanskrit dramas can be summed up like this:

- i The actor according to Bharata is an imitator. Kutiyattam tradition endowed the actor with two more functions - narration and interpretation. In *nirvahana* the actor is a narrator. At times he

turns out to be an interpreter. To fulfil these different roles he has to change his roles very often. This is an improvement on *natya* and definitely an adaptation from *attam*. This tradition has its roots in the Chakyar of the early *sangham* age.

- ii Kerala actors developed a special skill in *netrabhinaya* which turned out to be the very soul of Kutiyattam.

This means that the chakyar gave eyes and tongue to the performance of Sanskrit drama. He also made the prosaic acting poetic by the blend of rhythmic movements.

- iii The most fascinating contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit theatre is that it provided a multi-level acting technique. The performance was divided into two - a solo acting in *nirvahana* and multiple acting in the text portion. Prominence was given to the former; the text portion being an appendage. In the solo performance the actor is free from the text. This gave him ample opportunities to exhibit his histrionic talents indulging in imaginative acting and transformation of roles.

It is this solo performance that distinguishes Kutiyattam from the mode of presentation of ordinary Sanskrit dramas. Bharata had not provided space for such an act in his scheme of performance.⁶

IV

IV. i. Indigenous spectacles

Influence on the external frame was more visible. A number of spectacular scenes like floating away, flying, hanging, actor dripping in blood, etc. were added to the Sanskrit theatre. In Tapatisamvarana the floating in the river was being enacted on a fixed loom of white yarn. In Nagananda Garuda used to come down flying in the air. The Nambiar controlled the movement of the Chakyar by tying 1001 ropes. The movement of Katyayani resembles that of Kali in *mutiyettu*. The chopping of the nose and breast of Surpanakha is a horrible scene wherein the actor is dripped in blood. These additions are due to the indigenous influence.

IV. ii. Anti-hero cult

Classics generally extol the winning heroes. Bhasa made a deviation by going deep into the minds of those defeated. Kutiyattam acknowledged this trend and developed it to something like a cult. All the major characters in Kutiyattam are anti-heroes - Ravana, Bali, etc. The epic heroes like Rama, Krishna, etc. have only minor roles donned by junior artists. In Abhishekanataka Rama is the hero; but it is Bali in the beginning and Ravana in the latter part that dominate the stage.

The tendency to discard the original heroes gives a real Kerala touch to Kutiyattam.

What the author of *Natankusa* criticizes is this trend of *Keralisation* of Sanskrit theatre. He says that dance, local language, imaginative acting, transformation of roles, recapitulation and social criticism - all are aberrations and hence have to be discarded. Little does he realize that these aberrations are the real contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit theatre!

Luckily for us, our actors did not heed to the advice of that puritan, lest the only surviving relic of the ancient theatrical tradition would have disappeared from the world leaving no opportunity for UNESCO to declare a theatrical form as an intangible heritage of humanity.

Notes :

- 1 'Kanchukeeyam' evolved from Vyangyavyakhya. See *Improvisations in Ancient Theatre*, by Dr. K.G. Paulose, Published by International Centre for Kutiyattam, Tripunithura 2003
- 2 Subhadradhananjayadhvani (Mss.)
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Arjuna is trying to get Subhadra who is decided to given to Suyodhana in marriage...
Alas! He is being attracted to Subhadra like a deer is deceived by the mirage.
- 5 The point is this: eye gesture (*netrabhinaya*) in Kulasekhara's scheme of acting is mainly intended to bring out a hidden meaning to the audience. This meaning is closely related to the theme; hence thematic. Actors of later period ignored this cardinal distinction. They used eyes for elaborations like enacting of *Sikhinisalabha*, etc. Of course the skill used here is wonderful. But we have lost the real tradition of suggestive acting through the eyes. The efforts of our actors for improvisation of acting in Kutiyattam should be directed towards reviving this lost tradition. Then only we can regain the glory of the subtle acting techniques of the past.
- 6 *Natyasastra* tradition stresses the importance of *rasa*. It is the end-product of a situation. Kulasekhara is concerned more with the delineation of the mental process leading to the situation, i.e. *manasi avastha* which the actor presents through imaginative acting - *manodharma*. This naturally leads him to the technique of transformation of roles, *pakarnnattam*. *Manodharmabhinaya* and *pakarnnattam* are the two contributions that Kerala has made to the national theatre. In its later phase the Kerala actors, as part of their attempt to communicate the bhava to the *prekshaka*, made use of these two techniques which form the basis of the aesthetic rapture in Kutiyattam. Use of these two devices distinguishes Kutiyattam from the presentation of Sanskrit dramas in other states. This cardinal point was not been properly brought to the notice of the students of ancient Indian theatre.

ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ

പെണ്ണും പാട്ടും മലയാളവും

സി. വി. സുധീർ

മലയാളത്തിലെ നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുവഴക്കങ്ങളുടെ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ ജൂതരുടെ പെൺപാട്ടുകളെക്കുറിച്ചു പഠിക്കുകയാണ് ഇവിടെ ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ജൂതരുടെ പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽ കടന്നുവരുന്ന പെണ്മ, നാടോടിപാരമ്പര്യം, സാംസ്കാരികവിനിമയം, ലോകവീക്ഷണം, ഭാഷ തുടങ്ങിയ കാര്യങ്ങൾ സവിശേഷമായി പഠനവിധേയമാക്കി അവരുടെ മലയാളിത്തത്തെ കണ്ടെത്താനാണ് ശ്രമിക്കുന്നത്.

ഏതൊരു നാടോടികലാരൂപത്തിനും അതു നിലനിൽക്കുന്ന സമൂഹത്തിൽ/കാലത്തിൽ ചില ധർമ്മങ്ങൾ അനുഷ്ഠിക്കാനുണ്ടാകും. അവയുടെ രൂപം മാറുന്നതിനനുസരിച്ചു ധർമ്മത്തിലും മാറ്റം സംഭവിക്കും. ഓരോ സമൂഹത്തിലും അതിനെ നിലനിറുത്തുന്നതോ നിർവചിക്കുന്നതോ സാധ്യകുറിക്കുന്നതോ ആയ നാടോടികലാരൂപങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്താൻ സാധിക്കും. ചുരുങ്ങിയത്, ഒരു കാര്യത്തിലെങ്കിലും സമാനതപൂലർത്തുന്ന ഒരു സമൂഹത്തെ ഫോക് എന്നു വിളിക്കാം എന്ന വിശാലമായ ഫോക് നിർവചനപ്രകാരം സ്ത്രീകൾ ഒരു ഫോക്വിഭാഗമാണ്. അവർക്കും അവരുടെതായ ഫോക്ലോർ ഉണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ മലയാളത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ഫോക്ലോർ രൂപങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് അധികം പഠനങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടില്ല. സ്ത്രീ, പുരുഷൻ എന്നു മഹാവിഭാഗം കൽപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് അവരുടെ ഫോക്ലോറുകളെ വിശേഷപഠനത്തിനു വിധേയമാക്കി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്നത് ഇന്ന് ഏറെ പ്രസക്തമാണ്. കേരള സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ച കേരളഭാഷാഗാനങ്ങൾ രണ്ടാം വാല്യത്തിൽ (സമ്പാദകൻ : പ്രൊ.വി. ആനന്ദകുട്ടൻ നായർ) മതപരമായ പാട്ടുകൾ, കൃഷിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, ഓണപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, വീരഗാനങ്ങൾ, ക്രിസ്തീയഗാനങ്ങൾ, തെക്കൻപാട്ടുകൾ, പലവക പാട്ടുകൾ എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണു പാട്ടുകളെ തരംതിരിക്കുന്നത്. ഇതിൽ നല്ലൊരുഭാഗം ഗാനങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ സ്ത്രീകളാണ്. വാഹകരും പ്രയോക്താക്കളും സ്ത്രീകളാകുന്ന പാട്ടുകളെയാണ് ഇവിടെ പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ എന്നു വിളിക്കുന്നത്. ഈ അർഥ

ത്തിലാണു മലയാളത്തിലെ നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ വലിയൊരുവിഭാഗം പെൺപാട്ടുകളാകുന്നത്.

പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽത്തന്നെ സവിശേഷശ്രദ്ധ അർഹിക്കുന്ന ജൂതരുടെ പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ മലയാളത്തിൽ കാര്യമായി പഠനവിധേയമാക്കിയിട്ടില്ല. ഒറ്റപ്പെട്ട പഠനങ്ങളും ഗവേഷണങ്ങളുമല്ലാതെ അതു മുഖ്യധാരയിലേക്ക് എത്തിയിരുന്നേയില്ല. സാഹിത്യചരിത്രങ്ങളിലോ ചരിത്രഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങളിലോ അതിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പരാമർശം ഇല്ലെന്നുതന്നെ പറയാം. കേരളത്തിലെ ജൂതർതന്നെ മലയാളിയുടെ കാര്യമായ പഠനങ്ങൾക്കു വിധേയമായിട്ടില്ല. 'കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരികചരിത്രത്തിൽ "...വ്യാപാരികളും യോദ്ധാക്കളുമായിട്ടാണു ജൂതന്മാർ ഇവിടെ ജീവിതം നയിച്ചത്" എന്നു പി.കെ. ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണൻ (1991:299) പറഞ്ഞവ സാന്നിധ്യംകൊണ്ടു ചെയ്യുന്നത്. അവർക്കിവിടെ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന സാംസ്കാരികജീവിതത്തെ സാംസ്കാരികചരിത്രകാരൻ കാണുന്നില്ല.

പെണ്ണത്തവും ജൂതത്തവും മലയാളത്തവും നാടോടിത്തവും നിറഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്ന, അങ്ങനെ കേരളത്തിന്റെ പരിച്ഛേദമാകുന്ന ഒന്നാണു ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ. മേൽപ്പറഞ്ഞ ഘടകങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെയെല്ലാമാണു ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽ പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്നതെന്നു *കാർകുഴലിയെഫ്രേമിയു: ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ* എന്ന പേരിൽ ജറുസലേമിലെ ബെൻസി ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് 2005-ൽ പുറത്തിറക്കിയ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിലും Oh, Lovely Parrot! എന്ന പേരിൽ Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem പുറത്തിറക്കിയ Audio CD യിലും ഉള്ള പാട്ടുകളെ ആധാരമാക്കിയാണ് ഇവിടെ പഠനം നടത്തുന്നത്. ഏതൊരു നാടോടികലാരൂപത്തെയും അതിന്റെ പ്രകരണത്തിൽനിന്ന് അടർത്തിമാറ്റിക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള പഠനം അപൂർണ്ണമായിരിക്കും. ഇവിടെ പഠനവിധേയമാക്കുന്ന പല പാട്ടുകളും രംഗാവതരണസംബന്ധിയാണ്. പഠനസൗകര്യാർഥം രംഗപാഠത്തെ ഒഴിവാക്കി വരമൊഴിയെയും വാമൊഴിയെയും അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കിയാണു പഠനം നടത്തുന്നത്. അത് ഈ പഠനത്തിന്റെ പരിമിതിയും പരിധിയുമാണ്.

ജൂതത്തം

"ഹീബ്രു ബൈബിളിനെ ചുറ്റിപ്പറ്റി വലിയൊരു പുരാണലോകം വികസിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. വ്യാഖ്യാനരൂപത്തിലുള്ള ആഖ്യാനങ്ങളുടെ ഒടുങ്ങാത്ത ശൃംഖലയായി ജൂതപുരാണങ്ങൾ വളർന്നു. മിദ്രാഷ് (Midrash) എന്നു ജൂതർ വിളിക്കുന്ന ഈ പുരാണാവലി ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ പുരാവൃത്ത പരാമർശങ്ങളായി ഒളിഞ്ഞും തെളിഞ്ഞും കാണാം" (സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ, ഒഫീറ ഗംലിയേൽ, 2005:12). മിദ്രാഷിലൂടെ വളർന്നു പന്തലിക്കുന്ന ഒരു ജൂതലോകം ഈ പാട്ടുകളിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനിൽക്കുന്നു, ഊടും പാവവും എന്ന പോലെ.

മിക്ക പാട്ടുകളിലും എഴുന്നൂന്നിൽക്കുന്ന സ്വപ്നഭൂമിയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഉദ്ദേശ്യ കേരളത്തിലെ ജൂതത്തത്തിന്റെ അന്തരാത്മാവാണ്. പുസ്തകത്തിലെ

42-ാം പാട്ടിലെ

"അന്താളി പാടും കിളിയെ കെളു

അങ്ങല്ലാം എന്തൊരു വാർത്ത ഒളളു" എന്ന വരികൾ വിവാഹവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട സന്ദർഭത്തിലാണു പാടുന്നത്. അപ്പോഴും കിളിയോടു അന്വേഷിക്കുന്നത് അങ്ങ അകലെനിന്നുള്ള വാർത്തകൾ എന്താണ് എന്നാണ്. രണ്ടായിരം വർഷത്തോളമായി ഇവിടെ പ്രവസിക്കുന്ന ജൂതർക്കു തങ്ങളുടെ സ്വപ്നഭൂമിയിൽനിന്നുള്ള/സ്വപ്നഭൂമിയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള വാർത്തകൾ എന്താണെന്നാണ് അറിയേണ്ടത്. ആ വാർത്തകൾ തങ്ങളുടെ ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ അജ്ഞ നിശ്ചയിക്കുന്നതാണ് എന്നതിനാലാണു ജൂതമനസ്സ് എന്തു പാടുമ്പോഴും ചെയ്യുമ്പോഴും ഇസ്രായേൽ എന്ന കുറ്റിയിൽനിന്നു കറങ്ങുന്നത്. Audio CD യിലെ നശിക്കുകയില്ലിനി നാം...(40), ഇസ്രായേൽ പതാകേ...(42), ലോകം ഇരുഭാഗങ്ങളിൽ...(43) എന്നിങ്ങനെ തുടങ്ങുന്ന പാട്ടുകളിൽ വളരെ പ്രത്യക്ഷമായിത്തന്നെ ഈ ഉദ്ദേശ്യ അവതരിപ്പിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. പുസ്തകത്തിലെ 41-ാം (സർമാൻ)പാട്ടിലെ

"ചെകത്തു പൊണ പറങ്കിയൊടു

പുതുമ പാടെടി പള്ളിലെ" എന്ന വരികൾ പാടുമ്പോൾ പഴമ പാടെടി പള്ളിലെ എന്നായി മാറുന്നുണ്ട് അല്ലെങ്കിൽ മാറ്റുന്നുണ്ട്. ജഗത്തിലേക്കു(പുറം ലോകത്തിലേക്കു) പോകുന്ന പറങ്കിയോടു പള്ളിയിലെ പുതുമ പാടിക്കൊടുക്കു എന്നാണു ലിഖിത പാഠം. എന്നാൽ ഇപ്പോൾ വാമൊഴിയിൽ, പാടിക്കൊടുക്കേണ്ടതു പുതുമകളല്ല, പഴമയാണ്. പുതുതായി എത്തപ്പെട്ട ലോകത്തു കേരളീയ ജൂതർക്കു പറയേണ്ടതു തങ്ങളുടെ പുതുമയല്ല മറിച്ച് പഴമയാണ്. എങ്കിലേ കേരളത്തിലെ തദ്ദേശീയരായ ജൂതരെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള കൊളോണിയൽ വക്രീകരണത്തിൽനിന്ന് അവർക്കു രക്ഷപ്പെടാനും തങ്ങളുടെ അസ്തിത്വം സ്ഥാപിച്ചെടുക്കാനും സാധിക്കൂ. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ അവർ കുറച്ചൊക്കെ വിജയിക്കുകയും ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്.

പെണ്ണത്തം

പുരുഷൻ കാണുന്ന ലോകവും സ്ത്രീ കാണുന്ന ലോകവും വ്യത്യസ്തമാണ്. ഈ വ്യത്യസ്തത ശരീരപരവും അനുഭവപരവും വീക്ഷണപരവും സ്ഥാനപരവുമായ അന്തരത്തിൽനിന്നു ഉടലെടുക്കുന്ന ഒന്നാണ്. അനുഭവങ്ങളെ അതിന്റെ ശാരീരികവും മാനസികവുമായ തീവ്രതയിൽ അറിയുന്നു എന്നതാണു ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളുടെ പ്രത്യേകത. വിവാഹവും പ്രസവവും മെല്ലാം അതിന്റെ വിസ്തൃതിയിൽത്തന്നെ പെൺപാട്ടുകളിലെ സ്ത്രീകൾ അനുഭവിച്ചറിഞ്ഞ് അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

"അലങ്കാരമകന ആതരിച്ചു കാട്ടേണം അഴകുള്ള ചേലയും കെട്ടിയുടുത്തുതെ അരയിൽ അരഞ്ഞാണം ഇട്ടാതും ആയിതേ ചെർമ്മയിൽ ഒളളൊരു താക്കോൽ കൂട്ടവും

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

കാതിൽ അലികത്ത് ചതുരപുവു തന്നീലെ
കഴുത്തിൽ അനന്തൊരു ഒത്ത ചവടിയും
.....”
എന്തര തരത്തിൽ ചമയങ്ങൾ ചമഞ്ഞുതെ

(പാട്ട് 39, അലങ്കാരമങ്ക)

എന്നിങ്ങനെ എല്ലാ തരത്തിലും അണിഞ്ഞൊരുങ്ങിനിൽക്കുന്ന, ഓരോ അവയവവും എങ്ങനെയെല്ലാം അലങ്കരിക്കാമോ അങ്ങനെയെല്ലാം അലങ്കരിച്ചു നിൽക്കുന്ന ഈ പാട്ടിലെ മണവാട്ടിയെ കാണുന്നത് ഒരു സ്ത്രീതന്നെയാണ്. അലങ്കാരങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടത്തിൽ താക്കോൽക്കൂട്ടവും ഉണ്ട്. മോടികളുടെ ഭ്രമത്തിൽ തങ്ങളുടെ അധികാരത്തെ, അവകാശത്തെ വിട്ടുകളയുന്നില്ല എന്നതും ഈ പാട്ടുകളിലെ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സവിശേഷതയായി പറയാം. ഇതിന്റെ ഒരു തരം തുടർച്ചയാണു *വയലിൽ വസിക്കും സ്ത്രീയേ* (29) എന്ന പാട്ടിലെ

“കണ്ണിൽ ഇമ്പമുള്ളവർ പക്കൽ

കിടന്നു നിനക്കു ശയിക്കാം” എന്ന വരികളിൽ കാണുന്ന സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം. ഇഷ്ടപുരുഷനെ തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കാനുള്ള സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം കേരളത്തിൽ നായർ സ്ത്രീകൾക്കിടയിലേ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നില്ല എന്ന സാമാന്യധാരണ ഇതോടൊപ്പം ചേർത്തു വായിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ഈ പാട്ടു ഹീബ്രൂവിൽനിന്നു തർജ്ജമ ചെയ്തു പലപാഠങ്ങളിലൂടെ വളർന്നുവന്ന ഒന്നാണ്. ഈ പാട്ടു പാടുമ്പോൾ ‘ശയിക്കാം’ എന്ന വാക്ക് ‘ഉറങ്ങാം’ എന്നായി മാറിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ശയിക്കാം എന്ന പദത്തിൽ എഴുന്നൂറിൽക്കുന്ന ലൈംഗികതയെ സാമൂഹിക പുനഃസൃഷ്ടിയിലൂടെ ഇന്നു വെട്ടിനിരത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈ രണ്ടു പാഠങ്ങളും അവ ഉണ്ടായ കാലങ്ങളിലെ സ്ത്രീയുടെ ബോധമണ്ഡലത്തിലുണ്ടായ വ്യത്യാസം വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു.

നേരത്തെ പറഞ്ഞ അധികാര/അവകാശചിഹ്നങ്ങൾതന്നെയാണു *പൊലിക പൊലിയ* എന്ന പുസ്തകത്തിലെ 44-ാം പാട്ടിലെ

“ആയിരം താഴുമായി പൂട്ടും അവർ മാടം

ആയിരം താക്കോലുമായി തുറക്കും അവർ മാടം” എന്ന വരികളിൽ കാണുന്നത്. അതായത് നേരത്തെ മണവാട്ടിയുടെ കൈവശം ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന താക്കോൽക്കൂട്ടം കേവലം അലങ്കാരമായല്ല എന്നും മാടം തുറക്കാനും അടയ്ക്കാനും ഉള്ളതാണെന്നും ഈ വരികൾ വിശദീകരിക്കുന്നു.

സാറാ ഉമ്മാടെ പാട്ടി(റിബുഹ)(12)ൽ സ്ത്രൈണതയുടെ മറ്റൊരു മുഖവും അനാവരണം ചെയ്യുന്നു.

“...തിങ്കൾ തൈക്കത്തിട്ടു മാസം ഏഴായിതേ
പണ്ടൊള്ളവർക്കൊക്കെ ഏഴിലെ പെറ്റുതെ
സാറാ ഉമ്മാ കാലത്തു മാസം പത്തായിതേ
പണ്ടു ഉള്ളവർക്കൊക്കെയോ മരത്തൊത്തിമാരില്ലാ

സാറാ ഉമ്മാകാലത്ത് മരത്തൊത്തിമാർ ഉണ്ട്
പണ്ടു ഉള്ളവർക്കൊക്കെയോ നോവും വെളിവും ഇല്ലാ
സാറാ ഉമ്മാ കാലത്തു നോവും വെളിവും ഉണ്ട്
നൊന്തു വിളിച്ചു പെറ്റാന സാറാ ഉമ്മാ”

പത്തുമാസം ഗർഭം ചുമന്നു നൊന്തുപ്രസവിക്കുന്ന സ്ത്രീയുടെ ‘നോവുംവേവും’ ഈ വരികളിൽ നിറയുന്നു. മകനെ കൊന്നവനെ ശപിക്കുന്ന ഒരു അമ്മയുടെ ചിത്രവും ജൂതപ്പാട്ടിലുണ്ട്. *ദാവീദും മണ്ണാനും*(18) എന്ന പാട്ടിൽ “ഇവനെ പിടിച്ചിട്ട കൊല്ലുക വെണമെ പലം ഇല്ലാത്ത മരത്തിന്റെ ചൊക്ടില കൊണ്ട പൊയി വെച്ചുട്ടാവനെ അറക്കണം” എന്നാണ് അമ്മ പറയുന്നത്.

അമ്മ, ഭാര്യ, കാമുകി, അധികാരി എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള വ്യത്യസ്ത സ്ത്രീഭാവങ്ങൾ പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനിൽക്കുന്നു. അതിലുപരി മിക്കപ്പോഴും ക്രിയകൾക്കു കർത്താവായും ഹേതുവായും ഭൂമികയായും വർത്തിക്കുന്നതു സ്ത്രീകളാണ്.

നാടോടിത്തം

പാഠഭേദങ്ങൾ, ഫോക്ലോറിനെ തിരിച്ചറിയാനുള്ള ഒരു ഉപാധിയാണ്. ധാരാളം പാഠഭേദങ്ങളും പുതിയ പാഠങ്ങളുടെ സാധുത്വവും ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. ജൂതപുരാവൃത്തങ്ങൾക്കുതന്നെ ധാരാളം പാഠഭേദങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നു എന്നതും അവയെല്ലാം നിരപ്പുകേടുകൂടാതെ പാട്ടുകളുടെ പൊതുശയ്യയിൽ ചേർന്നിരിക്കുന്നു എന്നതും ഇവിടെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്.

കേരളത്തിലെ മറ്റു നാടോടി പാട്ടുപാരമ്പര്യവുമായി സമരസപ്പെടുപോകുന്നതാണു ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളും. വാമൊഴിരൂപങ്ങൾ ഇതിനായി പരിശോധിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. മിൽമാൻപാരി സിദ്ധാന്തവൽക്കരിച്ച, നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ ആഖ്യാനവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട കെട്ടുമുറസിദ്ധാന്ത(Theory of Oral Composition)ത്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ഇതിലെ പല പാട്ടുകളും വിശദീകരിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ആഖ്യാനസ്വഭാവമുള്ള പാട്ടുകളിലും ചോദ്യോത്തരരൂപത്തിലുള്ള പാട്ടുകളിലുമാണ് ഈ സ്വഭാവം ഏറെ പ്രകടമാകുന്നത്. നേരത്തെ പരാമർശിച്ച *സാറാ ഉമ്മാടെ പാട്ട്(റിബുഹ)*(12), *പൊന്നതണി*(40) എന്നീ പാട്ടുകൾ ഉദാഹരിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്.

“മേനി ഒത്ത പെണ്ണിൻ ഞാൻ എന്ത കൊടക്കണ്
മേനി ഒത്ത പെണ്ണിനു ഞാൻ തിരുമുടി കൊടുത്തു” (40)

നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ കാണുന്ന മറ്റൊരു പ്രത്യേകതകൂടിയുണ്ട് ഇതിൽ. ചോദ്യോത്തര രൂപത്തിലുള്ള (വാക്ക്/മറുവാക്ക് എന്ന രൂപത്തിലും) പാട്ടുക

ഇൽ ഉത്തരവാക്യങ്ങൾ മേൽവാക്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്ന് ഏറിയഭാഗവും സ്വീകരിച്ച് ഉത്തരമായി ഒന്നോ രണ്ടോ വാക്കുകൾ ചേർക്കുക എന്നതാണ് അത്.

“കൊട്ടുകേക്കണ് കായലുത്ത് കേക്കണ് പൂവാടി കാളേ പൂരത്തിന് ഏനില്ല കോരാ ഏനില്ല കോരാ എനിക്കൊത്ത ചേല ഏനില്ല കോരാ നിനക്കൊത്ത ചേല ഞാൻതരാം കാളേ പൂവാടി കാളേ പൂരത്തിന് ഏനില്ല കോരാ ഏനില്ല കോരാ എനിക്കൊത്ത മാല ഏനില്ല കോരാ നിനക്കൊത്ത മാല ഞാൻതരാം കാളേ പൂവാടി കാളേ പൂരത്തിന്”

എന്നിങ്ങനെ മറ്റു പാട്ടുകളിലും കാണുന്ന ഈ ഘടന കേരളത്തിൽ പരക്കെ കാണുന്നതാണ്. വടക്കൻ പാട്ടുകളുടെ പണിയാലയിൽ രാഘവവാരിയർ പറയുന്ന വിധത്തിലുള്ള പദാവർത്തനവും പദാവർത്തനവും നികത്തുമൊഴികളും ഏപ്പുമൊഴികളും മറ്റും ധാരാളമായി ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളിലും കാണുന്നുണ്ട്.

വായ്ത്താരികളുപയോഗിക്കുന്നതിൽ (സാർഥകമായ ഒറ്റപ്പദം പ്രകരണത്തിൽ നിരർഥകമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുക പാട്ട്-43), പാദത്തിന്റെ അവസാനവാക്ക് ആവർത്തിക്കുന്നതിൽ (പാട്ട്-17), താളാത്മകമായി നിരർഥകശബ്ദങ്ങൾ ആവർത്തിക്കുന്നതിൽ (പാട്ട്-11) എല്ലാം ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ മറ്റു പാട്ടുകളിൽനിന്നു വ്യത്യസ്തമല്ല. വാക്യങ്ങൾക്കിടയിൽ വായ്ത്താരി പ്രയോഗിച്ചു കാണുന്നുണ്ട്. *ആധാരപ്പെട്ടി*(24) എന്ന പാട്ടിൽ

“ആധാരപ്പെട്ടി അഴിച്ചു തുറന്നുതെ ജീവനുപകാരം ചെയ്തവനാരെന്ന്” എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള വരികൾ

“ആധാരപ്പെട്ടി ആധാരപ്പെട്ടി താനെ താനെ താനെ താനെ അഴിച്ചു തുറന്നുതെ”

“ജീവനുപകാരം ജീവനുപകാരം താനെ താനെ താനെ താനെ ചെയ്തവനാരെന്ന്” എന്നിങ്ങനെ വായ്ത്താരി കൂട്ടിച്ചേർത്തു രണ്ടു ഭാഗമാക്കി പാടുന്നുണ്ട്. പാട്ടിന്റെ താളത്തിനനുസരിച്ചു വാക്കുകൾ നീട്ടൽ, കുറുക്കൽ, പകുക്കൽ, വിടർത്തൽ തുടങ്ങിയവയ്ക്കു വിധേയമാക്കുന്നതു ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിലും അപൂർവമായ കാഴ്ചയല്ല.

കേരളത്തിലെ നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുകളിലെ ഒരു കഥാപാത്രം കൊതുകാണ്. ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിലും ഇടനാടൻപാട്ടുകളിലും കൊതുകു സജീവ കഥാപാത്രമാകുന്നു. ദാവീദും കൊതുകും(17) എന്ന പാട്ടിൽ ഗോലിയാത്തിന്റെ പതനത്തിനു വഴിയൊരുക്കിയത് അയാളുടെ ശിരോകവചത്തിനുള്ളിൽ കടന്നുകൂടിയ കൊതുകാണ്. അങ്ങനെ കേരളത്തിലെ ജൂതസ്ത്രീകൾ ബൈബിൾ കഥയിലേക്കു കൊതുകിനെ കടത്തിവിടുന്നു. മധ്യകേരളത്തിലെ സാംബവർക്കിടയിൽ കൊതുകു എന്ന പേരിൽ ഒരു പാട്ടുതന്നെയുണ്ട്(അപ്പക്കുട്ടൻ എ.കെ.).

ആഖ്യാനകേന്ദ്രങ്ങളിൽ മാറ്റം വരൽ, അസംബന്ധത എന്നിവയും മറ്റു നാടൻപാട്ടുവിഭാഗങ്ങളിലെന്നപോലെ ജൂതപ്പാട്ടിലും കാണുന്നുണ്ട്. ഇതിന് ഉദാഹരണമായി

“നിങ്ങൾ എയ്ത മാനിനു എന്തൊരു അടയാളം പുള്ളിമപുള്ളി പലതൊണ്ടു അടയാളം മാൻ മുറിപ്പാൻ ആരൊള്ളു,മാൻ മുറിപ്പാൻ ആരൊള്ളു, ഞാൻ മുറിപ്പൻ, ഞാൻ മുറിപ്പൻ എന്നു മണവാട്ടി നിങ്ങൾ മുറിച്ച മാനിനു എന്തൊരു അടയാളം പുള്ളിമപുള്ളി പലതൊണ്ട അടയാളം” (പാട്ട്- 46) എടുത്തു കാണിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. എന്നാൽ,

“പട്ടിലിന്റെടേക്കോടെ ചൂര്യനുദിച്ചപോലെ എന്റെ മോളു് കുഞ്ഞിപ്പയിക്ക വരണുണ്ട്.

“കുന്നത്തു സൂര്യനുദിച്ചപോലെ വയനാടൻമഞ്ഞൾ മുറിച്ചപോലെ”

എന്ന മട്ടിൽ വസ്തുവിനെ വിശദീകരിക്കാനായുള്ള അലങ്കാരങ്ങളുടെ പ്രയോഗം ജൂതപ്പാട്ടിൽ താരതമ്യേനെ കുറവാണ്.

മലയാളത്തം

ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ മലയാളത്തം രണ്ടു തരത്തിൽ/ തലത്തിൽ വിശദീകരിക്കാം.1) ഭാഷാപരമായി 2) സാംസ്കാരികമായി. മാപ്പിളപ്പാട്ടുകളിലെ അറബിപദങ്ങളുടെ ധാരാളിത്തവുമായി താരതമ്യപ്പെടുത്തുമ്പോൾ ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ ഹീബ്രു പദങ്ങൾ കുറവാണ്. “കേരളീയസമൂഹത്തിൽ ഹീബ്രുപദങ്ങൾ പ്രചരിച്ചത് യഹൂദരിലൂടെയെന്നതിനെക്കാളധികം ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളിലൂടെയാണ് ... പഴയനിയമത്തിന്റെ സുറിയാനി, മലയാളം തർജ്ജമകളിൽ സംജ്ഞാനാമങ്ങൾ അധികവും ഹീബ്രുവിനെ പിന്തുടരുന്നു. ഹീബ്രുവിൽനിന്ന് ആദാനം ചെയ്യപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളവയിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷം പദങ്ങളും സംജ്ഞാനാമങ്ങളാണു താനും” എന്നു പി. എം. ജോസഫ് (1995:311) നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽ ധാരാളം ഹീബ്രുപദങ്ങൾ കടന്നുവരുന്നുണ്ട്. അവയിൽ ഭൂരിപക്ഷവും മതവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട വാക്കുകളാണ്. മലയാളത്തോടു സ്വന്തപരമായ അനുകൂലനം ചെറിയ രീതിയിൽ കാണാമെങ്കിൽത്തന്നെയും വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ കാര്യത്തിലെ അടിയുറപ്പിനെയാണ് ഈ ധാരാളിത്തം കാണിക്കുന്നത്. ദ്രാവിഡപദങ്ങളും സംസ്കൃതപദങ്ങളുടെ തന്ത്രവികരണവുംകൊണ്ട് ഒരു മലയാളപരിമ പാട്ടുകളിൽ ആർക്കും കാണാം. ‘വായിരി’ (വരു, ഇരിക്കു), ‘ആലതി’ (ആവലാതി) എന്നിങ്ങനെയുള്ള ദേശ്യ പ്രയോഗങ്ങളും ‘പാരെടി’ തുടങ്ങിയ ദ്രാവിഡപ്രയോഗങ്ങളും വിരളമല്ല. കഷ്ടപ്പാട് എന്ന അർത്ഥത്തിൽ ‘വരുത്തം’ എന്ന വാക്കു ജൂതമലയാളത്തിൽ സുല

മോണെന്നു സ്കറിയ സക്കറിയ നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നുണ്ട് (സ്കറിയ സക്കറിയ, ഒഫീറ ഗംലിയേൽ:167).

“കറുത്തപെണ്ണേ! നിന്നെ കാണാഞ്ഞിട്ടൊരുനാളുണ്ടേ വരുത്തപ്പെട്ടേൻ ഞാനൊരു വണ്ടായ് ചമഞ്ഞെന്നെടീ” (കേരള ഭാഷാ ഗാനങ്ങൾ, ഭാഗം 2 :333) എന്നു മറ്റു പാട്ടുകളിലും ഈ വാക്ക് ഒരേ അർത്ഥത്തിൽ കാണുന്നുണ്ട്.

പാട്ടിന്റെ താളത്തിന് അനുസരിച്ചാണു പലപ്പോഴും തത്ത്വരൂപീകരണം, പ്രത്യേകിച്ചു സംസ്കൃതപദങ്ങൾക്കു നടക്കുന്നത്. ഒരേ പാട്ടിൽ സംസ്കൃത തത്ത്വങ്ങളും തത്ത്വങ്ങളും കാണുന്നു. സംസ്കൃതപദങ്ങൾ മാത്രമല്ല ഇംഗ്ലീഷും തത്ത്വമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

കർത്താവില്ലാതെ ക്രിയാപദങ്ങളുപയോഗിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു പ്രകരണത്തിൽമാത്രം ആശയപൂർത്തിയാക്കുന്ന വിധത്തിലുള്ള പ്രയോഗങ്ങളും(പാട്ട്-38) ക്രിയകൾക്കുമീതെ ‘-ഉതു’ എന്ന നിരർത്ഥകത്തിന്റെ ആവർത്തിച്ചുള്ള പ്രയോഗവും പുരുഷഭേദപ്രത്യയങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതിലെ അവിവേകവും അനുനാസികാതിപ്രസരം വരാത്ത അപൂർവ്വം ചില പ്രയോഗങ്ങളും(പാട്ട്-13) ഭാഷാപരമായ പ്രത്യേകതകളാണ്. ‘-ഉതു’ വിന്റെ പ്രയോഗത്തെ സി.എൽ. ആന്റണിയുടെ വർത്തമാനകാലപ്രത്യയോൽപ്പത്തിവാദവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തി വായിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. വർണ്ണപരിണാമമാണ് എടുത്തു പറയേണ്ട മറ്റൊരു ഭാഷാ സവിശേഷത (നോ. സ്കറിയ സക്കറിയ, ഒഫീറ ഗംലിയേൽ, 2005:130).

ഒപ്പനപ്പാട്ടിന്റെയും (പാട്ട്-11) കൈക്കൊട്ടിക്കളിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെയും(പാട്ട്-40) താളസ്വീകരണം സാംസ്കാരിക സ്വാംശീകരണത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി വായിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. Audio CD യിലെ അവസാനഭാഗത്തുവരുന്ന പല പാട്ടുകളിലും സിനിമാപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെയും നാടകഗാനങ്ങളുടെയും മുദ്രാവാക്യങ്ങളുടെയും താളം കടന്നുവരുന്നുണ്ട്.

വിവാഹം, മരണം, ആഘോഷം തുടങ്ങിയവ അനുഷ്ഠാനപരമായി വളരെ പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ളവയാണ്. ഭാഷയിൽ വ്യാകരണതല പരിണാമം വളരെ സാവധാനമേ നടക്കൂ എന്നു പറയുന്നതുപോലെ സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ അനുഷ്ഠാനതലത്തിലെ മാറ്റവും വളരെ പതുക്കെയും ക്രമീകവുമായേ നടക്കുകയുള്ളൂ.

പൊലിക പൊലിയ എന്ന പാട്ടുകളിൽ(44,45,46) സർവാലംകൃതയായി നിൽക്കുന്ന വധുവിന്റെ സുന്ദരചിത്രമുണ്ട്. ഈ വധു ചന്ദനം പൂശി ചമ്പകപ്പൂവും മുല്ലപ്പൂവും പിച്ചകപ്പൂവും ചൂടി വളയും മോതിരവും അണിഞ്ഞാണു നിൽക്കുന്നത്. പൊന്നിട്ടമേനി(താലി) എന്ന 37-ാം പാട്ടിൽ താലി ധരിച്ച ജൂതസ്ത്രീയെ കാണാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നു.

ചമ്പകപ്പൂവും മുല്ലപ്പൂവും പിച്ചകപ്പൂവും ചന്ദനം പൂശലും വളയും താലിയും കേരളീയമായ അലങ്കാര-വിവാഹ ചിഹ്നങ്ങളാണെങ്കിൽ മോതിരം തീർത്തും പാശ്ചാത്യചിഹ്നമാണ്. ഇവിടെ കേരളീയജൂതർ തങ്ങളുടെ വിവാഹ

ത്തിലേക്കു കേരളീയമായ താലിയെയും പാശ്ചാത്യമായ മോതിരത്തെയും കൊണ്ടുവന്നു സമന്വയിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

കപ്പൽ പണിയുന്ന ആശാരിമാരും (പാട്ട്-3) സർവാഭരണവിഭൂഷിതകളായ സ്ത്രീകളും (പാട്ട്-39) വിവാഹസദ്വയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സൂചനകളും ജൂതരുടെയും അക്കാലത്തെയും സാങ്കേതിക-സാമ്പത്തിക-സാംസ്കാരിക ജീവിതത്തിലേക്കുള്ള വഴികൾ തുറക്കുന്നതാണ്.

ഒപ്പന (വെറൊരു മങ്കു ഒപ്പന കാട്ടി ചെന്നു(പാട്ട്-43), മങ്ങല വേല (പാട്ട്-43), നൂലിട്ട താലി പൂണ്ടുകൊണ്ട് (പാട്ട്-37), പട്ടും വളയുംമെ സമ്മാനം കൊടുത്തുതെ (പാട്ട്-3) എന്നീ വരികൾ ശ്രദ്ധാർഹമാണ്. ഇതു കേരളത്തിലെ തീയ ജൂതർ കേരളത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥലരാശിയിലും സാംസ്കാരിക വൈവിധ്യത്തിലും ഉൾച്ചേർന്നു കേരളീയ ജൂതരായി, അങ്ങനെ കേരളീയരായി എന്നു സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

ഉപസംഹാരം

‘മോതിരം ഇട്ടൊരു വിരലും നനയാതെ’ ‘നൂലിട്ട താലി പൂണ്ടുകൊണ്ട്’ ഒപ്പനപ്പാട്ടിന്റെയും കൈക്കൊട്ടിക്കളിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെയും താളം ആവശ്യാനുസരണം സ്വീകരിച്ചു, ജൂതർ തങ്ങളുടെ ജൂതത്വം വിട്ടുകളയാതെ കേരളീയതയെ ആശ്ലേഷിച്ചതിന്റെ ചിത്രമാണു ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ നമുക്കു കാണിച്ചുതന്നത് .

സഹായക ഗ്രന്ഥങ്ങൾ

അജു നാരായണൻ	2005	കേരളത്തിലെ ബുദ്ധമതപാരമ്പര്യം നാട്ടറിവുകളിലൂടെ, താരതമ്യ പഠന സംഘം, ചങ്ങനാശ്ശേരി.
ആനന്ദകുട്ടൻ നായർ(സമ്പാ.)	1980	കേരള ഭാഷാഗാനങ്ങൾ ഭാഗം 2, കേരള സാഹിത്യഅക്കാദമി, തൃശ്ശൂർ.
ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണൻ പി.കെ.	1991(1974)	കേരളത്തിന്റെ സാംസ്കാരികചരിത്രം, കേരള ഭാഷാ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം.
ജോസഫ് പി.എം.	1995	മലയാളത്തിലെ പരകീയ പദങ്ങൾ, കേരളഭാഷാ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം.
മറിയാമ്മ ജോൺ(ആവേദക)	1998	മാണിക്കൊപെണ്ണ, മാനുഷം പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണം, ചങ്ങനാശ്ശേരി.

രാഘവൻ പയ്യനാട് 1992(1986) ഫോക്ലോർ, കേരള ഭാഷാ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം.

രാഘവൻ പയ്യനാട് (എഡി.) 1997 കേരളഫോക്ലോർ, ഫോക്ലോർ ഫെലോസ് ഓഫ് മലബാർ (ട്രസ്റ്റ്), പയ്യന്നൂർ.

സജിത.കെ.ആർ.(എഡി.) 1997 എടനാടൻപാട്ട്, താരതമ്യ പഠനസംഘം, ചങ്ങനാശ്ശേരി.

സന്തോഷ്. എച്.കെ. 1998 ഫോക്ലോർ വഴിയും പൊരുളും, സംസ്കൃതി പബ്ലിഷേഴ്സസ്, പരിയാരം, കണ്ണൂർ.

സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ, ഓഫീറ ഗംലിയേൽ 2005 കാർകുഴലി മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ, ബെൻസി ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, ജറുസലം.

Scaria Zacharia 2005 Jewish Malayalam Folksongs: Text, Discourses and Identity, *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* XXXIV No 2, June 2005.

CD ROM Oh, Lovely Parrot! 2005 The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish Music Research Centre.

ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ

സിസ്റ്റർ ദീപ

ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ എന്നു കേട്ടാൽ വായനാശീല മുളള മലയാളിയുടെ മനസ്സിൽ ആദ്യം തെളിഞ്ഞുവരുന്നതു 'പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ' എന്ന പുസ്തകമായിരിക്കും. 1910 മുതൽ കോട്ടയത്തുനിന്ന് അച്ചടിച്ചു പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിക്കുന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥമാണിത്. 2002-ൽ പത്താം പതിപ്പു പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ചു. പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ, ആൺപാട്ടുകൾ, പള്ളിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, മാർഗ്ഗംകളിപ്പാട്ട് പാണൻപാട്ട് എന്നിങ്ങനെ പല ഗണങ്ങളായി തിരിക്കാവുന്ന പാട്ടുകൾ ഇതിലുണ്ട്. പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ പ്രസാധകർ കോട്ടയം കേന്ദ്രമാക്കിയുള്ള ക്നാനായ കത്തോലിക്കാ സമുദായമാണ്.¹ അവരുടെ ആത്മദർശനത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന പരിണാമവുമായി പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ വിവിധ അച്ചടിപ്പതിപ്പുകളിലൂടെയുള്ള വികാസപരിണാമങ്ങളെ ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതു കൗതുകകരമാണ്.

നാടൻഗീതികളും കഥാഗാനങ്ങളും ഉൾപ്പെട്ട പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളെ ആരായി വർഗ്ഗീകരിക്കാം. ആഘോഷപ്പാട്ടുകൾ അതിൽ ഒരു വിഭാഗമാണ് ക്നാനായ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ ഇടയിൽ കല്യാണത്തിനും മറ്റാഘോഷങ്ങൾക്കും പാടുന്നവയാണ് ആഘോഷപ്പാട്ടുകൾ. പാടുന്നവരെ മുൻനിർത്തി ആൺപാട്ട്, പെൺപാട്ട് എന്നു തരംതിരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ചുവടും താളവും കൂടാതെ സ്ത്രീകൾ നീന്നോ ഇരുന്നോ പാടുന്നവയാണു പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ (1961:35). മിക്ക പെൺപാട്ടുകളും വിവാഹത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചു പാടുന്നവയാണ്. പഴമ കൊതിക്കുന്ന മട്ടിലുള്ളവയാണു മിക്ക പാട്ടുകളും. പാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മയെ സ്വയം നിർവ്വചിക്കുകയും വിളംബരം ചെയ്യുകയുമാണ് ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ. പാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മയ്ക്കു സ്വത്വപ്രകാശനം (identification) എന്ന നിലയിലാണു പാട്ടിന്റെ പ്രാധാന്യം.

കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകൾ

1. മാർത്തോമ്മാൻ

യേശുക്രിസ്തുവിന്റെ മരണത്തെത്തുടർന്നു യേശുശിഷ്യനായ മാർത്തോമ്മാ ഭാരതത്തിൽ സുവിശേഷം നൽകിയെന്ന പ്രബലവിശ്വാസമാണു

മാർത്തോമ്മാക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾക്കുള്ളത്. മാർത്തോമ്മാക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ തനിമ യാർന്ന ഉപവിഭാഗമായ ക്നാനായ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾ ² ഈ വിശ്വാസധാരയിലു റച്ചുനിന്നുകൊണ്ടു തങ്ങളുടെ വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങുകളുടെ ആരംഭത്തിൽ മാർ തോമ്മായെ അനുസ്മരിക്കുകയും യേശുവിന്റെയും മാർത്തോമ്മായുടെയും സാന്നി ധ്യംകൊണ്ടു ചടങ്ങുകൾ ഭംഗിയാക്കണമെന്നു പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്ന ഒരു ഗീതമാണിത്. കാരണം ക്നാനായക്കാർക്കു തോമ്മാസ്ത്രീഹാ വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ പിതാവാണ്. ബാബിലോണിൽവെച്ചു തോമ്മാസ്ത്രീഹാ നേരിട്ടോ ശിഷ്യരായ അദ്ദ റായി, മാറി എന്നിവർ വഴിയോ നൽകിയ സുവിശേഷമാണു തങ്ങളുടെ മതം എന്ന് അവർ കരുതുന്നു. ബാബിലോണിയൻ ജൂത-ക്രൈസ്തവ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ അവർ അഭിമാനംകൊള്ളുന്നു.

1. പാട്ടിന്റെ തുടക്കം

“മാർത്തോമ്മാൻ നന്മയാലൊന്നു തുടങ്ങുന്നു
നന്നായ് വരേണമേയിന്ന്
ഉത്തമനായ മിശിഹാ തിരുവുള്ളം
ഉണെയെഴുന്നൾക വേണം
കന്തിശാനായനെഴുന്നള്ളി വന്നിട്ടു
കർപ്പൂരപ്പന്തലകമേ
കൈകുപ്പി നേർന്നു ഞാൻ പെറ്റുവളർത്തോരു
കന്നിമകളെ ഞാൻ നിന്നെ
തോളും തുടയും മുഖവും മണിമാറും
യോഗത്താലെ പരിശുണ്ട്
എന്റെ മകളെ പരമേറ്റി വയ്പോളും
എന്മനസ്സോ പതറുന്നു....” (1998:1)

ഈ കർപ്പൂരപ്പന്തൽ യേശുവിന്റെ സാന്നിധ്യത്താൽ വിശുദ്ധീകരിക്ക പ്പടണമെന്ന പ്രാർത്ഥനയെ തുടർന്നുള്ള വരികളിൽ നിറഞ്ഞുനില്ക്കുന്നത് പെറ്റു വളർത്തിയ അമ്മയുടെ വികാരവൈവശ്യമാണ്. വളർത്തി വലുതാക്കി അനുരൂപനായ പുരുഷന്റെ കൈയിൽ മകളെ ഏല്പിക്കുമ്പോൾ അമ്മയ്ക്കു ണ്ടാകുന്ന വികാരമാണിത്. കന്യക പണയവസ്തുവാണ്. അത് ഉടമയ്ക്കു മട ക്കിക്കൊടുത്താലേ ആശ്വാസമാകൂ എന്നു കാളിദാസശാകുന്തളത്തിൽ കാണു ന്നുണ്ടല്ലോ. തന്റെ അഭിലാഷം നിറവേറ്റുന്നതിൽ അമ്മ അനുഭവിക്കുന്ന സംതൃപ്തി പൊതുബോധത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി വേണം മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ. സ്ത്രീയുടെ ജന്മസാഹചര്യം വിവാഹത്തിലാണെന്ന പൊതുബോധം പ്രകാശി പ്പിക്കാനും ഉൾച്ചുരുപ്പിക്കാനും ഇത്തരം ഭാഗങ്ങൾ പ്രയോജനപ്പെടും. സ്ത്രീ യുടെ വളർച്ച അവയവങ്ങളുടെ വളർച്ചയായി ചിത്രീകരിക്കുന്നിടത്തു സ്ത്രീസ ക്കല്പത്തിലെ അതീവ ശരീരപരത ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്. സമകാലിക ഫെമിനിസ്റ്റു ദർശനങ്ങളുടെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ ഇതു വിശകലനം ചെയ്യാവുന്നതാണ്.

2. അന്തം ചാർത്തുപാട്ട്

കല്യാണത്തിന്റെ തലേദിവസം പന്തലിൽവെച്ചു വരനെ സുന്ദരനാ ക്കുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണ് അന്തംചാർത്ത്. പഴയകാലത്തു ശൈശവവിവാഹം നിലനി ന്നിരുന്നതിനാൽ വരനെ ആദ്യമായി ക്ഷാരം ചെയ്യുന്നതും കൗപീനമണിയി ക്കുന്നതും ഈ ദിവസമായിരുന്നു. ഈ ചടങ്ങുകൾ നടത്തുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ പന്തലിൽവെച്ചു പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണു ചന്തം ചാർത്തുപാട്ട്. ചന്തംചാർത്തുക എന്ന ചടങ്ങ് പിന്നീട് അന്തംചാർത്തായി മാറിയതാവവാം.

“മാറാനീശോ പദവിയിലെ
മണർക്കോലപ്പുതുമ കാഞ്ചാൻ
കുറാന ബന്ധുക്കളും ഗുണമുടയ അറിവുള്ളൊരും
അപ്പനൊടു അമ്മാവന്മാരായലാരും ബന്ധുക്കളും
തേറാന ധനത്തെയൊത്തു വേഗമൊടെ തൻ പിതാക്കൾ
മാറാനെ മുൻനിർത്തി മാർഗ്ഗവാന നാൾ കുറിച്ചു
നാൾ കുറിച്ച ദിവസമതിൽ മുഴുകെപ്പുശി ഭംഗിയോടെ
നിറത്തോടൊത്തങ്ങിരിക്കും നേരം പാടിക്കളിക്കും ബാലകർക്ക്
കോൽവിളക്കും പാവാടയും അന്തം ചാർത്തി നീറുമാടി.”

അപ്പനും അമ്മയും ബന്ധുക്കളും അയൽവാസികളും ആയ ആളുകൾ ഇരി ക്കുന്ന പന്തലിൽ വിവാഹത്തലേന്നു ബാലകർ പാടിക്കളിക്കുന്നു. അലങ്കരിച്ച പീഠത്തിൽ ഇരിക്കുന്ന പുരുഷനെ കോൽവിളക്കിന്റെ അകമ്പടിയോടെ അന്തം ചാർത്തുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

3. മൈലാഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ട്

വിവാഹത്തലേന്നു മണവാട്ടിയുടെ വീട്ടിൽ നടത്തുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണ് ‘മൈലാഞ്ചിയിടീത്’. ഇതിനുള്ളതാണു മൈലാഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ട്. കൈപ്പത്തി, കാൽപ്പ ത്തി, നഖങ്ങൾ എന്നിവിടങ്ങളിലാണു മൈലാഞ്ചിയിടുന്നത്. പാട്ടിൽ വിവരി ക്കുന്ന സമയങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രമേ മൈലാഞ്ചിയിടാവൂ. അതിനുള്ള കാരണവും പാട്ടിൽ വിവരിക്കുന്നു.

“പണ്ട് പറഞ്ഞൊത്തോരാദത്തും ഭാര്യയാ
ഹവു മനയാളെ നായൻ കൊടുത്തപോൽ
അന്നന്നു കന്നിമാർ മംഗല്യം വാഴുവാൻ
പച്ചില മയിലാഞ്ചികൊണ്ടു പൊതിയേണം
കയ്യാലെ കായും പറിച്ചൊരു കാരണം
കൈപ്പടം തന്നിൽ പൊതിയുന്നു മയിലാഞ്ചി
കാലാൽ നടന്നു കനിതിന കാരണം
കാൽനഖം തന്നിൽ പൊതിയുന്നു മയിലാഞ്ചി

അസ്ഥിമേൽ മണ്ണു പൊതിഞ്ഞൊരു കാരണം
കൈപ്പടം തന്നിൽ പൊതിയുന്നു മയിലാഞ്ചി”
(1998:3)

ബൈബിളിലെ ഉൽപത്തി പുസ്തകത്തിൽ രണ്ടും മൂന്നും അധ്യായങ്ങളിൽ പ്രതിപാദിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള വിവരണവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെടുത്തിയാണു ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ മൈലാഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ട്. ബൈബിൾപാഠവും അരങ്ങിലെ പാഠവും കലർത്തി ഉണ്ടാക്കിയ മൈലാഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ ചേരുവ സവിശേഷപഠനം അർഹിക്കുന്നു. മൈലാഞ്ചിയിടിക്കുക എന്ന ചടങ്ങു മറ്റു കേരളീയ സമുദായങ്ങളിലുമുണ്ട്.³ ഇവിടെ ബൈബിൾപ്രമേയവുമായി ബന്ധിപ്പിച്ചു ചടങ്ങിനെ ക്രൈസ്തവമാക്കുന്നു.

4. വാഴുപ്പാട്ട്

വിവാഹപ്പന്തലിൽ വധുവരന്മാരെ അനുഗ്രഹിക്കാൻ വധുവിന്റെ അമ്മ എത്തുമ്പോൾ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണു വാഴുപ്പാട്ട്. സദസ്സിനോട് അനുവാദം വാങ്ങി വലതുകരം മണവാളന്റെ തലയിലും ഇടതുകരം മണവാട്ടിയുടെ തലയിലും വെച്ച് അനുഗ്രഹിക്കുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ സംഘമായി പാടുന്നു. പാട്ടിനു മുപ്പത്തഞ്ചു വരികളുണ്ട്.

“വാഴ്വെന്ന വാഴു നിനക്കൊകെ തന്നേൻ
നീയും നിൻ ഭർത്താവും മക്കളും കൂടെ
കാലം പെരുതായ് വാണിട്ടിരിക്കണം
വാഴ്വാന ഭൃമീം ഫലമാകത്തന്നേൻ
പങ്കിട്ടു നിൻമക്കൾ കൊള്ളുകയെന്നേകി
വീഴാതെ ശെൽവവും വിരിവുമതെല്ലാം
വിരിവാന വാഴ്വതെല്ലാം നിനക്ക്
വിത്താലിരട്ടിപ്പതെല്ലാം നിനക്ക്
അടിയാർക്കടിമ കൊടുപ്പതും താനേ
അരുളാൽ പെരുമ കൊടുപ്പതും താനേ
തിരുവുള്ളമാന വഴിയെ നടപ്പാൻ
മുടി ചുടുമാറു പെരുമ കൊടുത്ത്
ധനവതിയെന്ന ശ്രീയെക്കൊടുത്ത്
താനൊരു നന്ദിയുണർച്ചയും വെച്ച്..”

ഇങ്ങനെ പാടി ദീർഘായുസ്സു നേരുകയും പാലിലെ വെണ്ണപോലെ ലാളിച്ചു പോറ്റിയ മകൾക്ക് ഐശ്വര്യം ഉണ്ടാകുവാൻ പരസ്യമായി അനുഗ്രഹം നൽകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഇതിനു സമാനമായ പാട്ടു ‘കാർകുഴലി ജുതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ’ (സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ 2005) എന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ ‘വാഴുവന്ന’ എന്ന പേരിൽ കാണാം. മറ്റു പാട്ടുകളുമായി ജുതപ്പാട്ടുകൾക്കുള്ള അടുപ്പത്തെ

ക്കുറിച്ച് ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ ചർച്ചചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്. (കാർകുഴലിയുടെ മുൻ കുറിപ്പ് 2005 നോക്കുക)⁴.

കേരളത്തിലെ ജുതരുടെയും ക്നാനായ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെയും കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകൾക്കും സാദൃശ്യമുണ്ടെന്നും വാഴുപ്പാട്ട്, പൊന്നണിത്തീടും എന്നീ പാട്ടുകൾ ഇന്നും നേരിയ വ്യത്യാസത്തോടെ രണ്ടു കൂട്ടരും പാടിവരുന്നു എന്നും പ്രൊഫ. പി. എം. ജുസ്റ്റേ (A study in comparison 1986:4) രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്. പാഠതലത്തിൽ ഇരുകൂട്ടരുടെയും വാഴുപ്പാട്ടുകൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ കൗതുകകരമാണെന്ന് ‘കാർകുഴലി’യുടെ വ്യാഖ്യാനക്കുറിപ്പിൽ ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

5. വാഴുവട്ടക്കളി

പന്തലിൽ വധുവിന്റെ അമ്മ വധുവരന്മാരെ അനുഗ്രഹിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു നില്ക്കുന്ന സമയത്ത് വാഴുപ്പാട്ടും തുടർന്നു സന്ദർഭമനുസരിച്ചു വാഴുവട്ടക്കളി പാടും പാടുന്നു. ആടയാഭരണങ്ങളും പൊൻമുടിയും ചൂടി വധു വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങുകൾക്കു പള്ളിയിലേക്കു പോകുന്നതും ചടങ്ങുകൾ കഴിഞ്ഞ് തിരിച്ചെത്തുന്ന വധുവരന്മാർക്കു പാലും പഴവും നൽകുന്ന ചടങ്ങും പാട്ടിൽ വിവരിക്കുന്നു.

“ഓമനയുള്ള മകനെക്കണ്ടമ്മയും
ഉണ്ണയിലൊന്നു കൊടുക്കണമെന്നോർത്ത്
പൊന്നും തളികയിൽ പാലും പഴവുമായ്
വെള്ളിവിളങ്ങുന്ന കിണ്ടിയിൽ വെള്ളവും
കൊണ്ടുചെന്നങ്ങു കൊടുത്ത മധുരങ്ങൾ
ഇച്ഛിച്ചു തന്ന മധുരങ്ങൾ ചൊല്ലുവാൻ
ഇച്ഛയിലൊന്നും ശരിപ്പറവാൻില്ല..”

വിവാഹസദ്യയ്ക്കു മുമ്പായി നടത്തുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണിത്. ജുതവിവാഹത്തിലും ഇങ്ങനെയൊരു ചടങ്ങുള്ളതായി ഡോ. വെള്ളിയാൻ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിട്ടുണ്ട്.⁵ അവർ വീഞ്ഞാണ് ഒരേ പാത്രത്തിൽനിന്നു കുടിക്കുന്നത്.

6. നല്ലൊരൊറോശ്ശം

വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങുകൾ കഴിഞ്ഞു വധുവരന്മാരെ ഘോഷയാത്രയായി വരന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ സജ്ജീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന പന്തലിലേക്കു ആനയിക്കുന്നു. അവിടെ നടത്തുന്ന വാഴുപ്പാട്ടിനെ തുടർന്നു നല്ലൊരൊറോശ്ശം എന്നാരംഭിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടു പാടുന്നു. ക്നാനായ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ ചരിത്രം, അവർക്കു ലഭിച്ച പദവികൾ എന്നിവയാണു പാട്ടിന്റെ വിഷയം. കുടിയേറ്റക്കാർക്കു നേതൃത്വം നൽകുന്നവരെക്കുറിച്ചും അവർ കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂരു കപ്പലിറങ്ങുന്നതിനെക്കുറിച്ചും പാട്ടിൽ പ്രതിപാദിക്കുന്നു. ഓറോശ്ശം (ജറുസലം) നഗരത്തിൽനിന്നു മലനാട്ടിലേക്കു യാത്രയാകുന്ന ഒരു മന്നനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ചിത്രവും ഇവിടെ ലഭിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

അൻപതു വരികളുള്ള പാട്ട് ആരംഭിക്കുന്നത് ഇപ്രകാരമാണ്.

“നല്ലൊരോരോടും തന്നിൽ നഗരിയിൽ
മരതകമുത്തു വിളയുന്ന നാട്ടിലി
മയിലാടുംപോലെ വിളങ്ങുന്ന മന്നൻ
പത്തരമാറ്റിനു നിറമേനി ചൊല്ലാമേ
.....
.....
മലനാടു വാഴുവാൻ പോകണം മന്നൻ
ബാവായുടെ കല്പനയാലെ പുറപ്പെട്ടു..”

കാസോലിക്ക(മെത്രാൻ)യിൽനിന്നും അനുവാദം വാങ്ങി പുറപ്പെട്ട
അവർ കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂരെത്തുന്ന രംഗം വിവരിക്കുന്നതു കാണുക.

“ഒത്തുതിരിച്ചവർ കപ്പൽകേറി
മലനാടു നോക്കി പുറപ്പെട്ടാറെ
കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂരങ്ങീതെ വന്നിറങ്ങി
കൊച്ചിലഴിമുഖം കണ്ടവാരെ
ഈരൊഴു നാലു വെടിയും വച്ചു
വെടിവച്ചു ഗോപുരം കേറുന്നപ്പോൾ
ശിപ്പായിമാരവർ വിളികൊള്ളുന്നു
ബന്ധുക്കളൊക്കെ തളരുന്നയ്യോ
പള്ളിത്തണ്ടിന്മേൽ കൊടിയും കുത്തി
തണ്ടിനുമീതെയൊ രാജവർമ്മൻ
ചെമ്പകശ്ശേരിയും കൂടെയുണ്ട്
വെട്ടത്തുമന്നനും കൂടെയുണ്ട്.
ഉറഹാ മാർ യൗസേപ്പെഴുന്നള്ളുന്നു
കത്തങ്ങൾ നാലരരികെയുണ്ട്
തൊമ്മൻ കിനാനവൻ കൂടെയുണ്ട്
വന്നു കടിലാസു വാങ്ങിക്കൊണ്ട്
കാലത്തു നിങ്ങളവിടെച്ചെന്ന്
കൈക്കു പിടിച്ചു കരയിറക്കി.”

ഇങ്ങനെ വന്നു ‘മുടിവെച്ചു മൂന്നു വർഷം’ വാണചരിത്രമാണ് ഇതിൽ⁶ പ്രതിപാ
ദിക്കുന്നത്.

7. ഇന്നു നീ ഞങ്ങളെ

വിവാഹശേഷം വരന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ അലംകൃതമായ പന്തലിൽവെച്ചു നട
ക്കുന്ന ചടങ്ങുകൾക്കിടയിൽ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണിത്. ചരിത്രബോധമുണർത്തുന്ന

TAPASAM, January 2006

ഈ പാട്ടിൽ വേർപാടിന്റെ വേദനയുണ്ട്. ഉറ്റവരെയും ഉടയവരെയും പിരിഞ്ഞ്
വിദൂരയാത്രയ്ക്കൊരുങ്ങുന്ന ജനതയുടെ ആശങ്കയും ചെല്ലുന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് ഭാഷ
യറിയാത്തതിന്റെ നൊമ്പരവും ഇതിൽ അലയടിക്കുന്നു. കുടിയേറ്റക്കാർക്കു
കാസോലിക്ക(മെത്രാപ്പോലീത്താ) നല്കുന്ന ഉപദേശം ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്.

“കാലോചിതംപോലെ നല്ലയാബുന്മാരെ
കാലമീരാറിനു മുമ്പേ ഞാനെത്തിപ്പേൻ
ഏഴില്ലമെഴുപത്തിരണ്ടു കുടിയാരും
ഒത്തൊരുമിച്ചങ്ങു പോകണം നിങ്ങളും
വെണ്മയിൽ പോയാലും മക്കളെ നിങ്ങള്
ചട്ടയും മുട്ടാക്കും കൊന്ത തലമുണ്ട്
.....
.....
ഉറ്റവരുടയവർ ബന്ധുക്കളെല്ലാരും
തങ്ങളിത്തങ്ങളിലമ്പോടെ തഴുകുന്നു
മാർവത്തു കണ്ണുനീർ മാർവ്വം നനയുന്നു
തമ്പുരാനല്ലാതെ ഇല്ലൊരു സാക്ഷിയും
മക്കളെ കാണുമോ ഹിന്ദുവിൽ പോയാലും
ബന്ധങ്ങൾ വേർവിടാതോർക്കണമെപ്പോഴും..”

മക്കൾ പഠിച്ചു നടപ്പെടുകയാണ്. കുടിയേറ്റക്കാരായി വന്ന പൂർവ്വികരുടെ നിയോഗങ്ങളും ഉൽക്കണ്ഠകളും നൊമ്പരങ്ങളും ആത്മവിശ്വാസം ഉണ്ടാക്കിയെടുക്കു
വാൻ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നുണ്ടിവിടെ. ഇവിടെ ചരിത്രം വർത്തമാനകാലത്തെ മറി
കടക്കാനുള്ള ഊർജ്ജമാണ്.

8. പന്തൽപ്പാട്ട്

വധുവരന്മാരും സംഘവും ഘോഷയാത്രയായി വിവാഹപ്പന്തലിന്റെ
വാതില്ക്കലെത്തുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ സംഘമായി പന്തൽപാട്ടാരംഭിക്കുന്നു.
അവർ പന്തലിൽ പ്രവേശിച്ചു മണർക്കോലത്തെ സമീപിക്കുമ്പോൾ പാട്ടവസാനം
നിക്കുന്നു. പന്തലിന്റെ അവതരണം:

“കല്യാണപ്പന്തലിൽ കാതലുള്ള പന്തലിൽ
നല്ല മണപ്പന്തലിൽ നാരിമേവും പന്തലിൽ
ഇലകളിടും പന്തലിൽ കീർത്തിപ്പെട്ട പന്തലിൽ...”

പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളിലെ മറ്റു പല പാട്ടുകളിലും പന്തലിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള വർണ്ണന
കാണാം. പന്തൽ സന്തോഷത്തിന്റെ അനുഭവമാണു നല്കുന്നത്.

“എല്ലാരും പന്തലിൽ മോദാലിരിക്കുന്നു
പൊന്നും തളികയിൽ വെച്ചോരു വെറ്റില

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

കുടിയവരൊക്കെ വാങ്ങിച്ചു വെറ്റില
വെള്ളിത്തളികമേൽ വെച്ചോരു വെറ്റില ..”

ചെറിയ തോബിയാസിന്റെ പാട്ട്, എട്ടുത്തിര വട്ടക്കളി, മംഗല്യം വട്ടക്കളി തുടങ്ങിയ പല പാട്ടുകളിലായി പന്ത്രണ്ടു തവണ പന്തലിനെക്കുറിച്ചു പുരാതന പാട്ടുകളിൽ പരാമർശമുണ്ട്.

9. മംഗല്യം വട്ടക്കളി

വിവാഹസംബന്ധമായ ചടങ്ങുകളുടെ സംഗ്രഹം ഈ പാട്ടിലുണ്ട്. വിവാഹക്കാര്യത്തിൽ മാതാപിതാക്കളുടെ ആലോചന മുതൽ ഘോഷയാത്രയായി വധുവരന്മാരുടെ സംഘം വീട്ടിലെത്തുന്നതുവരെയുള്ള കാര്യങ്ങളെല്ലാം പാടിക്കേൾക്കാം. വിവാഹനിശ്ചയത്തെ തുടർന്നു പള്ളിയിൽ വിളിച്ചുചൊല്ലുന്ന കാര്യങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പ്രതിപാദനത്തിലെ ഒരു ഭാഗം:

“കത്തൻ വിളിച്ചു ചൊല്ലി
ശുദ്ധമാം പൂജനേരം
കോലാഹലത്തോടങ്ങു
നാലു ദിശയറിഞ്ഞു”

വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങും വേഷഭൂഷാദികളും വിവരിക്കുന്ന ഭാഗം:

“വേണ്ടും വചനം ചൊല്ലി കയ്യും പിടിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടു
കയ്യാലെയുന്നിയവൻ കയ്യാലെ കെട്ടിതാലി
പട്ടുമണിത്തവരെ കസേരയിലിരുത്തി
ഇട്ടുതരത്തിൽ വള പെട്ടന്നു ദൃഷണങ്ങൾ
കുന്തലഴിച്ചു തല കോന്തിയൊതുക്കിക്കെട്ടി
വേന്തൻ മുടികൾവെച്ചും കാന്തികലരുമ്പണ്ണം ...”

ഘോഷയാത്രയെ സംബന്ധിച്ചും വിവരണങ്ങളുണ്ട്.

“മെല്ലെയിരുവരെയും ആനപ്പുറത്തിരുത്തി
നല്ല തൊഴുമ്മക്കാരൻ മുന്നിലകമ്പടിയും
ഒത്തു നടനടകൾ ചൊല്ലി നടന്നുടനെ
ഏകാന്തപ്പെൺകൊടിമാർ വായ്ക്കുരവയുമിട്ടു
വാദ്യമേളവും നല്ല കൊട്ടും കുരവകളും
കുന്തമെറിഞ്ഞു നല്ല പന്താട്ടം കാണനിന്ന്
എന്തെന്തു കാണേണ്ടുന്നു ചിന്തിച്ചു കാണികളും..”

വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങുകളുടെ വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ പല പാട്ടുകളിലുമുണ്ട്.

“ആനക്കഴുത്തേറി ബാലപ്പുരുഷനും
മേനിക്കു നല്ല വിളക്കു പിടിപ്പിച്ചു
വേണ്ടുന്ന വാദ്യങ്ങളൊക്കെ മുഴുക്കിപ്പിച്ചു
പിന്നിൽ മുത്തുക്കൂട ചൂടിച്ചതന്നേരം
മാനിച്ചു വെഞ്ചാമരയാലവട്ടവും
താളത്തിൽ വീശിച്ചു ഘോഷത്തോടങ്ങനെ
ആർത്തു നടനട ചൊല്ലി നടന്നുടൻ”

എന്നു ‘ബാലായുള്ള വട്ടക്കളി’യിലും

“പത്തുവിരല്ക്കും നിരന്ന പൊൻമോതിരം
പാലുപോൽ തങ്കം വിളങ്ങും തലുവവും
പത്തുമിരുപതും തരുണികളകമ്പടി
പാട്ടും കുരവയലങ്കാരത്തോടായി
എത്തിനാർ പന്തലിൽ മെല്ലെമെല്ലെ ചെന്നു.”

എന്നു ‘എട്ടുത്തിര വട്ടക്കളി’യിലും വിശദാംശങ്ങൾ കാണാം.

10. അയനിപ്പാട്ട്

വിവാഹദിനത്തിൽ മണവാളന്റെ സഹോദരി ഒരു പാത്രത്തിൽ മിന്നും മന്ത്രകോടിയും മറ്റൊരു പാത്രത്തിൽ അയനിയപ്പവുമായി വാദ്യഘോഷങ്ങളോടെ പള്ളിയിൽ പോകുന്ന ചടങ്ങുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. വിവാഹം നടന്നാലുടനെ മണവാളന്റെ സഹോദരി സ്ത്രീകൾക്കുമാത്രം മേല്പറഞ്ഞ പലഹാരം വിതരണം ചെയ്യും. ഈ ചടങ്ങു നടക്കുമ്പോൾ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണു അയനിപ്പാട്ട്.

അയനിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ തുടക്കം

“മാറാതെ വാഴുടയോൻ മാറാനീശോമിശിഹാ
മിശിഹാ തന്നരുളാലെ മാർ യോഹന്നാനബുനാൻ
അബുനാന്തരൈവർ കൂടി ദേശമാം കുറുകൊണ്ട്
ദേശമാം കുറുകൊണ്ടു നാലരും നാലുദിക്കിൽ
വന്നതിൽ മാണിക്യമാം മാർ യോഹന്നാനബുനാൻ
ബഗദാരിൽനിന്നും പൂക്കു കുർബാന ചെയ്തവാറെ
കുർബാനപ്പരശുകൊണ്ടു മനമെഴുന്നപ്പമെല്ലാം
മാറാന്റെ അപ്പമതിൽ അമ്പിനാൽ കുമ്പിട്ടേറ്റം
ഗുണവാനാം പുരുഷനായ മാർ യോഹന്നാനബുനാൻ”

മാർ യോഹന്നാനബുനാൻ എന്ന മെത്രാനെക്കുറിച്ചാണു പാട്ട്. കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂർ ദേശവാസികളിൽ ചിലർ ഈ നാട്ടിലേക്കു മെത്രന്മാരെ ലഭിക്കുവാൻ

കിഴക്കിന്റെ പാത്രീയാർക്കീസിനെ സമീപിച്ചു. പാത്രീയാർക്കീസു രണ്ടു സന്യാസിനികളെ നാമകരണം ചെയ്തു മെത്രാന്മാരായി വാഴിച്ചു ഇന്ത്യയിലേക്കു വിട്ടു. ഇവരിൽ ഒരാളാണു മാർ യോഹന്നാനബുനാൻ. ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾ ഇവരെ സ്വീകരിച്ചു. ഇവർ ഇവിടെ പ്രതിഷ്ഠാകർമ്മങ്ങൾ നടത്തി.

11. പൊന്നണിത്തീടും

വിവാഹകർമ്മങ്ങളുടെ അവസാനം സ്ത്രീകൾ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണിത്. വധുവരന്മാരുടെ സൗന്ദര്യവർണ്ണനയാണ് ഇതിൽ

“കോവൽപഴുക്കാനിറം ചെല്ലുമിവൾ മേനി
വാ കണ്ടാൽ നല്ല തത്തച്ചുണ്ടു നിറം തോന്നും
നീറ്റിൽ കുളിച്ചെടുത്ത മുത്തിനൊളിവാലെ
നീലത്തടം കണ്ടവനെ എന്നെ മറന്തോനെ
ആലിൻതളിരുപോലെ ഇമ്പമുദരമുള്ളൊനെ ..”

എന്നിങ്ങനെ മണവാളനെയും മണവാട്ടിയെയും മാറിമാറി വർണ്ണിക്കുന്നു. ഇത്തരം പാദാദിവർണ്ണനകൾ സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ സുലഭമാണെങ്കിലും പുരാതന പാട്ടുകളിൽ വിരളമാണ്. ഇത്തരം ശരീരവർണ്ണന നാടോടിവഴക്കത്തിൽ വിരളമല്ല. എന്നാൽ ശരീരം പൊതുവേ ക്രൈസ്തവമതസാഹിത്യത്തിൽ കൊണ്ടാടപ്പെടാറില്ല. എങ്കിലും നാടോടിവഴക്കങ്ങളിലൂടെ അവ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ നാടോടിപ്പാട്ടിൽ സ്ഥാനം പിടിക്കുന്നു.

ഇതിനു സദൃശമായ ജൂതപ്പാട്ട് ‘കാർകുഴലി’യിൽ നാല്പത്തിമൂന്നാമത്തെ പാട്ടായി ചേർത്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. അതിൽ

1

“പൊന്നാണത്തീടും തണ്ടു കാറെരി
മങ്ങലാ വെല കാവാൻ നല്ല
പൊന്നൊരു മാല മാറുവിലും
പൊന്നു പൂശാരി മനൽ മീതെ നല്ല
മന്നവൻ ഏകെൻ പൊയി തുയിലാടും
പട്ടാണി പൂണ്ടും കൊണ്ട നല്ല
വളർകൊടി മുന്നി മുത്തണി നല്ല
വട്ടകം വീശുമീതെ നല്ല”

2

“മൂന്നാണി പിന്നാ അകമ്പടിനാലെ
പെമ്പിള ആടും പാട്ടും

.....
.....

എന്നു കാണാം.

പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടിൽ

“പൊന്നണിത്തീടും തണ്ടു കരേരി
മംഗല്യവേല കാണാൻ
വളർകൊടി മുമ്പിൽ മുത്തണിന്തോനെ
വാട്ടവും വീശി മെയ്യെ
പിന്നണി മുന്നിലകമ്പടി നായൽ
നിൻ വിളയാട്ടവും പാട്ടും..”

എന്നിങ്ങനെയാണു അവതരണം. ‘ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളിൽ ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ പ്രസ്തുത പാട്ടിനു വിശദമായ വ്യാഖ്യാനം നൽകുന്നുണ്ട്.⁷ പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടിൽ വിവാഹഘോഷയാത്രയെത്തുടർന്നു പന്തലിൽ പ്രവേശിക്കുന്ന വധുവരന്മാരുടെ സൗന്ദര്യവർണ്ണനയായിട്ടാണു പാട്ട്. കേരളത്തിലെ ജൂതരും വിവാഹാവസരത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടാണിത്.

12. അടച്ചു തുറപ്പാട്ട്

വിവാഹം കഴിഞ്ഞു മൂന്നാംദിവസം നടക്കുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണ് അടച്ചുതുറ. ഈ ചടങ്ങിൽ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണ് അടച്ചുതുറപ്പാട്ട്. വധുവിന്റെ അമ്മ പലഹാരങ്ങളുമായി വരന്റെ വീട്ടിൽ വരും. വധുവരന്മാരെ തോഴരുമായി മണവറയിൽ കയറ്റി കതകടയ്ക്കും. പിന്നീടു മണിവിളക്കുമായി വധുവിന്റെ അമ്മ വന്നു മണവാളനോടു വാതിൽ തുറക്കാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്ന സന്ദർഭം പാട്ടിൽ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. മകൾക്കു ഗൃഹോപകരണങ്ങളും സമ്മാനങ്ങളും വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണിത്. അമ്മയുടെ വരവിനുമുമ്പു മാവി, നാത്തൂൻ, ജ്യേഷ്ഠത്തി എന്നിവരും വാതിൽ മുട്ടുന്നതായി പാട്ടിൽ കാണാം. ഈ പാട്ടിൽ മാതൃവാത്സല്യം നിറഞ്ഞു നില്ക്കുന്നു. മണിവിളക്കു പിടിച്ചു വാതിൽ മുട്ടുന്ന അമ്മ നൽകുന്ന വാഗ്ദാനങ്ങൾ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കുക.

“വട്ടക കിണ്ടിയും തരാം തട്ടമൊത്ത താലം തരാം
കട്ടിൽ തരാം മെത്ത തരാം കണ്ടിരിപ്പാൻ വിളക്കു തരാം
പട്ടുചേല ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ ഭംഗിയൊത്ത മേൽവിതാനം
ഇഷ്ടമൊത്തരൻ വകയും ഹിതത്തിനൊടെ ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ
ഒത്തവണ്ണം ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ ഒന്നിനും കുറവില്ലാതെ
എന്റെ മകനെ മണവാള, മണവറയുടെ വാതിൽ തുറ.”

സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സംഘം പാട്ടുകൾ ആവർത്തിച്ചു പാടുന്നു. ഇങ്ങനെ പാത്രങ്ങൾ

‘ഒത്ത’ ശേഷം (വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്തശേഷം) വധുവരന്മാർ മണവറയുടെ വാതിൽ തുറന്നു പുറത്തുവരും.

13. എണ്ണപ്പാട്ട്

‘അടച്ചു തുറ’ എന്ന ചടങ്ങിനുശേഷം മണവാളനെയും മണവാട്ടിയെയും പന്തലിൽ കൊണ്ടുവരും. അമ്മാവി വന്നു എണ്ണ തേപ്പിക്കും. ഈ സമയം സ്ത്രീകൾ പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണ് എണ്ണപ്പാട്ട്. ചടങ്ങിനെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള വിവരണം പാട്ടിൽ തന്നെയുണ്ട്.

“അൻപുറ്റ മണവാളനും പെൺകൊടിയുമായി പാതിയൊരു ചേല കൊണ്ടൊരുമ്പാടയുടുത്ത് നീതിയോടെ അവർ പോയി പന്തലിലിരുന്നു ചിക്കനെ മുതിർന്നു വന്നമ്മാവിയെണ്ണ തേച്ചു ശില്പമോടെ നീരുമാടി ചോലയും പകർന്നു ചുറ്റുനിന്നു പെൺകൊടിമാർ വായ്ക്കുരവയിട്ടു ...”

കുളി കഴിഞ്ഞത്തുന്വേൾ നെല്ലും നീരും വെയ്ക്കുന്നതായും പാട്ടിൽ കാണാം.

14 കുളിപ്പാട്ട്

വധുവരന്മാർ നീരാടുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണ് കുളിപ്പാട്ടിലുള്ളത്. ശരീരലാവണം, അവരിലെ മാനസികഭാവങ്ങൾ എന്നിവയെല്ലാം പാട്ടിൽ പരാമർശിക്കുന്നു.

“കുന്നു കുഴിച്ച കുളിക്കടവും തോന്നിതെ മണ്ണുമറിച്ച് മണിക്കിണറും തോന്നിതെ പൂവിട്ടു കുന്തലും പൂവും നനഞ്ഞിതെ പൂഷ്പങ്ങൾ ചൂടും തലയും നനഞ്ഞിതെ ശംഖു കടഞ്ഞ കഴുത്തും നനഞ്ഞിതെ”

എന്നിങ്ങനെ അവയവഭംഗി പ്രകാശിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വരികൾ കാണാം. കൂടാതെ മാനസികഭാവങ്ങളും പ്രകാശിപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

“അവൻ പോകും വഴിയെല്ലാം പൊന്നും പലക നിരത്തിനിരത്തി അവൾ പോകും വഴിയെല്ലാം വെള്ളിപ്പലക നിരത്തി നിരത്തി അവനിരിക്കും മാളികമേൽ കൊങ്കുമപ്പനിനീർ അവളിരിക്കും മാളികമേൽ കളഭങ്ങൾ കസ്തുരി.”

ഇത്തരം വർണ്ണനകൾ വിരളമാണെങ്കിലും പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ നാടോടിത്തവുമ്പോ

ഭാവനാസമൃദ്ധിയും അവയിൽ പ്രകടമാകുന്നു. ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകളുടെ സമാഹാരമായ ‘കാർകുഴലി’യിലും ആടയാഭരണങ്ങളുടെ വിവരണവും ശരീരപരതയും കാവ്യോചിതമായി പ്രകാശിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുള്ള പാട്ടുകൾ - പൊലിക, അലങ്കാരമക തുടങ്ങിയവ നല്ല ഉദാഹരണങ്ങളാണ്.

15. വിളക്കുതൊടീൽ പാട്ട്

വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങുകളെല്ലാം കഴിഞ്ഞു വധുവിന്റെ വീട്ടിലേക്കു തിരിക്കുമ്പോൾ വിളക്കു തൊട്ടു വന്ദിച്ചാണു പോകുന്നത്. ആ ചടങ്ങിന്റെ വിവരണം:

“കല്യാണഘോഷത്താൽ നീരാടിവനിട്ട് മണവാട്ടിയും തോഴിയും പന്തലകം പൂക്ക് വിതാനിച്ച പന്തലിൽ വിളക്കുതും തൂക്കിട്ട് അഞ്ചും നാലൊമ്പതും തിരിയും തെരുത്തിട്ട് വിളക്കിനു മൂന്നു വലത്തും വെച്ചാദരാൽ ഭക്തിയാൽ കൈകുപ്പി കുരിശും വരച്ചിതെ.”

ഇങ്ങനെ പാടുന്ന ഗായകസംഘത്തോടു ചേർന്നു കന്യകാമറിയത്തിന്റെയും ത്രിത്വൈകദൈവത്തിന്റെയും സംരക്ഷണം യാചിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു വധുവരന്മാർ യാത്രയാകുന്നു.

കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകൾ പന്തലിൽവെച്ചു സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സംഘമാണു പാടിയിരുന്നത്. വിവാഹത്തോടനുബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള ഒമ്പതു ചടങ്ങുകളും സന്ദർഭാനുസൃതം പാടുന്ന പതിനഞ്ചു പാട്ടുകളുമാണ് മുകളിൽ സൂചിപ്പിച്ചത്. ഇവ കൂടാതെ സന്ദർഭാനുസരണം ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്നതും ഉപയോഗിച്ചുവരുന്നതുമായ പള്ളിപ്പാട്ടുകളും വട്ടക്കളിപ്പാട്ടുകളും ‘പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടിലുൾപ്പെടും.

കേരളത്തിലെ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾക്കിടയിൽ സവിശേഷമായ ആചാരരീതികളുള്ള ഒരു വിഭാഗമാണു തെക്കുംഭാഗർ അഥവാ ക്നാനായർ. എ. ഡി. 345--ൽ കച്ചവടപ്രമാണിയായ ക്നായിത്തൊമ്മന്റെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ കേരളത്തിൽ കുടിയേറിയവരുടെ പിൻഗാമികളാണു തങ്ങൾ എന്ന് ആ ജനത വിശ്വസിക്കുന്നു. തെക്കെ മെസപ്പൊട്ടോമിയയിൽനിന്നു കപ്പൽമാർഗ്ഗം കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂരെത്തിയ ഇവർക്ക് അന്നത്തെ ചേരമാൻ പെരുമാൾ താമസിക്കുവാൻ പട്ടണവും പള്ളി പണിചെയ്യാൻ സ്ഥലവും ഒപ്പം പദവികളും നല്കി. ഇക്കാര്യങ്ങൾ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത് ക്നായിത്തൊമ്മൻ ചെപ്പേടിലാണ്. കേരള ക്രൈസ്തവരിൽ ജൂതപാരമ്പര്യം അവകാശപ്പെടുന്ന ഇവർ തങ്ങളുടെ വംശശുദ്ധി നിലനിർത്താൻ ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നവരാണ്. ഏകവംശവിവാഹം മാത്രം നടത്തുന്ന ഒരു വർഗ്ഗസമുദായമാണിവർ. ആചാരാനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളിൽ തനിമ പുലർത്തുന്ന ഇവർ പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ പിൻബലത്തോടെയാണ് ആചാരങ്ങൾ പിന്തുടരുന്നത്. നൂറ്റാണ്ടുകളിലൂടെ ഓർമ്മ നിലനിർത്താനും പകരാനും പാട്ടുകളും ചടങ്ങുകളും ഉപകരിക്കുന്നു.

വിവാഹച്ചടങ്ങിൽ വധുവരന്മാരെ മുടിയണിയിപ്പിക്കുക, മണർക്കോലം തയ്യാറാക്കുക, വാഴ്ക പിടിക്കുക, കച്ച തഴുകുക, ഇല്ലപ്പണം നല്കുക തുടങ്ങിയവയ്ക്കു ജൂതാചാരങ്ങളുമായി ബന്ധമുണ്ടെന്നു ക്നാനായക്കാർ കരുതുന്നു. ജൂതന്മാരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ (കാർകുഴലി) ചേർത്തുവെച്ചു പഠിക്കുമ്പോൾ ഈ ബന്ധം കുറെക്കൂടി തെളിഞ്ഞു കിട്ടും.

കൂടുതൽ പഠനത്തിനും താരതമ്യവിശകലനത്തിനും വകയുള്ളതാണ് ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകൾ. അവയിൽ പ്രകടമാകുന്ന സ്വത്വബോധം, പെൺമ, നാടോടിത്തം എന്നിവയെല്ലാം സൂക്ഷ്മവിശകലനം അർഹിക്കുന്നു. വാമൊഴിവഴക്കവും പത്തു പതിപ്പുകളിലായി പടർന്നു കിടക്കുന്ന അച്ചടിപ്പാഠങ്ങളും പരിഗണിച്ചു വേണം ഇത്തരം പഠനം.

കുറിപ്പുകൾ

1. കേരള ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളിൽ കത്തോലിക്ക, ഓർത്തഡോക്സ് സഭകളിൽ ഒരു വ്യതിരിക്തസമുദായമായി വർത്തിക്കുന്നവരാണ് ക്നാനായക്കാർ. മെസപ്പൊട്ടോമിയയിൽനിന്നു എ.ഡി.345-ൽ ക്നായി തൊമ്മൻ എന്ന കച്ചവടപ്രമാണിയുടെ നേതൃത്വത്തിൽ കൊടുങ്ങല്ലൂരിൽ വന്നു കുടിപാർത്ത 72 ജൂത- ക്രൈസ്തവ കുടുംബങ്ങളുടെ പിന്മുറക്കാരാണു തങ്ങൾ എന്നു ക്നാനായക്കാർ കരുതുന്നു. കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾക്ക് : ജേക്കബ് കൊല്ലാപറമ്പിൽ 1992.
2. മാർത്തോമ്മാ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾ, സെന്റ് തോമസ് ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾ സുറിയാനി ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികൾ എന്നിവ ഒരേ സമുദായത്തെക്കുറിക്കുന്ന പേരുകളാണ്. ഏറ്റവും പഴക്കമുള്ള പേർ മാർത്തോമ്മാനസ്രാണികൾ. കൂടുതൽ വിവരങ്ങൾക്ക് : സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ ഉദയമ്പേരൂർ സൂനഹദോസിന്റെ കനോനുകൾ, 1994 ഇന്ത്യൻ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട് ഓഫ് ക്രിസ്ത്യൻ സ്റ്റഡീസ്, ഓശാന മൗണ്ട്, ഇടമറ്റം പാലാ.
3. മാപ്പിളപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ ലോകം (വി. എം. കുട്ടി 2000) എന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ മുസ്ലീം സമുദായത്തിൽ മൈലാഞ്ചിപ്പാട്ട് പാടുന്ന സന്ദർഭവും പാട്ടും വിവരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത് നോക്കുക.
4. കേരളത്തിലെ മറ്റു സമൂഹങ്ങളുടെ പാട്ടുകളിലുള്ള വരികളോ, പദാവലികളോ, സവിശേഷപദങ്ങളോ ജൂതപാട്ടുകളിൽ കാണാം. മാപ്പിളപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, നസ്രാണിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, തീരദേശത്തെ കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളികളുടെ പാട്ടുകൾ എന്നിവയുമായി ഭാഷയിലും സംഗീതത്തിലും ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകൾക്കു നിസ്സാരമല്ലാത്ത അടുപ്പമുണ്ട്.
5. The Jewish wedding contains a similar ceremony in which both the bride and bridegroom drink from a single glass of wine and later that glass is smashed underfoot. This ceremony is interpreted among others as indicative of the inseparable unity of the couple. No one else drink from the glass (Jewish Christians of India diackonia: Newyork, 1971)

6. നാടൻപാട്ടുകൾ കഴിഞ്ഞകാലത്തിന്റെ കലർപ്പുറ്റ അവശിഷ്ടങ്ങളാണെന്ന ധാരണ ശരിയല്ല. ഭാഷാസ്വരൂപത്തിൽതന്നെ ധാരാളം മാറ്റങ്ങളുണ്ടാകും. നാടോടിഭാഷ മാറുമ്പോൾ നാടൻപാട്ടുകളുടെ ഭാഷയും മാറും. കാലത്തിനൊത്തു ചിന്തകൾക്കും ചിത്രങ്ങൾക്കും പ്രമേയങ്ങൾക്കും മാറ്റമുണ്ടാകും. വെടി, ചെമ്പകശ്ശേരിരാജാവു തുടങ്ങിയവയൊന്നും അതിപുരാതന കാര്യങ്ങളല്ല. പാടിപ്പകർന്നുവരുമ്പോൾ ഇവ വിവരണത്തിൽ കടന്നുകൂടും. പാട്ടിന്റെ ധർമ്മവും ചരിത്രത്തിലൂടെ മാറിവരും. കുടിയേറ്റത്തിന്റെ കഥ പറയുന്ന ഈ പാട്ടിന്റെ ധർമ്മം ഇന്നത്തെ നിലയിൽ പാരമ്പര്യ സ്ഥാപനമാണ്. അതു ഭംഗിയായി നിർവഹിക്കുന്ന തരത്തിലാണു പെൺപാട്ടുകളുടെ പ്രകടനം.
7. “തണ്ടിലേറി എഴുന്നള്ളുന്ന രാജാവിന്റെയും മണവാളന്റെയും വാങ്മയചിത്രങ്ങൾ കലർത്തി ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നു. മന്നന്റെ ഉടുപ്പും നടപ്പുമാണ് വരനിൽ കാണുന്നത്. മന്നനോ മാറനോ എന്നു ചോദിക്കത്തക്കവണ്ണം വിവിധ ഭാവങ്ങൾ പകർന്നു കാണുന്നു. വിവാഹഘോഷയാത്രയുടെ പ്രൗഢിയും ബഹളവുമെല്ലാം പ്രതീയമാനമാക്കുന്നതാണ് പാട്ടിന്റെ പദഘടനയും സംഗീതവും”. കാർകുഴലി 2005.

ആധാരഗ്രന്ഥസൂചി

ഉള്ളൂർ എസ്. പരമേശ്വരയ്യർ	1953/1974	കേരളസാഹിത്യചരിത്രം ഒന്നാം വാല്യം കേരളയൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി, തിരുവനന്തപുരം
കുട്ടി വി. എം.	2000	മാപ്പിളപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ ലോകം, പാപ്പിയോൺ കോഴിക്കോട്.
കൊല്ലാപറമ്പിൽ ജേക്കബ് (ഹാദർ)	1999	ക്നാനായ സമുദായം കേരളചരിത്രത്തിൽ, ജ്യോതി ബുക്ക് ഹൗസ്, കോട്ടയം
ചുണ്ടൽ ചുമ്മാർ (ഡോ.)	1985	ക്നാനായ ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളുടെ സാമുദായികാചാരങ്ങൾ, ജ്യോതി ബുക്ക് ഹൗസ്, കോട്ടയം.
തോമസ് പി.ജെ. (ഡോ.)	1961/1989	മലയാളസാഹിത്യവും ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളും ഡി.സി.ബുക്സ്, കോട്ടയം.
ദീപ സിസ്റ്റർ (ഡോ.)		നസ്രാണികളുടെ പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, (അപ്രകാശിത ഗവേഷണപ്രബന്ധം), ശ്രീശങ്കരാചാര്യ സംസ്കൃത സർവകലാശാല, കാലടി.
പയ്യനാട് രാഘവൻ	1992	ഫോക്ലോർ, കേരളഭാഷാഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം.
ലൂക്കോസ് പി. യു.	1910	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, ഒന്നാം പതിപ്പ് മലയാളമനോരമ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം.
	1935	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം.

ലൂക്കോസ് പി. യു.	1954	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, മൂന്നാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1966	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, നാലാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1980	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, അഞ്ചാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1985	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, ആറാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1992	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, ഏഴാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1996	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, എട്ടാം പതിപ്പ്.
	1999	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, ഒമ്പതാം പതിപ്പ്.
	2002	പുരാതനപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, കാത്തലിക് മിഷൻ പ്രസ്സ്, കോട്ടയം, പത്താം പതിപ്പ്.
വെള്ളിയാൻ ജേക്കബ്	1991	തെക്കുംഭാഗവും കോട്ടയം രൂപതയും ജ്യോതി ബുക്കു ഹൗസ്, കോട്ടയം.
	1996	കല്യാണത്തിന്റെ കാൽചിലമ്പൊലി, ദീപിക ബുക്കു ഹൗസ്, കോട്ടയം.
സക്കറിയ സ്കറിയ (ഡോ.)	1989	'ചർച്ചയും പൂരണവും', മലയാള സാഹിത്യവും ക്രിസ്ത്യാനികളും, ഡി. സി. ബുക്സ്, കോട്ടയം.
സക്കറിയ സ്കറിയ (ഡോ.)	2005	കാർകുഴലി - ധൈര്യവീര്യം, ബെൻസി ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, ജനുസലം.

English

Choondal, Chummar	1983	<i>Christian Folksongs, Kerala Folklore Academy, Thrissur.</i>
Jussey P. M.	1986	'The wedding song of the Cochin Jews and of the Knanite Christians of Kerala, a study in Comparison', <i>Symposium on Knanites</i> , Jyothi Book House, Kottayam.
Kollaparambil Jacob	1992	<i>The Babilonian orgin of the Southists among the St. Thomas Christian, Pontifical Institutum Studiorum orientialium, Rome.</i>
Vellian Jacob	2001	<i>Knanite Community History and Culture</i> , Jyothi Book House, Kottayam. ▲

ജൂതരുടെ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടും കേരളത്തിലെ മറ്റു പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളും

അജു നാരായണൻ

കേരളത്തിലെ നാടൻപാട്ടുകളിൽ ഒരിനമാണു പൊലിപ്പാട്ട്. ഇതിനു പൊലിച്ചുപാട്ട്, പൊലികപ്പാട്ട്, പൊലിവുപാട്ട് എന്നീ പേരുകൾകൂടിയുണ്ട്. നിറഞ്ഞു പൊലിഞ്ഞു വരാൻ വേണ്ടി പാടുന്ന പാട്ടുകളാണിത്. കൃഷിപ്പാട്ട്, അനുഷ്ഠാനപ്പാട്ട്, വിനോദപ്പാട്ട് തുടങ്ങിയ സംവർഗങ്ങളിലെല്ലാം പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുണ്ട്. ദേവതാസ്തുതിപരങ്ങളായ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളും കുറവല്ല.

'പൊലിപ്പാട്ട്' എന്ന ഗണകല്പന നാടൻപാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മ പറഞ്ഞുവരുന്നതാണ്. കൃഷിപ്പാട്ട്, അനുഷ്ഠാനപ്പാട്ട്, വിനോദപ്പാട്ട് തുടങ്ങിയ പൊതുഗണകല്പനകൾ നാടൻപാട്ടുപഠിതാക്കളുടെ വർഗീകരണയുക്തിയിൽനിന്നു ജനിച്ചതാണ്. ഇതു വളരെ സാമാന്യ ഗണക്കുറിയുമാണ്. പരമ്പരാഗത നാടൻപാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മ പറഞ്ഞുവരുന്ന ഗണനാമങ്ങൾക്കു സാമാന്യസ്വഭാവത്തെക്കാളുപരി സവിശേഷസ്വഭാവമാണുള്ളത്. ഒരു നാടൻപാട്ടുകാരൻ / നാടൻപാട്ടുകാരി ഒരു 'കൃഷിപ്പാട്ട്' തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞെന്നു വരില്ല എന്നാൽ 'ഞാറ്റുപാട്ടോ' 'പൊലിപ്പാട്ടോ' 'മെതിപാട്ടോ' തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു പാടിയെന്നിരിക്കും. (നാടൻപാട്ടു പഠനങ്ങളുമായും വർഗീകരണങ്ങളുമായും പരിചയപ്പെട്ട ഒരു പാട്ടുകാരൻ പൊതുഗണകല്പന സീകരിച്ചുപയോഗിച്ചേക്കാനുള്ള സാധ്യത ഇവിടെ വിസ്മരിക്കുന്നില്ല.) സുചിഹ്നിച്ചു വരുന്നത്, നാടൻപാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മ പറഞ്ഞുവരുന്ന പാട്ടുകളുടെ ഗണകല്പനയ്ക്കു പ്രാധാന്യമുണ്ടെന്നാണ്. ഇത്തരം പാട്ടുകളിൽ സാധാരണയായി 'പൊലി' / 'പൊലിക' / 'പൊലിയുക' എന്ന ശബ്ദം ആവർത്തിച്ചുവരും. പാട്ടുകളിലെ പ്രധാന ക്രിയാപദവും ഇതായിരിക്കും.

പൊലിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ കെട്ടുമുറ

നാടൻപാട്ടുകൾ പാട്ടുകാർ കെട്ടിയുണ്ടാക്കുകയാണെന്ന ആശയം ചില ഘടനാവാദികൾ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. മിൽമേൻ പാരി ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുകയും ആൽബർട്ട് ബി. ലോർഡ് വികസിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത കെട്ടുമുറ

സിദ്ധാന്തം (theory of oral composition), നാടോടിഗായകൻ നാടൻപാട്ടു വരികൾ ഓർത്തുവെച്ചു പാടുന്നതല്ല എന്നും പാടുന്ന വേളയിൽ വരികളും ഖണ്ഡങ്ങളും വർണനകളും സൃഷ്ടിച്ചെടുക്കുകയാണെന്നും നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു (രാഘവൻ പയ്യനാട്, 1999:26). വലിയ കഥാഗാനങ്ങളെ അടിസ്ഥാനമാക്കി നടത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന ഈ നിരീക്ഷണം പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ നിർമ്മിതിയിൽ അർത്ഥവത്താകുന്നുണ്ട്. പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ പാട്ടുവസരത്തിൽ കെട്ടിയുണ്ടാക്കുന്ന വരികളുണ്ടാവുക സാധാരണമാണ്. പാട്ടിന്റെ പൊതുസ്വഭാവത്തിലേക്ക് അനേകം പദങ്ങൾ ചേർത്തുവെച്ചാണിതു സാധ്യമാക്കുന്നത്. ദേവതാസ്തുതിപരങ്ങളായ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ ഇഷ്ടദേവതകളുടെ പേരുകൾ ആവശ്യാനുസരണം ഉൾച്ചേർക്കുന്നു. വസ്തുവകകൾ നിറഞ്ഞുപൊലിയാനായി അപേക്ഷിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടുകളിൽ, സാഹചര്യബദ്ധമായി, ഇത്തരം വസ്തുസൂചനകൾ ചേർത്തുവെച്ച് പൊലിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ ദൈർഘ്യം കൂട്ടുന്നു. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ, കേരളത്തിലെ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ കെട്ടുമുറയിലൂടെ തിടം വയ്ക്കുന്നവയാണെന്നു പറയാം.

കേരളത്തിന്റെ വിവിധഭാഗങ്ങളിലെ മിക്ക നാടൻപാട്ടുകളായ് കൾക്കും അവരുടേതായ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുണ്ട്. വ്യത്യസ്ത സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിലായിരിക്കും ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ പാടുന്നത്. പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ രൂപമനുസരിച്ച് അവയ്ക്കു മൂന്നു പൊതു മാതൃകകൾ കല്പിക്കാം.

മാതൃക 1

ഈ ഗണത്തിലുൾപ്പെടുത്താവുന്ന പാട്ടുകൾ ആദ്യതരം പൊലിപ്പാട്ടായിരിക്കും. അതായത്, എല്ലാ വരികളിലും അല്ലെങ്കിൽ എല്ലാ ഈരടികളിലും 'പൊലി' / 'പൊലിക' / 'പൊലിയുക' എന്ന ശബ്ദം കടന്നുവരും. ഏതാനും ഉദാഹരണങ്ങൾ ചുവടെ ചേർക്കുന്നു.

ഉദാ: 1

'പൊലിക പൊലിക... പൊലിക പൊലിക...
കുന്നു പൊലിക ... കൂളവും പൊലിക...
നാടു പൊലിക... നഗരം പൊലിക...
വീടു പൊലിക... വീട്ടാരും പൊലിക...
പന്തൽ പൊലിക... പടിവാതിൽ പൊലിക...
പൊലിക പൊലിക... പൊലിക പൊലിക...'

(ആവേദകൻ: ഏ.കെ. അപ്പുക്കുട്ടൻ (40)
ഏഴോലിക്കൽ, മാടപ്പള്ളി, ചങ്ങനാശേരി)

കൂട്ടനാട്ടിലും പരിസരപ്രദേശങ്ങളിലും പാടുന്ന പൊലിപ്പാട്ടാണിത്. താനുൾപ്പെടുന്ന കൂട്ടായ്മ പാട്ടുകൾ പാടിത്തുടങ്ങുന്നത് ഈ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടോടു കൂടിയാണെന്ന് ആവേദകൻ പറയുന്നു. സ്തുതിപ്പ് എന്ന നിലയിലാണു പ്രസ്തുത കൂട്ടായ്മ ഈ പാട്ടു പാടുന്നത്.

TAPASAM, January 2006

ഉദാ: 2

'പൊലി പൊലി ശബ്ദം പൊലി പൊലിക...
തിങ്കൾക്കല ചൂടുന്ന തമ്പുരാനും
പൊലി പൊലി പൊലി പൊലി പൊലി പൊലിക...
അക്ഷര രൂപിണി വാഗ്ദേവിയും
സമ്മതമാർന്നെന്നും പൊലി പൊലിക...
പാലാഴി മാതും പൊലി പൊലിക...
ശൈലാത്മജ ദേവിയും പൊലി പൊലിക...
നാരദനാദികള് മൂമ്പാകിയ
മാമുനിമാരും പൊലി പൊലിക...
അംബരബിംബം പോലുജ്ജ്വലിക്കും
ബിംബമജിമ്മം പൊലി പൊലിക...
ഭണ്ഡാരഗേഹം പൊലി പൊലിക...'

(ആവേദകൻ: രാജീവൻ പണിക്കർ (33)
മാമുനി വീട്, തൃക്കരിപ്പൂർ, കാസർഗോഡ്)

ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലെ കാവുകളിലും ഭഗവതിക്ഷേത്രങ്ങളിലും നടത്തിവരുന്ന അനുഷ്ഠാനകലാരൂപമായ പൂരങ്ങളുടെയും മന്ത്രങ്ങളുടെയും അവസാനമായി പൂരംകൂട്ടിച്ചടങ്ങിനു പാടുന്ന പൊലിച്ചുപാട്ടാണിത്. പൂരങ്ങളുടെ സമാപനഘട്ടത്തിലാണ് ഇതു പാടുന്നത്.

മാതൃക 2

ധാരാളം വരികളുള്ള പാട്ടുകളുടെ ഭാഗമായി പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ കടന്നു വരാറുണ്ട്. ചിലപ്പോൾ പാട്ടിന്റെ തുടക്കത്തിലാവും 'പൊലി'ഭാഗം. മറ്റു ചിലപ്പോൾ പാട്ടിന്റെ ഒടുക്കത്തിലാവും ഇത്. ഏതെങ്കിലും ഒരു ജനുസിൽപ്പെട്ട ഒരു പ്രത്യേക പാട്ടിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി വരുന്ന പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളെ രണ്ടാം മാതൃകയായി ഇവിടെ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നു. ഇത്തരത്തിലുള്ള പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളാണ് എണ്ണത്തിലധികവും. ഏതാനും ഉദാഹരണങ്ങൾ താഴെ ചേർക്കുന്നു.

ഉദാ: 1

അയ്യപ്പൻ കാവുകളിലും ബ്രഹ്മാലയങ്ങളിലും തീയാടി നമ്പ്യാന്മാർ നടത്തിവരുന്ന അനുഷ്ഠാന കലയാണ് അയ്യപ്പൻ തീയാട്ട് അഥവാ അയ്യപ്പൻ കൂത്ത്. അയ്യപ്പൻ തീയാട്ടിന്റെ കഥാഭാഗം പത്രങ്ങളു ദിവസം കൊണ്ടാണു പൂർത്തിയാക്കുന്നത്. എന്നാലിത് ഒരു ദിവസം കൊണ്ടു പൂർത്തിയാക്കുന്ന പതിവുണ്ട്. ഇതിനെ 'ഉദയാസ്തമയം കൂത്ത്' എന്നു വിളിക്കും. അയ്യപ്പൻ തീയാട്ട് ഉദയാസ്തമയം കൂത്തായി നടത്തുമ്പോൾ പൊലിച്ചുപാട്ട് പാടാറുണ്ട്. ശ്രീഭൂതനാഥന്റെ ജനനം വാഴ്ത്തി സ്തുതിക്കുന്ന ലഘുഗാനമാണിത്. ഗർഭവർണനയാണു പാട്ടിന്റെ ആദ്യഭാഗം. കൂട്ടി ജനിച്ചപ്പോൾ കാണാൻ വന്ന ശിവൻ പ്രസാദിച്ചു. ഈ സന്ദർഭത്തിനു ശേഷമാണു പൊലി തുടങ്ങുന്നത്.

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

‘പൊലിയ പൊലിയ ചിറ്റശ്ശി പൊലിയ...
പൊലിയ പൊലിയ പേരശ്ശി പൊലിയ..
പൊലിയ പൊലിയ കൺവർ പൊലിയ..
പൊലിയ പൊലിയ കേട്ടവർ പൊലിയ..’

(എം. വി. വിഷ്ണു നമ്പൂതിരി, 2000 : 59)

ഉദാ: 2

മധ്യതിരുവിതാംകൂറിലെ തീയാട്ടിനു പാടുന്ന പാട്ടാണിത്. തീയാട്ടു സംബന്ധമായ എല്ലാ പുജകളും കളം പാട്ടും കഴിഞ്ഞശേഷം കളത്തിൽ കാണിക്ക അർപ്പിക്കാനും ഭക്തർക്കു നേർച്ചകാഴ്ചകളിടാനുമുള്ള അവസരത്തിലാണ് ഈ പാട്ടു പാടുന്നത്.

‘മോഹമോടെ മോഹിനിക്ക്
തൃപ്പുത്ത് ഏഴാം ദിനം
നീരാടി കര കയറി
മുക്കുടന്ന നീരുകോരി

.....
.....
ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണൻ ജനിച്ചപ്പോൾ ഭഗവതി പൊലിച്ചു
മുത്തുരത്നങ്ങളെ ഞങ്ങൾ പാടിടുന്നേൻ
ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണന്റെ പിറന്നാൾക്കു പാടുമ്പോൾ
പൊലിക്കാനുള്ളവരെല്ലാം പൊലിക്കേണം കളം തന്നിൽ
മുണ്ടുകൾ പൂടവകൾ തെരുതെരെ പണങ്ങളും
തെരുതെരെ പൊലിക്കേണം ഭഗവതി കളം തന്നിൽ
എല്ലാരും പൊലിച്ചെങ്കിൽ താംബൂലം പൊലിക്കേണം
ഭഗവതിയുടെ നല്ല കളത്തിനകത്ത് ...’

(പി.വി.നാരായണൻ ഉണ്ണി, വി.സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ ശർമ്മ, 2001 : 191-192)

ഉദാ: 3

ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലെ വണ്ണാൻമാർ നടത്തുന്ന ബാധയൊഴിപ്പിക്കൽ ചടങ്ങിനു കുറുന്തിരിപ്പാട്ട് പാടാറുണ്ട്. കുറുന്തിരിമാർ എന്ന ഏഴു ദുർമൂർത്തികളുടെ ബാധയാൽ തരുണിമാരുടെ തലമുടി കൊഴിയുകയും മൂലകൾ ചുരുങ്ങുകയും ഗർഭച്ഛിദ്രം ഉണ്ടാവുകയും ചെയ്യുമെന്ന വിശ്വാസമുണ്ട്. ഇത്തരം ബാധകളെ ഒഴിപ്പിക്കുവാൻ നടത്തിവരുന്ന ചടങ്ങാണു കുറുന്തിരിപ്പാട്ട് (ചിറയ്ക്കൽ ടി. ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ, 1993 : 310). കുറുന്തിരിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ ആദ്യഭാഗം പൊലിപ്പാട്ടാണ്.

‘പൊലികൻ പൊലികൻ ദൈവമേ ഹരിതിരു പോക
ദീപം പൊലിക ദൈവമേ ഹരിനന്മ വരിക
വർദ്ധിക്ക വാണൊരു നാളും വർദ്ധനവാണൊ
ഭാനൂലോകിൽ ശ്രീയും സമ്പത്തും പെരികി നിൽക്കേണം

കണ്ടാൽ വനവും കദളി വനവും പൊലികാനായെ
കണ്ടാർ വനത്തിൽ ഇരുഷിയാരും പൊലികാനായെ
നാഗലോകീൽ നാഗരാജാവു പൊലികാനായെ
ഉലകത്തിങ്കൽ ഉലക രാജാവു പൊലികാനായെ
കനകമലമ്മൽ കനക രാജാവു പൊലികാനായെ
ധർമ്മ ലോകിൽ ധർമ്മ രാജാവു പൊലികാനായെ
പരിയിക്കുലകിൽ പരീക്ഷിത്തു രാജാവു പൊലികാനായെ
വണ്ടോരുലകിൽ വണ്ടോരപ്പൻ പൊലികാനായെ
എരിപൊരിയാമ്മലമ്മൽ വണ്ടോർ കേശി പൊലികാനായെ
വണ്ടോർ കേശി മകൻ ആങ്കാരനും പൊലികാനായെ
നാഗദേവി പെറ്റ വിഷകണ്ഠനും പൊലികാനായെ
വിനതയാളും കദ്രുവാളും പൊലികാനായെ
കദ്രു പെറ്റ അഷ്ടനാഗങ്ങൾ പൊലികാനായെ
ശ്രീപാലാഴിക്കടലുമൊന്നു പൊലികാനായെ
ശ്രീപാലാഴിക്കടലിന്റെയ്തൊരു മധ്യത്തില്
സഹസ്ര ഫണമുള്ള ശ്രീ അനന്തനും പൊലികാനായെ
അല്ലിയനെന്ന ചെന്താമരയും പൊലികാനായെ
ചെന്താമരയിൽ പൂമാണികളും പൊലികാനായെ

കേരള ഭാഷാഗാനങ്ങൾ വാല്യം ഒന്നിൽ ചിറയ്ക്കൽ ടി. ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ ശേഖരിച്ചു ചേർത്തിക്കുന്ന കുറുന്തിരിപ്പാട്ടിലെ ആദ്യത്തെ 23 വരികൾ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടാണ്.

ഉദാ: 4

ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലെ അനുഷ്ഠാനകലയായ തെയ്യത്തിനുവേണ്ടി പാടുന്ന തോറ്റംപാട്ടുകളിൽ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടു കടന്നുവരാറുണ്ട്. മുച്ചിലോട്ടു ഭഗവതിയുടെ തോറ്റത്തിന്റെ തുടക്കത്തിൽ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുണ്ട്.

‘പൊലിക ഭഗവതിയേ പൊലിക ഭഗവതിയേ
ദീപം പൊലിക വെച്ചെരിയുന്ന നന്താർ വിളക്കും പൊലിക
നാടു പൊലിക ഭഗവതിയേ സ്വരൂപം പൊലിക
നാടു വാഴും സ്വാമി പൊലിക
എടം വാഴും കർത്താക്കൻമാരും പൊലിക
നാടോടിടവാജന്മ ഭൂമിയും പൊലിക
പെരിഞ്ചെല്ലൂർ പെരും തൃക്കോവിലും പൊലിക
തീക്കുഴിച്ചാൽ മരവും പൊലിക
മുച്ചിലോടൻ പെരു വയലും പൊലിക

തണലിയന്ന പടിപ്പുരയും പൊലിക
ഗംഗയെന്ന മണിക്കിണറും പൊലിക
വെള്ളിയെന്ന തീയക്കരിമ്പനയും പൊലിക
ദയരമംഗലം വടക്കേ ഭാഗം പൊലിക
കരിവെള്ളൂർ പടിഞ്ഞാറ്റയും പൊലിക
കരിവെള്ളൂർ പടിഞ്ഞാറ്റ തന്റേയകത്ത്
എടുത്തു വെച്ച വെള്ളി ശ്രീപീഠവും പൊലിക
മടക്കിയിട്ട മാറ്റൊലി തിരുവടാട പൊലിക
കടഞ്ഞു വെച്ച വാളൊടു പേടകം പൊലിക
പറിച്ചു വെച്ച പൂവൊടു പുഷ്പം പൊലിക
ജലഗന്ധപുഷ്പം ഹോമദീപം പൊലിക
തയച്ചു വെച്ച ചാന്തൊടു ചന്ദനം പൊലിക
ഏത്തക്കിണറും മുല്ലപ്പന്തലും പൊലിക
പൊഴുതുണ്ണുന്നാ പുഞ്ചഭുമിയും പൊലിക
കറന്നു കുടിക്കുന്ന കന്നൊടു കാലിയും പൊലിക
കെട്ടിയാടും ചെറുകനലാടിയും പൊലിക
ഊതിയാടും പൊൻ തോരണവും പൊലിക
പൊലികായെന്നു പൊലികുണർത്തി ഇഴൽ പാടുമ്പോൾ
കേട്ടരുൾകാ മുച്ചിലോട്ടമ ദേവ കന്യാവേ

.....
.....
(ചിറയ്ക്കൽ ടി. ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ, 1993 : 103-104)

ഉദാ: 5

നാഗത്തിന്റെയും നാഗക്കനിയുടെയും കോലംകെട്ടിയാടി ആരാധി
ക്കുന്ന രീതി ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലുണ്ട്. വണ്ണാൻമാരാണ് നാഗക്കോലങ്ങൾ കെട്ടി
യാടുന്നത്. ഇതിനായി നാഗം പൊലിച്ചുപാട്ട് പാടിവരുന്നു.

‘പൊലിക ഭഗവതിയേ നാഗ ഭഗവതിയേ
പൊലിക പൊലിക നാഗ ഭഗവതിയേ
തോന്നുന്നല്ലോ അഴകിയ വെള്ളിമാങ്കല്ല്
.....
.....

(ചിറയ്ക്കൽ ടി. ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ, 1993 : 78-79)

ഈ പാട്ടിന്റെ ആദ്യ രണ്ടു വരിയിൽ മാത്രമേ പൊലി ശബ്ദം
കടന്നു വരുന്നുള്ളുവെങ്കിലും പൊലിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ പ്രതീതിയാണു ഇതിനു മൊത്ത
ത്തിലുള്ളത്.

TAPASAM, January 2006

ഉദാ: 6

‘പൊലി’ ശബ്ദം ഒരു വരിയിൽ മാത്രമാണുള്ളതെങ്കിലും പൊലിപ്പാ
ട്ടിന്റെ പൊതുപ്രതീതി നൽകുന്ന മറ്റൊരു പാട്ടാണിത്. ആലപ്പുഴ ജില്ലയിലെ
പള്ളിപ്പാടു ഗ്രാമത്തിൽനിന്നാണ് ഈ പാട്ടു ശേഖരിച്ചത്.

‘നാടു വാഴുക നഗരം വാഴുക
വീടു വാഴുക വിരുതം വാഴുക
കാടു വാഴുക കണ്ടം വാഴുക
ഇല്ലം നിറയുക വല്ലം നിറയുക
മണ്ണു വാഴുക മരവും വാഴുക
വെള്ളം വാഴുക വായുവും വാഴുക
കല്ലു വാഴുക പുല്ലും വാഴുക
പുവു വാഴുക മണവും വാഴുക
പാട്ടു വാഴുക ഈണം വാഴുക
അരങ്ങു വാഴുക പന്തലും വാഴുക
നാടൊരുങ്ങാൻ പൊലിയുക പൊലിയുക
കാവിലമ്മേ കനിയുക കിനിയുക
നാടു വാഴുക നഗരം വാഴുക
വീടു വാഴുക വിരുതം വാഴുക....’

(ആവേദകൻ: ഹരിദാസ് (35) കുരയ്ക്കലാറ്, പള്ളിപ്പാട്, ഹരിപ്പാട്)

ഉദാ: 7

‘കുടിവീരൻ തോറ്റത്തിൽ’ മുടിപൊലിക്കൽ ഉൾച്ചേരുന്നൂണ്ട്.

‘പിളർന്നു വളർന്നു മുവാണ്ടിൽ മുടി പൊലിച്ചു
അയ്യാണ്ടിൽ കയ്യഴുതി മെയ് തെളിഞ്ഞു
ഏഴാണ്ടിൽ തൃക്കാതു കുത്തി കുണ്ഡലമിട്ടു...’

(എം. വി. വിഷ്ണുനമ്പൂതിരി, 1990 : 325)

ഈ വിഭാഗത്തിലുൾപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്ന മിക്ക പാട്ടുകൾക്കും സവി
ശേഷമായ മറ്റു പേരുകൾകൂടിയുണ്ട്. അയ്യപ്പൻ തീയാട്ട്, കുറുന്തിരിപ്പാട്ട്, മുച്ചി
ലോട്ടു ഭഗവതി തോറ്റം, കുടിവീരൻ തോറ്റംപാട്ട് എന്നിങ്ങനെ. എന്നാൽ ഈ
പാട്ടുകൾക്ക് അതിന്റെ പൊലിഭാഗം ഇല്ലാതെ പൂർണ്ണതയില്ല. പൊലിഭാഗം ഉപേ
ക്ഷിച്ച് ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ പാടാറുമില്ല. അതുകൊണ്ടാവണം, ചില സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിൽ
ഈ പാട്ടുകളെ പൊലിപ്പാട്ട് എന്ന പേരിൽത്തന്നെ വ്യവഹരിച്ചു വരാറുണ്ട്.

മാതൃക 3

‘പൊലി’ ശബ്ദം പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടാത്ത, എന്നാൽ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ
പൊതു പ്രതീതി ജനിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടുകളെയും പൊലിപ്പാട്ടായി പാട്ടുകൂട്ടായ്മ
പറഞ്ഞുവരുന്നു. ഇത്തരം പാട്ടുകളെ മൂന്നാം മാതൃകയായി ഇവിടെ പരിഗണിക്കു
ന്നു.

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

ഉദാ: 1

ഉത്തരകേരളത്തിലെ പുലയരുടെ അനുഷ്ഠാനഗാനമാണു 'കലശം പൊലീപ്പാട്ട്'. തെയ്യാട്ടത്തിനു തലേ ദിവസം ദേവതാസങ്കേതത്തിനു മുമ്പിൽ അവർ ഈ പൊലീപ്പാട്ടു പാടുന്നു. മുത്തപ്പന്റെ തിരുവൊപ്പനയ്ക്കും കോതാ മൂരിയാട്ടത്തിനും പാടുന്ന പാട്ടുകളിൽ കലശം പൊലിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടുകൾ കാണാം.

'കരുവാൻ മകനൊരു കത്തി കൊടുത്തു
തച്ചൻ മകനൊരു പിട്ടൽ കൊടുത്തു
ഒണ്ടയും കത്തിയും പിട്ടലുമായി
രണ്ടു കിതച്ചവൻ മട്ടലോടെത്തി
മൂന്നു കിതച്ചവൻ കുലയോടടുത്തു
ചുണ്ടു മുറിച്ചവനാണിയും മേടി
പാനി കമിച്ചവൻ കുത്തന കീഞ്ഞു
പിറ്റന്നാൾ നേരം പുലരുന്ന കാലം
കള്ളല്ലെ മുക്കുടം പൊഴിയുന്നു തോഴാ...'
(എം. വി. വിഷ്ണുനമ്പൂതിരി, 1990 : 316)

പാടുന്ന കലാകാരൻമാർക്കു നെല്ലും പണവും വസ്ത്രവും ലഭിക്കുവാൻവേണ്ടി പാടുന്ന പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകളുണ്ടെന്നു ഡോ. എം.വി. വിഷ്ണു നമ്പൂതിരി രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു (1989:283). കളം പാട്ട്, കെന്തോൻ പാട്ട് തുടങ്ങിയവയിലെ പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകൾ പാട്ടുകാർക്കു വരുമാനമുണ്ടാക്കുകയും ശ്രോതാക്കൾക്കു വിനോദം നൽകുകയും ചെയ്യും. പുള്ളുവരുടെ പൊലീപ്പാട്ടായ 'കറ്റുപ്പാട്ടി'ൽ വിത്തും വിളയും പൊലിയാൻ ആവശ്യപ്പെടുന്നു.

ഓണക്കാലത്തു പെൺകുട്ടികൾ 'പൂപ്പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകൾ' പാടാറുണ്ട്. കല്യാണപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ (മംഗലം പാട്ടുകൾ) പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകളും ഉൾപ്പെടും. 'വിവാഹാദി അടിയന്തിരങ്ങൾക്കു ബന്ധുമിത്രാദികൾ പണം പൊലിക്കുമ്പോൾ പൊലി വുപാട്ടു പാടുകയെന്നതു ചില സമുദായക്കാരുടെ ആചാരമാണ്. തീയർ, പുലയർ മുതലായ സമുദായക്കാരുടെയിടയിൽ വിവാഹത്തിനു പന്തലിൽ അമ്മികളിട്ട് അരയ്ക്കുമ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകൾ പൊലീപ്പാട്ടു പാടും. (ബ്രാഹ്മണിപ്പാട്ട്, പാനേങ്കളി എന്നിവയിലും പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകളുണ്ട് (എം. വി. വിഷ്ണുനമ്പൂതിരി, 1989 : 284).

കോതാമൂരിയാട്ടമെന്ന കാർഷികനൃത്തത്തിൽ മദ്യം, വിത്ത്, പശു, പൂവ് മുതലായവയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകൾ പാടാറുണ്ട്. വിത്തുപൊലിപ്പാട്ടിൽ അനേകം വിത്തുകളുടെ പേരുകൾ പറയുന്നുണ്ട്. പശുവിനെക്കൊണ്ടുള്ള ഉപകാരങ്ങൾ പാടിപ്പുകഴ്ത്തുന്നതാണു പശുപൊലിപ്പാട്ട്. എല്ലാ തോറ്റംപാട്ടുകളിലും പൊതുവെ കാണുന്ന ഒരു ഘടകമാണ് പൊലീപ്പാട്ട്.

ജൂതരുടെ പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകൾ

ജൂതരുടെ മലയാളം പെൺപാട്ടുകൾ സമാഹരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന 'കാർകുഴലി - യെഹോഫിയ' (2005) എന്ന ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിൽ ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്ന മൂന്നു പാട്ടുകൾ (നമ്പർ യഥാക്രമം 44,45,46) പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകളാണ്. 'പൊലീക പൊലിയ' എന്ന തലക്കെട്ടോടെ ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്ന പാട്ട് കൊച്ചിയിൽ വ്യാപകമായി പ്രചരിച്ചിരുന്നതായി ഈ പാട്ടുകളുടെ സമ്പാദകനും പഠിതാവുമായ ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു (2005:199). മറ്റു സ്ഥലങ്ങളിലും ഈ പാട്ടുണ്ടായിരുന്നിരിക്കണം. 45, 46 എന്നീ നമ്പരുകളിൽ ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടുകൾ അതിന്റെ സൂചനയാണു നൽകുന്നത്. പാഠഭേദങ്ങളായി അവയെ പരിഗണിക്കാം. 'വാശിപ്പാട്ട്' എന്ന ഗണത്തിൽപ്പെടുന്നവയാണ് ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ. വിവാഹാചാരവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടാണു വാശിപ്പാട്ടു പാടുന്നത്. വധുവരൻമാരുടെ സാന്നിധ്യത്തിൽ നടക്കുന്ന പൊതു സൽക്കാരത്തിൽ സ്ത്രീകൾ രണ്ടു ഗണമായി തിരിഞ്ഞാണു വാശിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ പാടുന്നത്.

ഇസ്രായലിലേക്കുള്ള ജൂതരുടെ കുടിയേറ്റത്തിനുശേഷം ജൈവ സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽനിന്നു വേർപിരിഞ്ഞ നിലയിലാണ് ഈ പാട്ടുകൾ പരിണമിക്കുന്നതെന്നും പൊതുസദസ്സിന്റെ മുമ്പിലുള്ള അവതരണത്തിനുവേണ്ടി പലതരത്തിൽ വെട്ടിയൊതുക്കിയ രൂപങ്ങളിലൂടെ പാട്ടിന്റെ പരിണാമം തുടരുന്നുവെന്നും ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ നിരീക്ഷിക്കുന്നു(2005:199). ജൂതരുടെ രണ്ടു പൊലീപ്പാട്ടുകൾ/വാശിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ ചുവടെ ചേർക്കുന്നു.

ഉദാ: 1

'പൊലീക പൊലിയെടാ കല്യാണ പന്തലിൽ
താൻ പൊലീക പോയി പൊലീക
ചിരിയനന്തര താൻ പൊലീക
എണ്ണത്തിൽ പൊലീകെടാ
മനസ്സിൽ പൊലീകെടാ
മനസ്സോടെ മണവാളൻ മക്ക പൊലീകെടാ
മനസ്സോടെ മണവാട്ടി മക്ക പൊലീകെടാ
.....
.....'
(ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ, 2005 : 117)

ഉദാ: 2

'പൊലിയു പൊലിയെടാ
കല്യാണ പന്തലിൽ താൻ
താൻ പൊലിയ ചിരിപ്പൊലിയ
ചിരിചനംതാൻ താൻ പൊലിയ
മാടം പൊലിയെടാ

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

മനയിലെ താൻ ചെല്ലുമ്പ
മനസോടെ മണവാട്ടി മക്കളും വാണിരിപ്പാൻ

.....
.....

(ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ, 2005 : 118)

ഈ ലേഖനത്തിൽ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുടെ രണ്ടാം മാതൃകയായി ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്ന പാട്ടുകളുടെ പൊതുസ്വഭാവമാണു ജൂതരുടെ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകൾക്കുള്ളത്.

പൊലിപ്പാട്ടിന്റെ കേരളീയത

കേരളത്തിലെ നാടൻപാട്ടുകളിൽ കാണുന്ന സവിശേഷമായ ഒരിനമാണു പൊലിപ്പാട്ട്. വിവിധ ദേശങ്ങളായ് മകൾക്കും മതക്കൂട്ടായ്മകൾക്കും ജാതിക്കൂട്ടായ്മകൾക്കും അവരവരുടേതായ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ ഇവയ്ക്കെല്ലാം പൊതുവായ ഒരു കേരളീയ മാതൃകയുണ്ട്. ജൂതരുടെ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകളും ഈ പൊതു മാതൃകയോടൊത്തു പോകുന്നതാണ്. കേരളത്തിലെ മറ്റു സമൂഹങ്ങളുടെ പാട്ടുകളിലുള്ള വരികളോ പദാവലികളോ സവിശേഷ പദങ്ങളോ ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ കാണാം. മാപ്പിളപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, നസ്രാണിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ, തീരദേശത്തെ കർഷകത്തൊഴിലാളികളുടെ പാട്ടുകൾ എന്നിവയുമായി ഭാഷയിലും സംഗീതത്തിലും ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകൾക്കു നിസ്സാരമല്ലാത്ത അടുപ്പമുണ്ട്. തോറ്റം പാട്ട്, വടക്കൻ പാട്ട് എന്നിവയിലെ ചില പ്രയോഗവിശേഷങ്ങളും ഈണങ്ങളും പോലും ജൂതപ്പാട്ടുകളിൽ കേൾക്കാം. ഇത്തരം പാഠമിശ്രണം കേരളത്തിലെ സംസ്കാര സങ്കലനബഹളത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി വേണം വിശദീകരിക്കാനും വ്യാഖ്യാനിക്കാനും (ഡോ. സ്കറിയാ സക്കറിയ, 2005 : 32).

എല്ലാറ്റിനെയും മതം എന്ന ഒറ്റ മാനദണ്ഡം കൊണ്ടു വ്യവച്ഛേദിക്കണമെന്ന വാശി പണ്ടു കേരളത്തിൽ പൊതുവേ ഇല്ലായിരുന്നു. കോളനിവാഴ്ചക്കാലത്താണ് ഇത്തരം വ്യവച്ഛേദം ഉടലെടുക്കുന്നത്. കേരളത്തിന്റെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ മതഭേദങ്ങൾക്ക് അതീതമായി സാംസ്കാരിക രൂപങ്ങളെ കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്തു പോന്നിരുന്നുവെന്നു വ്യക്തം. കോളനീകരണത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായുണ്ടായ മതപരമായ വീടവുകളും കർക്കശമായ അതിർത്തികളും ഒരു രീതിയിൽ ജനകീയമനസ്സു പ്രതിരോധിക്കുന്നുവെന്നതിന്റെ സൂചനയാണു പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുകൾ. മതഭേദങ്ങൾക്കതീതമായ സാംസ്കാരിക പൈതൃകത്തിലേക്കു കാര്യങ്ങളെ പരിണമിപ്പിച്ചു കാണുവാനുള്ള വ്യഗ്രത പൊലിപ്പാട്ടു മെനയുന്നവർക്കുണ്ട്. പണ്ടു നമ്മുടെ നാട്ടിലെ അനുഷ്ഠാനങ്ങളും ആചാരങ്ങളും ഉത്സവങ്ങളും കലാരൂപങ്ങളുമൊക്കെ പ്രാദേശികാനുഭവത്തിന്റെ ഭാഗമായിരുന്നു. എന്നാൽ കോളനീകരണത്തോടെ കേരളത്തിൽ ആരംഭിച്ച വിഘടനവാദം ഇന്നു പല തരത്തിലും രീതിയിലും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുമ്പോൾ, നമ്മുടെ നാടിന്റെ സംസ്കാരത്തിനുള്ളിൽ ദേശപരമായുണ്ടായിരുന്ന ഏകീഭാവങ്ങളെ തിരിച്ചറിഞ്ഞു പുതുതലമുറയെ ജാഗ്ര

തപ്പെടുത്താൻ പൊലിപ്പാട്ടുപോലെയുള്ള ഫോക്ലോർ രൂപങ്ങൾ സഹായിച്ചേക്കും.

ഗ്രന്ഥസൂചി :

നാരായണനുണ്ണി, പി. വി സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യശർമ്മ, വി	2001	തീയാട്ട് ഒരു പഠനം, കറന്റ് ബുക്സ്, കോട്ടയം
പയ്യനാട്,രാഘവൻ ഡോ.	1999	ഫോക്ലോർ സങ്കല്പങ്ങളും സങ്കേതങ്ങളും, ഫോക്ലോർ ഫെലോസ് ഓഫ് മലബാർ ട്രസ്റ്റ്, പയ്യന്നൂർ
ഭക്തവത്സല റെഡ്ഡി,എൻ,ഡോ.	2004	ഫോക്ലോർ പഠനം സിദ്ധാന്തതലം, ഫോക്ലോർ സൊസൈറ്റി ഓഫ് സൗത്ത് ഇൻഡ്യൻ ലാംഗ്വേജസ്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം
ബാലകൃഷ്ണൻ നായർ,ടി, ചിറയ്ക്കൽ	1993	കേരള ഭാഷാഗാനങ്ങൾ(വാല്യം ഒന്ന്), (സമ്പാ.) കേരള സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി, തൃശൂർ
വിഷ്ണുനമ്പൂതിരി,എം.വി., ഡോ.	1989	ഫോക്ലോർ നിഘണ്ടു, കേരള ഭാഷാ ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, തിരുവനന്തപുരം
	1990	തോറ്റം പാട്ടുകൾ ഒരു പഠനം, എൻ.ബി.എസ്, കോട്ടയം
	2000	തീയാട്ടും അയ്യപ്പൻകുത്തും, കറന്റ് ബുക്സ്, കോട്ടയം
സക്കറിയ, സ്കറിയാ, ഡോ.	2005	കാർകുഴലി - ധൈന്യമിത, ബെൻസി ഇൻസ്റ്റിറ്റ്യൂട്ട്, ജറുസലേം
Bouman, Richad	1977	Verbal Art as Performance, New Burg House, Rowely Mass
Handoo, Jawaharlal	1998	Folklore in Modern India, CIIL, Mysore.

മുണ്ടശ്ശേരിയും ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യതത്ത്വചിന്തയും

സി. രാജേന്ദ്രൻ

സൈദ്ധാന്തികവും പ്രായോഗികവുമായ സാഹിത്യവിമർശനത്തിൽ ഒരേ താല്പര്യത്തോടെ വ്യാപരിച്ച മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പ്രായോഗികവിമർശനത്തിനാധാരമായി ചില സൈദ്ധാന്തിക അടിത്തറകൾ രൂപപ്പെടുത്തുന്നതിൽ എന്നും ശ്രദ്ധാലുവായിരുന്നു. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ മുപ്പതുകളിൽ മലയാളസാഹിത്യത്തിൽ രൂപമെടുത്തുതുടങ്ങിയ പ്രവണതകളെ ദിശാബോധത്തോടെ അനുസന്ധാനം ചെയ്തുകൊണ്ടു സാഹിത്യജീവിതമാരംഭിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം നാലു പതിറ്റാണ്ടോളം നീണ്ടുനിന്ന വിമർശനപ്രവർത്തനത്തിൽ സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ സാമൂഹികവും സൗന്ദര്യപരവുമായ മൂല്യങ്ങളെ സമന്വയിപ്പിക്കാനാണ് ഏറെ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചത്. സാഹിത്യത്തിലെ പുതുപ്രവണതകളോടു പൊതുവിൽ ആഭിമുഖ്യം കാണിച്ച അദ്ദേഹം ജീവിതബന്ധം നഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട ഗതാനുഗതികസാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ ജീർണ്ണതകളെ വീറോടെ എതിർത്തു. ഏതുകാലത്തും ജീവിതഗന്ധിയായ ഉൽകൃഷ്ട സാഹിത്യം ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നു ദൃഢമായി വിശ്വസിച്ച ആ നിരൂപകൻ വാല്മീകി, കാളിദാസൻ, ഭാസൻ തുടങ്ങിയ വിശ്വോത്തരകവികളുടെ ക്ലാസിക്കുകൾ പരാമർശിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാണു സങ്കേതജടിലമായ സമകാലിക നിയോക്ലാസിക്ക സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ ഉപരിപ്ലവത തുറന്നുകാട്ടിയത്. സാഹിത്യവിമർശനത്തിലും മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പഴയതും പുതിയതുമായ സാഹിത്യദർശനങ്ങളെ ഉപജീവിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് ഊർജസ്വലമായൊരു സാഹിത്യവീക്ഷണം കരുപ്പിടിപ്പിക്കാനാണ് ശ്രമിച്ചത്. മുണ്ടശ്ശേരിയുടെ സാഹിത്യദർശനത്തിൽ സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെ കാവ്യതത്ത്വചിന്തയുടെ സ്ഥാനമെന്തെന്നാണെന്നാണ് ഈ പ്രബന്ധം ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്നത്.

കാവ്യപീഠികയിലാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി സൈദ്ധാന്തികവിമർശനത്തിനൊരു രൂപരേഖ സൃഷ്ടിക്കാൻ കാര്യമായി ശ്രമിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്. അദ്ദേഹം പാശ്ചാത്യവും പൗരസ്ത്യവുമായ ചിന്താധാരകളോട് ഒരേ ആഭിമുഖ്യം ദീക്ഷിച്ചിരുന്നതായി കാണാം. മനുഷ്യന്റെ ഉത്തമരൂപികളെ പ്രീണിപ്പിക്കേണ്ട സാഹിത്യാദികലകളുടെ മൗലികതത്ത്വങ്ങൾ എവിടെയും ഒന്നാവാണെന്നു വഴിയുള്ളു എന്ന തന്റെ

TAPASAM, January 2006

അടിസ്ഥാനസമീപനതത്ത്വം അദ്ദേഹം കാവ്യപീഠികയുടെ പ്രസ്താവനയിൽതന്നെ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്. കലയുടെ ബാഹ്യതലത്തിനാണു ദേശകാലാദ്യപാധികൾക്കനുസരിച്ചു വ്യത്യാസമുണ്ടാകുന്നതെന്നും കലയെ കലയാക്കുന്ന സാമാന്യതത്ത്വങ്ങൾ എവിടെയും ഒന്നുതന്നെയാവാണെന്നു നിർവ്വാഹമുള്ളുവെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം വിശ്വസിച്ചു. ഈയൊരു സമീപനത്തിൽ ഉറച്ചുനിന്നുകൊണ്ടാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യതത്ത്വചിന്തയെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്തത്. പാരമ്പര്യനിഷ്ണാതനായ കുട്ടിക്കൃഷ്ണമാരാർ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരിയുടെ കാവ്യപീഠികയെ ഹൃദയപൂർവ്വം സ്വാഗതം ചെയ്തുവെന്നതു ശ്രദ്ധേയമാണ്. ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യതത്ത്വചിന്തയുടെ ചില അടിസ്ഥാന പരികല്പനകളെ സമകാലികവിമർശനവും സമകാലികസാഹിത്യവുമായി ഇണക്കിച്ചേർത്തുകൊണ്ട് അവയുടെ പ്രസക്തി പുനർനിർണ്ണയിക്കാനാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി യത്നിച്ചത്.

ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യചിന്തയിൽ രസധനിദർശനങ്ങളെയാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി തന്റെ സാഹിത്യസിദ്ധാന്ത പരികല്പനയിൽ ഏറ്റവുമധികം ഉപജീവിച്ചുകൊണ്ടിരുന്നത്. ഒരുപക്ഷേ സാഹിത്യകലയുടെ മർമ്മമായിത്തന്നെ അദ്ദേഹം സങ്കല്പിച്ചത് രസത്തെയാണ്. കലാകാരന്റെ അന്തർഭാവത്തിന്റെ ആവിഷ്കരണമായി അദ്ദേഹം സാഹിത്യത്തെ നോക്കിക്കാണുന്നു. ഹഡ്സനെ പിന്തുടർന്നുകൊണ്ട് ഈ അന്തർഭാവങ്ങളെ വികാരങ്ങൾ, അനുഭവങ്ങൾ, ചിന്തകൾ എന്നെല്ലാം അദ്ദേഹവും വേർതിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ഊന്നൽ വികാരങ്ങൾക്കു തന്നെ. മനുഷ്യന് അനേകായിരം വികാരങ്ങളുണ്ടാവാമെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ ഇവയെ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി എട്ടോ പത്തോ ആക്കി വെട്ടിച്ചുരുക്കാമെന്നദ്ദേഹം സിദ്ധാന്തിക്കുന്നു. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ, ഭരതാദികളംഗീകരിച്ച സ്ഥായിഭാവങ്ങളെത്തന്നെയാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരിയും തന്റെ സാഹിത്യസങ്കല്പത്തിന്റെ ആധാരശിലയായി കാണുന്നത്. ജീവിതവുമായി സാത്മ്യം വന്ന വികാരങ്ങളാണിവയെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം അവയെ വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. ഇവ തന്മയീഭാവത്തിന്റെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിൽ മനുഷ്യനെ ഹൃദയസംവാദത്തിലേക്കു നയിക്കുമെന്ന രസതത്ത്വസിദ്ധാന്തത്തെ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നു. തന്മയീഭാവത്തെ ജഗൽസാഹോദര്യമെന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിലൂടെ തന്റെ സാമൂഹിക പരിപ്രേക്ഷ്യത്തെ രസദർശനവുമായി കൂട്ടിയിണക്കാനദ്ദേഹം ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു.

വികാരതന്മയീഭാവത്തിനാൽ ആസ്വാദകനെ ഹൃദയസംവാദദശയിൽ എത്തിക്കുവാനുതകുംവിധം ജീവിതത്തെ ആന്തരീകരിക്കുകയെന്ന കൃത്യം സാഹിത്യത്തെയും ചിത്രകലയെയും സംഗീതത്തിൽനിന്നു വിലക്ഷണമാക്കുന്നുവെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു. തുടർന്ന് ഈ ആന്തരീകസൃഷ്ടിയെ കലാസൃഷ്ടിയിലൂടെ മുർത്തമാക്കുകയും വേണം. ഈ അന്തഃസൃഷ്ടിയും ബാഹ്യസൃഷ്ടിയും തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസത്തെ പൗരസ്ത്യാലങ്കാരികന്മാർ അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നുവെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി സിദ്ധാന്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും അതിനുപോൽബലകമായി 'ദർശനാദ് വർണ്ണനാചൈവ ലോകേ രൂഢാ കവിശ്രുതി:'

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എന്ന ഭട്ടതൗതന്റെ വരികളെ എന്തുകൊണ്ടോ അദ്ദേഹം ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്നില്ല. 'അപൂർവ്വ വസ്തുനിർമ്മാണക്ഷമാപ്രജ്ഞാ', 'ശക്തിർനിപുണതാ' ഇത്യാദികാരികളെ പ്രകൃതത്തിലേറ്റേഹം ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്നുവെങ്കിലും അവയ്ക്ക് ഉദ്ദിഷ്ടാർത്ഥവുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം വിശദീകരിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നില്ല.

സാഹിത്യസൃഷ്ടിയിൽ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പ്രതിഭയ്ക്കു കല്പിക്കുന്ന സ്ഥാനം അവിതീയമാണ്. അനിർവ്വചനീയമായ കല്പനാശക്തിയാണിത്.

“ശക്തിർനിപുണതാ ലോക
കാവ്യശാസ്ത്രാദ്യപേക്ഷണാത്”

എന്ന മമ്മടന്റെ കാരികയിൽ ശക്തിയെ ഒന്നാമതായിപ്പറഞ്ഞതും അതിനു പോഷകമായിമാത്രം വ്യുൽപ്പത്തുദ്യാസങ്ങളെ നിർദ്ദേശിച്ചതും സാർത്ഥകമാണ്. പ്രതിഭതന്നെയാണ് അനുപേക്ഷണീയം എന്ന തന്റെ നിലപാടിന്റെ സാധ്യകരണമായി മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ഈ ക്രമീകരണത്തെ നോക്കിക്കാണുന്നുണ്ട്. പ്രതിഭയില്ലെങ്കിലും വ്യുൽപ്പത്തുദ്യാസങ്ങൾകൊണ്ടു മാത്രം മികവു നേടാമെന്ന ദണ്ഡിയുടെ വാദഗതിയെ അദ്ദേഹം തള്ളിക്കളയുന്നുമുണ്ട്. മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പറയുന്നു:

“നവനവോല്ലേഖ ശാലിനി (?)യായപ്രജ്ഞയുടെ - പ്രതിഭയുടെ സഹകാരികളായി നൈപുണ്യാദ്യാസങ്ങൾ കൂടുകയാണെങ്കിൽ സാധിക്കുന്ന കാര്യം ഒന്ന്; വ്യുൽപ്പത്തി പരിശ്രമങ്ങൾക്കകമ്പടിയായി വെറും പ്രജ്ഞ നടക്കുകയാണെങ്കിൽ സാധിക്കുന്നത് മറ്റൊന്ന് - രണ്ടും രണ്ടാണെന്നു തീർത്തുപറയാം. പാശ്ചാത്യർ ജീനിയസ്സ് (Genius) എന്നും ടാലന്റ് (Talent) എന്നും പറഞ്ഞുവേറിട്ടു നിറുത്തുന്നത് അവ രണ്ടിനെയുമാണ് (കാവ്യപീഠിക പുറം 35).

പ്രജ്ഞ സാർവ്വത്രികമെങ്കിലും പ്രതിഭ സുദുർലഭമാണെന്ന് എടുത്തുപറയുന്ന മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ഷേക്സ്പിയറും ബെൻ ജോൺസനും, കാളിദാസനും മാഘനും, നളചരിതവും ദുര്യോധനവധവും, ചണ്ഡാലഭിക്ഷുകിയും, ഭക്തിദീപികയും തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസം ഇവ രണ്ടും തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസമാണെന്നു ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്നു. അപൂർവ്വ വസ്തുക്കല്പനയിലാണ് പ്രതിഭയുടെ ശരിയായ അരങ്ങേറ്റം. കവിയുടെ അന്തർഗതഭാവത്തെ പ്രകാശിപ്പിക്കലാണ് പ്രതിഭാവില്ലാസമെന്നു ഭരതൻ പറഞ്ഞുവെച്ചതായി മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി നിർവ്വീശകം പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുന്നു. ശക്തി - നിപുണത - അഭ്യാസം എന്ന മമ്മടന്റെ ക്രമത്തിനുള്ളിൽ മറ്റൊരു രഹസ്യവും അടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നുവെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി കരുതുന്നു. കവിയശഃ പ്രാർത്ഥികൾ പദവാക്യ ഛന്ദസ്സുകളിൽനിന്നു അർത്ഥത്തിലേക്കു മുന്നോൻ ശ്രമിക്കുമ്പോൾ യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ വേണ്ടത് പ്രതിഭയിൽനിന്ന് അഭ്യാസത്തിലേക്കു മുന്നോറുകയാണെന്നും വസ്തുവിൽനിന്നു രംഭിച്ചു പദവാക്യച്ഛന്ദസ്സുകളിലേക്കുള്ള പ്രയാണമാണു കവിതയെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം വായിച്ചെടുക്കുന്നു.

ലോകോത്തരാഹ്ലാദത്തെ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കുന്ന കലാധർമ്മമാണു രമണീയതയെന്ന ജഗന്നാഥപണ്ഡിതന്റെ അഭിപ്രായത്തെ എടുത്തുദ്ധരിക്കുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും ആഹ്ലാദത്തിന്റെ മറ്റൊരു പേരാണ് സൗന്ദര്യമെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. പ്രയോജനപേക്ഷ വരുമ്പോൾ ആഹ്ലാദത്തിനും സൗന്ദര്യത്തിനും ശുദ്ധി കുറയുന്നുവെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ സൗന്ദര്യബോധത്തിന്റെ ഏറ്റക്കുറച്ചിലുകൾക്കനുസരിച്ചു സൗന്ദര്യത്തോടുള്ള പ്രതികരണത്തിനും വ്യത്യസ്തമുണ്ടാവാം. അംഗോപാംഗങ്ങളുടെ യഥാസ്ഥാന വിനിവേശനത്തിൽ നിന്നുണ്ടാവുന്ന ഏകാഗ്രമോഹനതയാണു സൗന്ദര്യം പ്രത്യക്ഷപ്പെടുന്നത്. പുറമെയും അകമെയുമുള്ള ഈ ചതുരശ്രശോഭിതയെയാണ് ധ്വനികാരൻ 'വിഭാതിലാവണ്യമീവാംഗനാസു' എന്ന ഉപമാപ്രയോഗത്തിലൂടെ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നതെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു. ഈ സംവിധാന വൈചിത്ര്യം നിമിത്തം ബാഹ്യദൃഷ്ടിയിലസുന്ദരമായ വസ്തുക്കൾപോലും കലയിൽ ഹൃദയഹാരികളായിത്തീരുന്നുവെന്നും അദ്ദേഹം സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. രസാസ്വാദനവേളയിൽ അനുവാചകനെ ശ്രസിപ്പിക്കുന്ന അജ്ഞാനത്തിന്റെ ആവരണം നീങ്ങിപ്പോകുന്നതു നിമിത്തമാണു കരുണം, ബീഭത്സം എന്നിവ പോലുള്ള രസങ്ങൾപോലും ആസ്വാദ്യമാകുന്നതെന്ന അഭിനവഗുപ്താദികളുടെ അഭിപ്രായം ഇവിടെ അദ്ദേഹം പരാമർശിച്ചു കാണുന്നില്ല.

രസസിദ്ധാന്തം തന്നെയാണു ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യമീമാംസയിൽ 'സാമ്രാജ്യച്ചേങ്കോലേന്തി' നില്ക്കുന്നതെന്ന് മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു. ഹൃദയാനുഭൂതിമേലാണ് ആ സിദ്ധാന്തം പടുത്തുയർത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. രസസിദ്ധാന്തത്തിന്റെ ഉപജ്ഞാതാവായ ഭരതൻ രൂപകത്തെ 'കർമ്മഭാവാനുകീർത്തന' മായി വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുകവഴി നാടകകലയ്ക്കും ജീവിതത്തിനും തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധത്തെയാണ് എടുത്തുകാട്ടിയത്. Poetry is the criticism of Life എന്ന ആർനോൾഡിന്റെയും 'കൃതികൾ മനുഷ്യകഥാനുഗായികൾ' എന്ന ആശാന്റെയും കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ ഇതിൽനിന്നു വ്യത്യസ്തമല്ല. ജീവിതചിത്രണത്തിൽ സ്ഥൂലതകളിൽനിന്നു സൂക്ഷ്മതയിലേക്കുള്ള മുന്നേറ്റത്തെയാണു വിഭാവാനുകൂടെ അപഗ്രഥനത്തിലൂടെ ഭരതൻ വിവരിക്കുന്നത്. സർവ്വകർമ്മക്ഷമതയോടുകൂടിയ മനുഷ്യനാണ് ആലംബനവിഭാവം; അവന്റെ ആന്തരികഭാവങ്ങളെ വർധമാനമാക്കുന്ന ബാഹ്യസാഹചര്യങ്ങളാണ് ഉദ്ദീപനവിഭാവങ്ങൾ. അന്തർഗതങ്ങളുടെ ബഹിർസൂചനകളത്രേ അനുഭാവങ്ങൾ. വ്യഭിചാരിഭാവങ്ങളും സ്ഥായിഭാവങ്ങളും സൂക്ഷ്മതലത്തിൽ സ്മിതിചെയ്യുന്നു. സ്ഥായിഭാവങ്ങൾ തന്നെയാണു ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ മർമ്മങ്ങൾ. തക്ക പരിതോവസ്ഥയിൽ തക്കരൂപത്തിൽ പാത്രങ്ങളെ അവതരിപ്പിച്ച് അവയിൽ അപ്പപ്പോൾ വേണ്ട വികാരചിഹ്നങ്ങൾ വരുത്തിക്കാണിച്ചാൽ സ്ഥായിഭാവപ്രതീതിയായി.

അനുവാചകനിഷ്ഠമായ രസപ്രതീതിയെ ചിലേടത്തെല്ലാം കവിനിഷ്ഠമായ ആഹ്ലാദപ്രതീതിയുമായി മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി കൂട്ടിക്കലർത്തിക്കാണുന്നുണ്ട്. അദ്ദേഹം ഭരതന്റേതെന്നു പറഞ്ഞ് ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്ന ധനഞ്ജയന്റെ ഒരു ശ്ലോകം

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

ഈ തെറ്റിദ്ധാരണയ്ക്കുദാഹരണമാണ്.

“ക്രീഡതാം മുൻമയൈർഭാവൈഃ
ബാലാനാം ദിരദാഭിഭിഃ
സോത്സാഹഃ സ്വദതേ തദത്
ശ്രോത്യുണാമർജ്ജുനാദിഭിഃ”

ഇവിടെ ധനഞ്ജയൻ വിവരിക്കുന്നത് അനുവാചകനിഷ്ഠമായ ആഹ്ലാദത്തെയാണ്. മൺകളിപ്പാട്ടങ്ങളായ ആനകളും മറ്റുമെടുത്തു കളിക്കുമ്പോൾ കൂട്ടിക്കൂടെയാണെന്ന ആഹ്ലാദത്തോട് അദ്ദേഹം അർജ്ജുനാദികളെ കാണുമ്പോൾ അനുവാചകനുണ്ടാവുന്ന ആഹ്ലാദത്തെ തുലനം ചെയ്യുന്നു. എന്നാൽ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ഈ വരികളെ വ്യാഖ്യാനിക്കുന്നത് ഇങ്ങനെയത്രേ: “മൃണയരുപങ്ങളുണ്ടാക്കിക്കളിക്കുന്നൊരു കൂട്ടി അനുകരണത്തിൽ ആത്മാവിഷ്കാരത്തിൽ ആനന്ദിക്കുംപോലെ ഒരാനന്ദിക്കലല്ലേ രസം” എന്നദ്ദേഹം ചോദിക്കുന്നു എന്നാണ്. ഇത്തരം ചില പ്രമാദങ്ങൾ പിണഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിലും രസദർശനത്തിന് ആധുനിക പാശ്ചാത്യസാഹിത്യചിന്തയിലുള്ള ചില പ്രവണതകളുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി കൃത്യമായി എടുത്തുകാട്ടുന്നുണ്ട്. പരമാവധി വൈകാരികമായ അനുഭൂതിയിൽ ചെന്നെത്തുവിധമായിരിക്കണം ജീവിതചിത്രണങ്ങളെല്ലാംതന്നെയെന്നുള്ള ഭരതമതത്തെ സി. ടി. വിഞ്ചെസ്റ്റർ, ഐ.എ. റിച്ചാർഡ്സ് തുടങ്ങിയവർ പൂർണ്ണമായും ശരിവെയ്ക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നദ്ദേഹം എടുത്തു പറയുന്നു. ശാസ്ത്രനിർദ്ദേശമനുസരിച്ചു യാത്രകുമായി പദവാക്യച്ഛന്ദങ്ങളുപയോഗിച്ചാൽ രസം സൃഷ്ടിക്കാമെന്ന ധാരണയദ്ദേഹം തിരസ്കരിക്കുന്നു. വിഭാവാനികളെ തമ്മയീഭാവമുണി സ്വരൂപിക്കുന്നതിലാണു തുടങ്ങേണ്ടത്. അതിനു ഭാവനാശക്തി വേണം; അതു പൂർവ്വസംസ്കാരത്തിൽ കൊടിനീട്ടേണ്ടതാണ്; ഗുരുവിന്റെ കാല്ക്കൽ ചന്ദ്രം പടിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടാക്കേണ്ട തല്ല എന്നദ്ദേഹം ആണയിടുന്നു. ലോകാവലോകനത്തിലൂടെയാണു ഭാവനയെ പോഷിപ്പിക്കേണ്ടത്.

പദവാക്യചരണോലങ്കാരങ്ങളിൽ രസഭംഗമന്വേഷിക്കുന്ന രീതി മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി തള്ളിക്കളയുന്നു. വാസ്തവത്തിൽ വിഭാവാനികളുടെ കല്പനയിലാണു ശ്രദ്ധിക്കേണ്ടത്. വള്ളത്തോളിന്റെ കൊച്ചു സീതയിലെ നായികയുടെ ആത്മഹത്യയും ചങ്ങമ്പുഴയുടെ രമണനിലെ മൂന്നാം ഭാഗത്തെ ജുഗുപ്സയുടെ ആധിക്യവും ഉള്ളതിന്റെ മൂന്നാളിനിയെ മദ്യപാനിയുമെല്ലാം അരോചകമായിത്തീരുന്നതു ജീവിതം കണ്ണുകൊണ്ടു കാണാതെ ഈരടികളെഴുതിക്കൂട്ടുന്നതിനാലാണ്.

രസവാദം കല കലയ്ക്കുവേണ്ടിയെന്ന സിദ്ധാന്തത്തിനു ന്യായീകരണമാവിലെന്നും മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പറഞ്ഞുറപ്പിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. കവി ജീവിതത്തെ നിഷ്കർഷണം ചെയ്തെടുത്തു നല്കുന്ന സംസ്കാരം ആസ്വദിക്കുമ്പോഴാണു രസാസ്വാദനിർവൃതിയുണ്ടാവുന്നത്. ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ, സാംസ്കാരിക മൂല്യസംക്രമണമാണു സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ പരമലക്ഷ്യം. ഹൃദയനിർവൃതി ആ മൂല്യത്തിന്റെ

ജ്ഞാപകം മാത്രമാണ്. രസോൽക്കർഷം മുൻനിർത്തി ഒരു കൃതിയെ സമീപിക്കുമ്പോൾ അതു പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്ന സാംസ്കാരികമൂല്യങ്ങളെത്തന്നെയാണു നാം എടുത്തുകാട്ടുന്നതെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നു.

പാശ്ചാത്യസാഹിത്യചിന്തയും ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യതത്ത്വചിന്തയും തമ്മിൽ അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി പലതരം സാമ്യങ്ങളുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ചില മൗലിക വ്യത്യാസങ്ങളുമുണ്ടെന്നും മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. പാത്രസൃഷ്ടിയുടെ മേഖലയിലാണു സമീപനവ്യത്യാസം ഏറ്റവും വലുതാവുന്നത്. ഭരതനെ സംബന്ധിച്ചിടത്തോളം നാടകത്തിലെ ഏതു ഘടകവും രസോന്മുഖമാവണം. എന്നാൽ അരിസ്റ്റോട്ടിൽ പാത്രസൃഷ്ടിക്കാണു പരമപ്രധാന്യം നല്കിയത്. ‘ഒരാൾ കാര്യത്തിൽ പിടിച്ചു; മറ്റേയാൾ കാരണങ്ങളിലും’ എന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ഈ വ്യത്യാസത്തെ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്നു. പിൻക്കാലത്തെ ടിപ്പണകാരന്മാരായ സംസ്കൃതാലങ്കാരികന്മാർ രസത്തിന്റെ പ്ലാടൈനിയായതായിലെന്നിരുന്നിരുന്നിട്ടും പാത്രപരിസരാദികളായ വിഭാവാനികളിൽനിന്ന് ആസ്വാദകശ്രദ്ധ പിൻവാങ്ങിപ്പോയെന്നാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി പറയുന്നത്. ‘യത്ര പ്രതിതിഖണ്ഡനാ ന ജായതേ താദൃഗേവ വർണ്ണനീയം’ എന്ന ധനികാരന്റെ താക്കീത് അവഗണിക്കപ്പെട്ടു. മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി തുടരുന്നു:

“ഭാഷാശൈലിക്കരികെ നല്ലൊരു ഉരകല്ലുമായങ്ങിരിക്കുക - അതായിത്തീർന്നു ‘വാക്യം രസാത്മകം കാവ്യം’ എന്നുരുവിട്ടു പഠിച്ച സുശിക്ഷിത കവികളിലധികംപേരുടെയും തൊഴിൽ. പൂർവ്വവിവക്ഷിതത്തിൽനിന്നു പൗരസ്ത്യൻ ഇങ്ങനെ അകന്നകന്നുപോയപ്പോൾ പാശ്ചാത്യൻ അതിനോടടുത്തടുത്തു വരികയാണുണ്ടായത്. അരിസ്റ്റോട്ടിൽ കഥാഘടനയ്ക്കൊന്നൊന്നാം സ്ഥാനം നല്കിയിരുന്നത്. പാത്രവിധാനത്തിനു രണ്ടാംസ്ഥാനവും. അനന്തരകാലികരായ യൂറോപ്യൻ നിരൂപകന്മാർ ആ ക്രമം മറിച്ചിട്ടു. തിരിഞ്ഞു മറിഞ്ഞ് ഇങ്ങനെ വന്നപ്പോൾ പൗരസ്ത്യന്റെയും പാശ്ചാത്യന്റെയും പാത്രവിധാനരീതികൾ തമ്മിൽ ഒന്നിടത്തെ മട്ടായി” (കാവ്യപീഠിക പു. 70).

വാസ്തവത്തിൽ പിണക്കമുണ്ടായതു തത്ത്വങ്ങൾ തമ്മിലല്ലെന്നും അനുവർത്തനരീതികൾ തമ്മിലാണെന്നും മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി എടുത്തുപറയുന്നു. രസമാത്രദൃഷ്ടികളായ കവികൾ പാത്രങ്ങളുടെ സവിശേഷതകളിൽ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കാതെയായി. പാത്രസൃഷ്ടി ടൈപ്പോളജിയായിച്ചുരുങ്ങിയത് ഈവണ്ണമാണ്. എന്നാൽ വാല്മീകി, ഭാസൻ, കാളിദാസൻ തുടങ്ങിയവരുടെ കൃതികളിൽ മിഴിവുറു വ്യക്തിതമുള്ളവരാണ് പാത്രങ്ങൾ. കാളിദാസകൃതികളിൽ മുഖ്യപാത്രങ്ങളേക്കാൾ മിഴിവുണ്ട് ഉപപാത്രങ്ങൾക്ക്. വ്യാസകഥാപാത്രങ്ങളെയും മൂല്യകൃതികളെയും പോലുള്ള കൃതികളിലെ ശകാരണപ്പോലുള്ള പാത്രങ്ങളെയും ഈ അവസരത്തിൽ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി എന്തുകൊണ്ടോ പരാമർശിച്ചു കാണുന്നില്ല. പൗരസ്ത്യരുടെ സാഹിത്യം രസൈകവിശ്രുതമെങ്കിൽ പാശ്ചാത്യരുടേതു പാത്രൈകവിശ്രുതമാണെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം പറഞ്ഞുറപ്പിക്കുന്നു.

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ രൂപതലത്തിന്റെ പര്യവേക്ഷണമായാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ധ്യാനീഭാവത്തെ സമീപിക്കുന്നത്. അല്പംകൊണ്ടധികം കാണിക്കണമെന്ന കലാ തത്ത്വമത്രേ ഇതിലടങ്ങിയിരിക്കുന്നത്. Brevity is the soul of art, Nothing in Excess തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രമാണങ്ങൾ അദ്ദേഹം ഇവിടെ ഉദ്ധരിക്കുന്നു. പ്രായോഗിക വിമർശനത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹം ധ്യാനീഭാവത്തിലെ സങ്കേതങ്ങൾ ഉപജീവിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. 'സംസ്കൃതശൈലിയെ അനുകരിച്ച മലയാളകവികളിൽ അധികം പേരും ധ്യാനിയെ വസ്തുലകാരധനി പര്യവസിതങ്ങളായിക്കണ്ടത് ഒരു വലിയ ന്യൂനതയായി അദ്ദേഹം എടുത്തുപറയുന്നുണ്ട്. വ്യഥാസ്ഥൂലതയാർന്ന മയൂര സന്ദേശംപോലുള്ള കൃതികളുടെ ന്യൂനത രസധ്യാനിയെ അവഗണിച്ചതാണ്. ഉള്ളൂരിന്റെ 'മൃണാളിനി'യിലെ വ്യഥാസ്ഥൂലതകൾ ഒഴിവാക്കിയ പരീക്ഷണത്തിൽ ആകെ നൂറു വരികളേ അവശേഷിക്കുന്നുള്ളൂവെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി സാക്ഷ്യപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുണ്ട്.

ഔചിത്യം, രീതി തുടങ്ങിയ സങ്കേതങ്ങളെയും മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി ദീർഘമായി വിവരിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിപാദനത്തിനു സൂക്ഷ്മത പോരാ. ക്ഷേമേന്ദ്രനു പകരം മഹിമഭട്ടനെയെന്ന് ഔചിത്യദർശനത്തിന്റെ സൈദ്ധാന്തികനായി അദ്ദേഹം പരാമർശിക്കുന്നതെന്ന വസ്തുതതന്നെ ഈ സൂക്ഷ്മതക്കുറവിനുദാഹരണം. മഹിമഭട്ടന്റെ അന്തരംഗഔചിത്യത്തെയും ബഹിരംഗഔചിത്യത്തെയും കീറ്റ്സിന്റെ സത്യസൗന്ദര്യസമന്വയവുമായി ബന്ധിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോഴും മറ്റും അദ്ദേഹം വളയമില്ലാതെ ചാടുകയാണെന്നു തോന്നും. എന്നാൽ, 'അസ്ത്യനേകോ ഗിരാം മാർഗ്ഗഃ; സൂക്ഷ്മഭേദഃ പരസ്പരം' എന്ന ദണ്ഡിയുടെ ശൈലീഗുണ ചർച്ചയെയും 'തദ്ഭേദാസ്തുന ശക്യന്തേ വക്തും പ്രതികവി സ്ഥിതഃ എന്ന നിരീക്ഷണത്തെയും കുറിച്ചു പരിചിന്തനം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ കവിയുടെ തനിമയോളം അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഉൾക്കാഴ്ച പ്രസരിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. അലങ്കാരത്തിനും ധ്യാനീകാരൻ കല്പിച്ച പ്രാധാന്യമേ നല്കേണ്ടതുളളുവെന്നദ്ദേഹം സിദ്ധാന്തിക്കുന്നു. വൃത്തത്തിനു ഭാവഔചിത്യവും ഭാഷയുടെ വാമൊഴിയോടുള്ള അടുപ്പവും വേണമെന്നു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി എടുത്തുപറയുന്നു.

ചുരുക്കിപ്പറഞ്ഞാൽ ഭാരതീയ കാവ്യശാസ്ത്രപാരമ്പര്യത്തിനെ സമകാലികീകരിക്കുകയെന്ന ദൗത്യമാണു മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി കാവ്യപീഠികയിലൂടെ ഏറ്റെടുത്തു നിർവ്വഹിച്ചതെന്നു കാണാം. ഈ സംരംഭത്തിൽ അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു ധാരാളം പ്രമാദങ്ങൾ പിണഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ടാവാം. വിശദാംശങ്ങളിലേക്കു ദൃഷ്ടി പായിക്കുമ്പോൾ അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രതിപാദനം ഏറെ പരിമിതികൾ കലർന്നതാണെന്നുള്ള തിരിച്ചറിവാണ് ഇന്നത്തെ വായനക്കാരനുണ്ടാവുക. അതേസമയം അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ പൊതുവേ ദിശാബോധം കലർന്നവയായിരുന്നു എന്ന വസ്തുത നിസ്സാർവ്വഭാവം കൂടാ. രസധ്യാനീഭാവങ്ങളുടെ സമകാലികമായൊരു പാരായണത്തിന്റെ വെളിച്ചത്തിൽ പാരമ്പര്യവും ആധുനികതയും തമ്മിൽ സമന്വയിപ്പിച്ചുകൊണ്ടു തന്റെ പ്രായോഗിക നിരൂപണത്തിനൊരു സൈദ്ധാന്തികാടിത്തറ നല്കുന്നതിൽ മുണ്ടശ്ശേരി വലിയൊരളവിൽ വിജയിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നു കാവ്യപീഠിക തെളിയിക്കുന്നു.



കഥകളി സംഗീതത്തിലെ ദിശാപരിണാമങ്ങളും ഹൈദരാലിയും

എൻ. അജയകുമാർ

ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിലെ കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിൽ വ്യക്തിത്വമുറ്റ ശബ്ദമായിരുന്ന ഹൈദരാലിയെ സ്മരിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിലെ ചില പ്രധാനപ്പെട്ട ദിശാപരിണാമങ്ങളിലൂടെ കാതോടിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുകയാണിവിടെ.

കഥകളിയുടെ നവീകരണത്തിൽ പ്രധാനപങ്കു വഹിച്ച കേരളകലാമണ്ഡലത്തിൽ ആദ്യകാലത്ത് പാട്ടു പഠിപ്പിച്ചിരുന്നത് കളരിയിൽ ചൊല്ലിയാടിക്കുന്നതിൽ പ്രഗല്ഭനായിരുന്ന പുലാപ്പറ്റ കുട്ടൻഭാഗവതരായിരുന്നു. അക്കാലത്തുതന്നെ കാവശ്ശേരി സാമിക്ക് കുട്ടൻഭാഗവതരും അവിടെ അധ്യാപകനായി നിയമിക്കപ്പെട്ടുവെങ്കിലും അദ്ദേഹം അധികകാലം അവിടെ തുടർന്നില്ലെന്ന് കെ. പി.എസ്. മേനോൻ എഴുതിയിട്ടുണ്ട് (1986:396). ഇവർ ഇരുവരുടെയും മൂണ്ടായ വെങ്കിടകൃഷ്ണഭാഗവതരുടെയും ശിഷ്യത്വത്തിൽ നീലകണ്ഠൻ നമ്പീശൻ മികച്ചൊരു കഥകളിഗായകനായി വളർന്നു. നമ്പീശന്റെ ഈ മൂന്നു ഗുരുനാഥന്മാരും കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിനു നല്കിയ സംഭാവനകൾ വളരെ പ്രധാനമാണ്. ഇവരിൽ വെങ്കിടകൃഷ്ണഭാഗവതരുടെ സംഭാവനകളേ കുറെയെങ്കിലും പഠിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുള്ളൂ. നമുക്കിന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത്, കഥകളിപ്പാട്ടിൽ കർണാടകസംഗീതശൈലി ധാരാളമായി ഉപയോഗിച്ചു തുടങ്ങിയെന്നതും ഭാവപ്രധാനമായ സംഗീതശൈലി ആവിഷ്കരിച്ചുവെന്നതുമാണ്. തന്റെ അനുജനായ പാലക്കാട്ടു രാമഭാഗവതരോടുള്ള മമതയാലായിരിക്കാം ശ്ലോകം ചൊല്ലുമ്പോളെന്നല്ല പദങ്ങൾ പാടുമ്പോൾത്തന്നെ കർണാടകസംഗീതശൈലികൾ സാർവ്വത്രികമായി ഭാഗവതർ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരുന്നു. പഴയ സോപാനരീതിയിൽതന്നെ പാടണമെന്നു നിർബന്ധമുള്ളവർക്കും സംഗീതത്തിൽ അഭിനിവേശമില്ലാത്ത കളിബ്ദ്രാന്തന്മാർക്കും ഭാഗവതരുടെ പാട്ട് ആസ്വാദ്യമാവുകയില്ല. എന്നാൽ ഇതൊന്നുണ്ട്: “സാമാന്യം ‘കർണാടകസംഗീത’ക്കാർ അക്ഷരവ്യക്തിയിൽ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കാതിരിക്കുന്ന ദോഷം ഭാഗവതരെ ബാധിച്ചിട്ടില്ല. അക്ഷരസ്മൃത അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഒരു പ്രത്യേകഗുണമാണ്” എന്നാണ് കെ.പി.എസ്.മേനോൻ ഭാഗവതരുടെ സംഗീതത്തെപ്പറ്റി എഴുതുന്നത് (1986:282). ആട്ടക്കഥാകൃത്തുക്കൾ നിയമനം ചെയ്ത രാഗങ്ങൾ മാറ്റി പുതിയ രാഗങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിച്ച് കളിയിൽ ഭാവം

എന്നു തേവാരത്തിൽ. കേദാരപന്ത് എന്നു കഥകളിയിൽ കേദാരപൻ എന്നു തേവാരത്തിൽ. ഖണ്ഡാരം എന്നു കഥകളിയിൽ, ഖണ്ഡ എന്നു തേവാരത്തിൽ. കാനകുറിഞ്ഞി എന്നു കഥകളിയിൽ, കുറിഞ്ചിപ്പൻ എന്നു തേവാരത്തിൽ - ഇങ്ങനെ പലതുമുണ്ട്. ഇതുകൊണ്ടു തെളിയുന്നത് കഥകളിസംഗീതം കൂടുതൽ ഒട്ടിനില്ക്കുന്നത് തമിഴകത്തോടാണ് എന്നാണ് (1979:IV). ചില രംഗങ്ങൾക്ക് ഹിന്ദുസ്ഥാനിസംഗീതവുമായുള്ള ബന്ധവും അദ്ദേഹം ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുന്നുണ്ട്.

വെങ്കിടകൃഷ്ണഭാഗവതർ മുതൽക്കുള്ള കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിലെങ്കിലും കർണാടകസംഗീതത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനം സുവ്യക്തമാണെന്നിരിക്കെ നമ്പീശൻ അതിന്റെ തമിഴ്പഴമയിൽ ശ്രദ്ധയൂന്നാൻ കാരണമെന്തായിരിക്കും? കർണാടക സംഗീതം കഥകളിസംഗീതപ്രയോഗത്തിൽ ഒരു പങ്കും വഹിച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്നു സ്ഥാപിക്കാനാവില്ല. അതിനിടയിലും ചില നാട്ടുവഴികൾ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്താനുള്ള ശ്രമമാവും അത്. അടിസ്ഥാനപരമായി സമാനസ്രോതസ്സുകൾ ഉള്ളവയും എന്നാൽ വ്യതിരിക്തമായ വ്യക്തിത്വമുള്ളവയുമായി ദക്ഷിണേന്ത്യയിലെ സംഗീതപദ്ധതികളെ മനസ്സിലാക്കാനും അതിൽതന്നെ കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിന് തമിഴ് സംഗീതവുമായുള്ള ബന്ധം എടുത്തു കാണിക്കാനും ശ്രമിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ അടിത്തട്ടിൽ നവോത്ഥാനമൂല്യങ്ങളിൽ വേരോട്ടമുള്ള, കേരളദേശീയതയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സങ്കല്പങ്ങളും പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ടായി എന്നുവരാം. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിൽ പല ഘട്ടങ്ങളിലും കേരളദേശീയതയേയോ കേരളീയതയേയോ പറ്റിയുള്ള ചിന്തകൾ നടന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെന്നും ഐക്യകേരളപ്പിറവിക്കുശേഷവും അവയ്ക്കു തുടർച്ചയുണ്ടായിരുന്നുവെന്നും ഓർമ്മിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഇവയുടെ പ്രത്യക്ഷസ്വാധീനം അക്കാലത്തെ ചിന്തകളിലെല്ലാം ഉണ്ടാവണമെന്നല്ല. ഒരു സാംസ്കാരിക കാലാവസ്ഥയായി ആ ചിന്തകൾ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ ഉണ്ടായിരുന്നിരിക്കാം എന്നു മാത്രം. അങ്ങനെ നോക്കുമ്പോൾ, ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടോടെ കർണാടകസംഗീതത്തിൽനിന്ന് പലതും സ്വീകരിച്ച് വ്യക്തിത്വമുറപ്പിച്ച് കഥകളിസംഗീതം ആ നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ പകുതിയോടെ കർണാടകസംഗീതസ്വാധീനം ഉപേക്ഷിക്കാതെതന്നെ സ്വവ്യക്തിത്വത്തെ പുനർനിർവചിക്കാനുള്ള ശ്രമങ്ങളും തുടങ്ങിയിരുന്നു എന്നു പറയാൻ കഴിഞ്ഞേക്കാം.

നമ്പീശന്റെ ശിഷ്യസമ്പത്തിനെപ്പറ്റി സൂചിപ്പിച്ചുവല്ലോ. ഇരുപതാം നൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ രണ്ടാം പകുതിയിലെ കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിന്റെ മുഖ്യധാര വാസ്തവത്തിൽ അവരാണ്. അവരിൽ ശ്രദ്ധാർഹരായ ഓരോരുത്തരും സ്വന്തമായ ആലാപനശൈലി വികസിപ്പിച്ചെടുത്തവരാണ്. ഈ വൈവിധ്യമായിരിക്കും ഒരു പക്ഷേ ഗുരുനാഥനെന്ന നിലയിൽ നമ്പീശന്റെ മഹത്വം.

കലാമണ്ഡലം ഉണ്ണികൃഷ്ണക്കുറുപ്പാണ് ആദ്യം നമ്മുടെ ശ്രദ്ധയാകർഷിക്കുന്നത്. നമ്പീശന്റെ ശിഷ്യന്മാരിൽ ഉറച്ച അടിത്തറയുള്ള അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സംഗീതത്തിൽ സ്വന്തമായ അന്വേഷണങ്ങളുള്ളത് നമുക്കു തിരിച്ചറിയാനാകും. രാത്രിയുടെ നിശ്ശബ്ദയാമങ്ങളിൽ ചേകിലശൃതിയോടിണങ്ങി ഉയർന്നു കേട്ടിരുന്ന ആ നാദം സഹൃദയർക്ക് മറക്കാനാവില്ല. അതു ചിലപ്പോഴൊക്കെ കേരളത്തിന്റെ നാടോടിയോ അനുഷ്ഠാനപരമോ ആയ സംഗീതത്തിന്റെ

സംസ്കാരം ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നതായി തോന്നും. കേരളത്തിലെ പ്രാചീന കലാരൂപങ്ങളിൽ പലതും കുറുപ്പിനു സായത്തമാണെന്നതും കളമഴുത്തിലും നന്തുണിപ്പാട്ടിലും അദ്ദേഹത്തിനുള്ള പരിചയം അതിശയകരമാണെന്നതും (മാധവൻ, 1979:1) ഇതിന് ഉപോദ്ബലകമായി ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കാം. ഹിന്ദുസ്ഥാനി സംഗീതവും ഉത്തരേന്ത്യൻ സംഗീതവഴികളും കേട്ടുശീലിച്ചതിന്റെ സംസ്കാരവും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സംഗീതത്തിലുണ്ടെന്ന് നിരീക്ഷിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ട് (കലാധരൻ, 2002:64). കുറുപ്പിന്റെ സംഗീതത്തിന്റെ ഭാവപൂർണത വാഴേകട കുഞ്ചുനായരുടെ ഈ വാക്കുകളിൽനിന്നു മനസ്സിലാക്കാം: “ ‘കാദ്രവേയ കുലതിലക്’ എന്ന പദം ധന്യാസിയിലെത്തിയപ്പോഴേക്കും പാട്ടിലെ ഭാവാർദ്രതകൊണ്ട് ആട്ടം വളരെ അനായാസമായിത്തീർന്നു. ‘വിജനേ ബത’, ‘മറിമാൻകണ്ണി’ - ഇവയിൽ ഏതേതു മീതെ എന്നു പറയുക വയ്യ. മനസ്സു നിറഞ്ഞു വിഴിഞ്ഞു. പാട്ടിന്റെ മേന്മകൊണ്ട് അഭിനയിക്കേണ്ടിവന്നില്ല എന്നു പറഞ്ഞാൽ അത് ഒരു നിലയ്ക്കും മിഥ്യാവചനമല്ല” (1993:72). പക്ഷേ അതൊരിക്കലും അതിഭാവുകത്വത്തിലേക്കു വഴുതി വീഴാറില്ലെന്നതും ഓർക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ചൊല്ലിയാട്ടപ്രധാനമായ കോട്ടയം കഥകളെക്കാൾ നളചരിതം, ഇരയിമ്മൻതമ്പിയുടെ കഥകൾ, രുക്മാംഗദചരിതം, സന്താനഗോപാലം, കുചേലവൃത്തം മുതലായവയിലാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ സംഗീതത്തിലെ പുതുവഴികൾ കൂടുതൽ ശ്രദ്ധേയമാവുന്നത്.

കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിന്റെ ചിട്ടകളിൽ കൂടുതൽ നിഷ്ഠ പുലർത്തുന്നത് കലാമണ്ഡലം ഗംഗാധരനാണ്. എന്നാൽ ചൊല്ലിയാട്ടപ്രധാനമായ കഥകളും ജനപ്രിയകഥകളും ഒരുപോലെ അദ്ദേഹം കൈകാര്യം ചെയ്യുന്നുണ്ട്. മാടമ്പി സുബ്രഹ്മണ്യൻ നമ്പൂതിരിയുടെ പേരും ഇവിടെ ഓർക്കാം.

കലാമണ്ഡലം ശങ്കരൻ എമ്പ്രാന്തിരിയുടെ രംഗപ്രവേശത്തോടെയാണ്, 1960-കളുടെ രണ്ടാം പകുതിയോടെ, കഥകളി സംഗീതത്തിൽ വ്യക്തമായ ഒരു വഴിത്തിരിവുണ്ടാകുന്നത്. കോട്ടയംകഥകളെക്കാൾ നളചരിതവും മറ്റു ജനപ്രിയകഥകളും നന്നായി രംഗപ്രചാരം നേടുന്ന കാലഘട്ടമാണത്. സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ ഭാവം സാഹിത്യോചിതമായി ഉൾക്കൊണ്ട് ഓരോ വരിയിലും വാക്കിലും അത് സ്പന്ദിക്കത്തക്കവിധം ശബ്ദനിവൃത്തിയോടെ, വൈകാരികതയ്ക്കു പ്രാധാന്യം നല്കി ആലപിക്കുന്ന ഈ ശൈലി വളരെയേറെ ആസ്വാദകരെ ആകർഷിച്ചു. ജനപ്രിയകഥകളുടെ പ്രചാരത്തിന് ഒരു കാരണംതന്നെ ഈ ആലാപനശൈലിയാവാം. കർണശപഥത്തിനു കൈവന്ന സ്വീകാര്യതയിൽ പ്രധാനസ്ഥാനം ഈ ആലാപനശൈലിക്കുണ്ടാവും. എമ്പ്രാന്തിരി-ഹൈദരലി, പിന്നീട് എമ്പ്രാന്തിരി-ഹരിദാസ് കൂട്ടുകെട്ടിന്റെ സംഗീതം കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തെ വളരെ ജനപ്രിയമാക്കി.

കഴിഞ്ഞനൂറ്റാണ്ടിന്റെ അറുപതുകൾ കേരളീയസംഗീതത്തിൽ ലളിതഗാനശൈലിക്ക് സവിശേഷസ്ഥാനം കിട്ടിവരുന്ന കാലവുമാണ്. നാടക-സിനിമാഗാനങ്ങളിലൂടെ പരന്നൊഴുകിയ അക്കാലത്തെ ലളിതഗാനശൈലി സാഹിത്യത്തിന്റെ ഭാവത്തിൽ പരമാവധി ഊന്നുന്നതും അതിവൈകാരികതയോളമെത്തുന്ന വികാരപ്രാധാന്യമുള്ളതുമായിരുന്നുവെന്ന് ഒരു തിരിഞ്ഞുനോട്ടത്തിൽ മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ പറ്റിയേക്കാം. ഹിന്ദി, തമിഴ് ചലച്ചിത്രഗാനങ്ങളുടെ ഈണ

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

ങ്ങളിൽനിന്നു മാറി കേരളീയസംഗീതത്തിന്റെ വഴി അന്വേഷിച്ച കെ. രാഘവൻ, ദേവരാജൻ മുതലായവർക്ക് കർണാടകസംഗീതത്തിലുണ്ടായിരുന്ന അടിസ്ഥാനം വിസ്മരിക്കാനുമാവില്ല. ഈ അടിത്തറയിൽനിന്നുതന്നെയാണ് വ്യക്തിത്വമുറ്റ ഒരു കേരളീയ ലളിതഗാനശൈലി അവർ വാർത്തെടുത്തത്. ആധുനിക വ്യക്തിത്വമുറ്റ ആശകളിലും വേദനകളിലും സംഘർഷങ്ങളിലും വേരോട്ടമുള്ള സാഹിത്യവും ഈ സംഗീതശൈലിയും തമ്മിലുള്ള ഇണക്കമാവണം പുതിയ വ്യക്തികളുടെ സമൂഹത്തിന് അത് സ്വീകാര്യമാവാനുള്ള ഒരു കാരണം. ഈ പൊതുസംഗീതസംസ്കാരവുമായി ഏറിയോ കുറഞ്ഞോ സമാന്തരത്വം പുലർത്തുന്ന സംഗീതശൈലിയാണ് എമ്പ്രാന്തിരിയിലൂടെ പ്രചാരം നേടിയതെന്നു വിശ്വസിക്കാൻ വഴിയുണ്ട്.

ഇതിന്റെ തുടർച്ചയും വികാസവും ഹൈദരലിയുടെ സംഗീതത്തിൽ കേൾക്കാം. സംഗീതത്തെ സംബന്ധിച്ചുള്ള നിലയ്ക്കാത്ത അന്വേഷണങ്ങളാണ് അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ വ്യതിരിക്തമാക്കുന്ന ഒരു ഘടകം. സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തോടൊപ്പം നൃത്തസംഗീതത്തിലും നൃത്തനാടകസംഗീതത്തിലും പ്രാവീണ്യം നേടിയ അദ്ദേഹം സ്വന്തം നിലയ്ക്ക് കർണാടകസംഗീതവും ഹിന്ദുസ്ഥാനിസംഗീതവും ലളിതസംഗീതവും വശമാക്കി. എല്ലാ സംഗീതസ്വഭാവങ്ങളെയും സമഭാവനയോടെ കാണാനും സ്വാംശീകരിക്കാനുമുള്ള മനസ്സ് അദ്ദേഹം ഒടുക്കംവരെ നിലനിർത്തിയിരുന്നു. ഒരുപക്ഷേ, മുൻ സൂചിപ്പിച്ച ലേഖനത്തിൽ കഥകളിസംഗീതത്തിലെ കലർപ്പായി നമ്പീശൻ ചുണ്ടിക്കാണിച്ചത് എമ്പ്രാന്തിരിയുടെയും ഹൈദരലിയുടെയും സംഗീതത്തിൽ കണ്ടുവരുന്ന കലർപ്പുകളെയുമാവാം. അതുപക്ഷേ, പുതിയ സംഗീതത്തിന്റെ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യമാണ്. എമ്പ്രാന്തിരിയുടെയോ ഹൈദരലിയുടെയോ സംഗീതാനുഭവങ്ങളിൽ പക്ഷേ, നാടോടിസംഗീതത്തിൽനിന്നുള്ള ഊർജ്ജം അത്രയൊന്നും ഉണ്ടെന്നു തോന്നുന്നില്ല. ഇവരുടെയും ഹരിദാസിന്റെയും സംഗീതം തെക്കുവടക്കുഭേദമില്ലാതെ കേരളത്തിന്റെ ആധുനിക കഥകളിസംഗീതമായി സ്വീകരിക്കപ്പെട്ടു എന്നതാണ് ശ്രദ്ധാർഹമായ കാര്യം.

ഗ്രന്ഥസൂചി

കലാധരൻ, വി.	2002	മലയാളമുദ്ര. ദൃശ്യശ്രാവ്യകലകൾ, ഡി.സി. ബുക്സ്, കോട്ടയം
കുഞ്ചുനായർ, വാഴേങ്കട	1993	കഥകളിവെട്ടം, വാഴേങ്കട കുഞ്ചുനായർ മെമ്മോറിയൽ ട്രസ്റ്റ്, കാരൽമണ്ണ
നീലകണ്ഠൻ നമ്പീശൻ, കലാമണ്ഡലം	1979	കഥകളിസംഗീതം ശുദ്ധമാക്കിനിർത്തണം, മാതൃഭൂമി വാരാന്തപ്പതിപ്പ്, മെയ് 27
മാധവൻ കോടർമണ്ണ 1979		കേരളസംഗീതത്തിനു പുതിയ മുഖം, മാതൃഭൂമി വാരാന്തപ്പതിപ്പ്, ഏപ്രിൽ 22
മേനോൻ, കെ. പി. എസ്.	1986	കഥകളിരംഗം, മാതൃഭൂമി പ്രിന്റിംഗ് & പബ്ലിഷിംഗ് ഹൗസ്, കോഴിക്കോട്.

രേഖാശേഖരത്തിൽനിന്ന് / From the Archives

കമ്മ്യൂണിസം വരുന്നു

ഇൻഡ്യയിൽ കമ്മ്യൂണിസ്റ്റ് ഗ്രൂപ്പുകൾ രൂപപ്പെടുന്നതിനു തൊട്ടുമുമ്പത്തെ ഘട്ടത്തിലേതാണ് താഴെ പകർത്തുന്ന സർക്കാർ രേഖകൾ. ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ കൊച്ചിയിലെ ആദ്യ ഔദ്യോഗികകത്തുകളാകാം ഇവ. ഇതാ, കമ്മ്യൂ. ഭീഷണി എത്തിക്കഴിഞ്ഞു എന്ന മട്ടിൽ കൊച്ചി-തിരുവിതാംകൂർ ബ്രിട്ടീഷ് റെസിഡന്റ് എച്ച്. എൽ. ബ്രെയ്ഡ്‌വുഡ്, മദ്രാസിലെ മധുരജില്ലയിലെ മാട്ടുപ്പട്ടിയിൽവച്ച്, കൊച്ചി ദിവാൻ റ്റി. വിജയരാഘവാചാര്യർക്ക് 1920 ഏപ്രിൽ 3-ന് എഴുതിയ രഹസ്യകത്താണ് ആദ്യത്തേത്. ബോൾഷെവിക്ക് പ്രചാരണത്തിന് അനുകൂലമായ മണ്ണല്ല കൊച്ചിയുടേത് എന്ന് രാജാവ് കരുതുന്നതായി ദിവാന്റെ മറുപടിയിലുണ്ട്. മുഹമ്മദീയരിൽ രാജ്യദ്രോഹചിന്ത പടർത്താൻ ഖിലാഫത്ത് പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തെ ബോൾഷെവിക്ക് ചാരന്മാർ മുതലെടുക്കുമെന്ന മുന്നറിയിപ്പുണ്ട്, കൊച്ചി പോലീസ് സൂപ്രണ്ട് എം. എ. ചാക്കോവിനുള്ള (മൂന്നാം) കത്തിൽ. എന്നാൽ, കൊച്ചിയിലെ മുഹമ്മദീയർക്ക് ഖിലാഫത്ത് പ്രസ്ഥാനത്തോടു താല്പര്യമില്ലെന്നാണ് സൂപ്രണ്ട് മറുപടി നൽകുന്നത്.

- ചെറായി രാമദാസ്

D. O. Secret

Mattupatti P. O.
Via Periakulam
3. 4. 20

My dear Mr. Vijayaraghavacharya,

Bolshevik Menace

A short time ago I received a confidential communication from the Madras Government referring to the possible spread of Bolshevik propaganda in India, and to countermeasures which were being adopted; and was asked to bring the matter confidentially to His Highness' notice in order that his cooperation might be ... in any measures which it might be necessa[ry] to take lat[t]er or. As I was unable to see His Highness when I was last at Bolghatty, I am now writing to you ... ask you to bring the matter to his notice.

The following is a summary of the ... Actual proof of Bolshevik activity in India is small ... is wellknown that active steps are

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being taken outside India by various agencies hostile to the British Empire. It is known that Bolshevist agents have entered India and it is apprehended that they will seek to utilize force of discontent now existing and in particular will try to work upon the feelings of Muhammadans in regard to ... By way of countermeasures the Government of India proposes:-

- (1) to collect better information,
- (2) to prevent the ingress into India of Bol[shevist] Emissaries and to check the action of any who may have come in ...
- (3) to prevent the circulation of Bolshevik L..

Method proposed to carryout the above:-

(1) Two officers are being placed on s.. duty with the Government of India ... collect and coordinate informat.. as to the possible spread of Bols.. in India.

A Muhammadan Deputy Sup.. of Police is being placed on special .. in the Madras Presidency.

(2) Ingress by sea is already checked ... passport system. An attempt ... made to detect the ingress of suspe.. foreigners by watching land routes.

(3) A careful watch will be kept for Bolshevik Literature.

I have no doubt that His Highness will ... cooperate in any ... which may be taken hereafter to check the spread of Bolshevism. Meanwhile, pending the receipt ... instructions, it would be a ... you would, with His Highness' permiss.. ..struct your Superintendent of Poli.. ... keep a lookout for (1) suspicious ..reigners who might be Bolshevik ..gents/such are likely to be cleverly disgu.. ... Bolshevik Literature.

It is however not desirable that any instruction specifically referring to Bolshevism ..uld be issued to any other officers at present.

Yours sincerely
H. L. Braidwood

Vijayaraghavachary
Rao Bahadur, ...
Dewan of Cochin

(Copy)

D. O. Secret

Springfield P. O.
Nilgris,
10th April 1920

My dear Mr. Braidwood,

Bolshevik Menace

Your D. O. Secret dated 3-4-20 came to hand yesterday and I hastened to place it before His Highness. Under his directions I have issued orders to the Superintendent of Police to keep a sharp look out for

- (1) Suspicious foreigners who might be Bolshevik agents, and
- (2) Bolshevik literature.

2. His Highness asks me to assure you, and through you the British Government, that he will cordially co-operate in all measures that may be taken hereafter to check the spread of Bolshevism.

3. His Highness is inclined to think that Cochin is not a favourable soil for spread of Bolshevist propaganda but realises there are possibilities of mischief in the Khalifat Movement. He has issued orders that the Superintendent of Police should keep himself in close touch with the activities of the movement amongst Mahomedans in Cochin.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/- T. Vijayaragha[va]charya.

H. L. Braidwood Esr., I. C. S.
Br. Residency
Mattupatti P[.O.]
via Periakulam
Madura Dt.

SECRET

Springfield P. O.,
Nilgiris, 10th Apr. 20

Dear sir,

Bolshevik Menace

Please keep a sharp look out for

(1) suspicious foreigners who may be the Bolshevik agents arriving by rail and road into the State, and

(2) any Bolshevik tracts or pamphlets that might find their way into the State.

There is reason to believe that Bolshevik emissaries are trying to enter India at various points, and they are likely to take advantage of the Khalifat movement to spread sedition among Mahomedans.

The Darbar expects you and your successor to be in close and confidential touch with the activities of the Bolshevik movement in Cochin State, and desire to have a special report from you on the subject before you proceed on leave.

When you hand over charge to Mr. Vydhanatha Ayyar, please hand over to him this D. O. and instruct him as to what steps you have taken.

Yours sincerely,

M

M.R. Ry. M.A. Chakko Avl.

Secret

Trichur, 22nd April 20

Bolshevik Menace

[Dear] Sir,

Referring to your D O Communication dated 10th ... beg to inform you that in Cochin State there is no movement over the Khalifat movement. The Mahommedans both Cutchees and local seem to be rather indifferent and pessimistic over it. Only the Editor of the Mahommedan paper "Islam" seems to be somewhat enthusiastic. But his enthusiasm does not seem to be catching. I have instructed Mr. Rice, the B Dn Inspector, to be watchful about Thathamangalom which is the only place [w]here the Mahommedans live in a cluster, that is close to British [P]alghat from where any movement can spread to our State.

I am handing over the D O to Mr Vaidyanatha Iyer as [desired].

Yours very sincerely,

[sd/-]

[M.] R. Ry.,

Rao Bahadur T. Vijayaraghava Charya
Avl. M. A.,

Diwan of Cochin.

[D. O. Correspondence of the Diwan of Cochin, File No. 50, pp. 1 - 3,5,7,9 REGIONAL ARCHIVES, ERNAKULAM]



ഗവേഷണരംഗം

കേരളപഠനസംബന്ധമായ വിഷയങ്ങളിൽ വിവിധ സർവകലാശാലകളിൽനിന്നു ഡോക്ടർ ബിരുദം ലഭിക്കുന്നവരുടെ പ്രബന്ധങ്ങൾ പരിചയപ്പെടുത്തുന്ന പംക്തിയാണിത്. വിവിധ പഠനവകുപ്പുകളിൽനിന്നു കേരളപഠനവിഷയങ്ങളിൽ ബിരുദം ലഭിക്കുന്നവരുടെ പ്രബന്ധങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള കുറിപ്പുകൾ ക്ഷണിക്കുന്നു.

മലയാളനോവലിലെ കാല്പനികഘടകങ്ങൾ (2006)

എസ്. ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണപിള്ള

മാർഗ്ഗരശ്മി : ഡോ. സ്കറിയ സക്കറിയ

ഗവേഷണകേന്ദ്രം: മലയാളവിഭാഗം, സെന്റ് ബർക്കുമാൻസ് കോളേജ്, മഹാത്മാഗാന്ധി സർവകലാശാല

ഡോ. ഡി. ബഞ്ചമിൻ

കാല്പനികതയേയും മലയാളകവിതയിലെ കാല്പനികതയേയും കുറിച്ച് ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ ചില പഠനങ്ങൾ നടന്നിട്ടുണ്ടെങ്കിലും മലയാളനോവലിലെ കാല്പനികതയെക്കുറിച്ച് ആനുഷംഗികമായ ചില അന്വേഷണങ്ങളേ ഇതുവരെ നടന്നിട്ടുള്ളൂ. പ്രമുഖരായ നാലു നോവലിസ്റ്റുകളുടെ കൃതികളെ ആസ്പദമാക്കി ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണപിള്ള നടത്തിയ ഗവേഷണം ശ്രദ്ധേയമാകുന്നത് ഈ പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിലാണ്. കൃത്യമായും മലയാളനോവലിന്റെ വ്യത്യസ്തഘട്ടങ്ങളെ പ്രതിനിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്നവരാണ് സി. വി. യും ഉറുബുവും എം.ടി.യും രാജലക്ഷ്മിയും എന്നു പറഞ്ഞുകൂടാ. കാലനിഷ്ഠമെന്നതിനെക്കാൾ പഠനസൗകര്യം മുൻനിറുത്തിയുള്ള ഘട്ടവിഭജനമാണ് സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്.

ആദ്യത്തെ മൂന്നു നോവലിസ്റ്റുകളുടെയും സംഭാവനകളുടെ വൈപുല്യമോ ഗരിഷ്ഠതയോ രാജലക്ഷ്മിയുടെ സംഭാവനയ്ക്കുണ്ടെന്നു പറഞ്ഞുകൂടാ. വ്യത്യസ്തവും തനതുമായ ചില കാല്പനിക പ്രവണതകൾ ഉദാഹരിക്കുന്നു എന്നതുകൊണ്ടാണ് ഈ പഠനത്തിൽ രാജലക്ഷ്മിയും തിരഞ്ഞെടുക്കപ്പെട്ടത്.

മാർത്താണ്ഡവർമ്മ, ധർമ്മരാജ, രാമരാജബഹദൂർ, ഉമ്മാച്ചു, സുന്ദരികളും സുന്ദരന്മാരും, ഒരു വഴിയും കുറേ നിഴലുകളും, ഞാനെന്ന ഭാവം, നാലുകെട്ട്, അസുരവിത്ത്, കാലം, രണ്ടാമുഴം എന്നീ പന്ത്രണ്ടു നേവലുകളാണ് കാല്പനികതയെ മുൻനിർത്തി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യപ്പെടുന്നത്.

ആദ്യഅധ്യായം കാല്പനികതയുടെ സൈദ്ധാന്തികചർച്ചയാണ്. വളരെ സങ്കീർണ്ണമായ ഈ ഭാവുകതത്തിന്റെ സർവ്വവിപര്യായം, കാലാതീതത്വവും

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പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ വിശദമാക്കുന്നുണ്ട്. ഭാവനാത്മകത, പ്രക്ഷോഭവാസന, ആത്മനിഷ്ഠത, സ്വപ്നലോലുപത, പ്രകൃതിയിലേക്കു മടങ്ങിപ്പോകാനുള്ള വ്യഗ്രത, വിഷാദാത്മകത്വം, ഗൃഹാതുരത, പ്രണയം എന്നിവയെയാണ് പ്രധാന കാല്പനികപ്രവണതകളായി ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടുന്നത്. തുടർന്നുള്ള നാലധ്യായങ്ങളിലെ വിശകലനങ്ങൾ പ്രായേണ ഈ പ്രവണതകളെ മുൻനിർത്തിയാണ് നടത്തിയിട്ടുള്ളത്.

കഥാപാത്രസങ്കല്പനത്തെയും അന്തരീക്ഷസൃഷ്ടിയേയും അവലംബമാക്കിയാണ് വിശകലനം നടക്കുന്നത്. നാലു നോവലിസ്റ്റുകളിലും കാണുന്ന സമാനമായ കാല്പനിക പ്രവണതകളും, അവർ പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്ന വ്യതിരിക്തതകളും വിശദമാക്കുന്നതിൽ പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ ശ്രദ്ധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. എം. ടി.യുടെ നോവലുകളിലെ വിഷാദാത്മകത്വവും കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടെ ഉദാരമായ അഹംബോധവും സമർത്ഥമായി വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുന്ന പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ രാജലക്ഷ്മിയുടെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളിൽ വെളിപ്പെടുന്ന, ആത്മാംശത്തിന്റെ അമിതത്വം എടുത്തു കാട്ടുന്നുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ ഉറുബിന്റെ കഥാപാത്രങ്ങളുടേതിലേക്കു തീക്ഷ്ണമായ അന്തസ്സം ഘർഷണങ്ങളെ കുറച്ചുകൂടി ആഴത്തിൽ അപഗ്രഥിക്കാമായിരുന്നു. ഉമ്മാച്ചുവുമായനും, ശാന്തയും ഇരുമ്പൻ ഗോവിന്ദൻനായരുമൊക്കെ അതിനുള്ള സാധ്യതയൊരുക്കുന്നുണ്ടല്ലോ.

ആമുഖത്തിൽ വിഷയത്തിന്റെ വ്യാപ്തിയും ഇതുവരെ നടന്ന പഠനങ്ങളുടെ സ്വഭാവവും സ്വീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന രീതിശാസ്ത്രവും സമീപനത്തിനു സംഭവിക്കാവുന്ന പരിമിതികളും ചർച്ച ചെയ്തിട്ടുണ്ട്. സൈദ്ധാന്തികചർച്ചയും അധ്യായങ്ങളിലെ വിശകലനങ്ങളും തമ്മിലും, അധ്യായങ്ങളും ഉപസംഹാരവും തമ്മിലും പുലർത്തുന്ന ജൈവബന്ധം രീതിശാസ്ത്രപരമായി ഈ പ്രബന്ധത്തിന്റെ മികവാണ്. അടിക്കുറിപ്പുകളും ഗ്രന്ഥസൂചിയും തയ്യാറാക്കുന്നതിൽ ശാസ്ത്രീയമായ സൂക്ഷ്മത പാലിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ഗവേഷണപ്രബന്ധരചന, അതു സാഹിത്യപ്രശ്നങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചായാലും കാര്യമാത്രപ്രസക്തവും പരിനിഷ്ഠിതവുമായ ഭാഷയിലാവണം. എസ്. ഗോപാലകൃഷ്ണപിള്ള പലപ്പോഴും ഈ നിബന്ധന പാലിക്കുന്നില്ല. ഒട്ടോരോ വേശം കലർന്ന ഭാഷ വാചാലതയിലേക്കും ബിംബകല്പനകൾ അവിഷ്കരണത്തിലേക്കും നയിക്കുന്ന സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ വിരളമല്ല.

ദർശനത്തിന്റെയും ശൈലിയുടെയും വികാസപരിണാമങ്ങൾ സച്ചിദാനന്ദൻ കവിതകളിൽ (2005)

പി. സി. സലീം

മാർഗ്ഗരശ്മി : ഡോ. സി. സ്റ്റീഫൻ

ഗവേഷണകേന്ദ്രം: യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റി ലൈബ്രറി, കേരള സർവകലാശാല

ഡോ. ഡി. ബഞ്ചമിൻ

സച്ചിദാനന്ദൻ കവിതയിലെ ദർശനത്തിനും ശൈലിക്കും സംഭവിച്ച വികാസപരിണാമങ്ങൾ നിർമ്മാർണ്യം ചെയ്യാനാണ്. ഈ ഗവേഷണപ്രബന്ധത്തിൽ ശ്രമിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്.

സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ കാവ്യലോകം അത്യന്തം വൈചിത്ര്യപൂർണ്ണമാണ്. പ്രമേയവൈവിധ്യവും രചനാവൈചിത്ര്യവും ധാരാളമുണ്ട്. ഒട്ടേറെ സാധീന

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

തകൾക്കു വിധേയമായ ഒരു കവിവൃക്തിത്വമാണ് സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റേത്. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ ദർശനത്തിന്റെയും ശൈലിയുടെയും വികാസപരിണാമം കണ്ടെത്തുക ശ്രമകരമാണ്. ഗൗരവപൂർണ്ണവും സങ്കീർണ്ണവുമായ പ്രബന്ധവിഷയം ധാരാളം സാധ്യതകളും ഉള്ളതാണെന്നു പറയാം.

ദർശനവും ശൈലിയും, കാല്പനികതയും സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ കവിതകളും, വിപ്ലവകവിതകളും വിവർത്തനങ്ങളും, പാരമ്പര്യവും തനതുസംസ്കാരമുദ്രകളും, ഉപസംഹാരം എന്നിങ്ങനെ ആറധ്യായങ്ങളായി പ്രബന്ധം സംവിധാനം ചെയ്തിരിക്കുന്നു.

ദർശനം, ശൈലി എന്നിവയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള സൈദ്ധാന്തികമായ വിശകലനമാണ് ഒന്നാമധ്യായം. ജീവിതവീക്ഷണവും ജീവിതദർശനവും തമ്മിലുള്ള വ്യത്യാസം ചർച്ചചെയ്യാനും ജീവിതദർശനത്തിന് തത്ത്വചിന്തയോടുള്ള അടുപ്പം വ്യക്തമാക്കാനും ഈ അധ്യായത്തിൽ പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ യത്നിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. 'എഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ സ്വത്വത്തിന്റെ ആത്മനിഷ്ഠമായ വിന്യസനമാണ് ദർശന'മെന്ന ലളിതമായ സങ്കല്പനത്തിലാണ് ദർശനത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ചർച്ച എത്തിച്ചേരുന്നത്. ശൈലിയെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള ആധുനികസങ്കല്പങ്ങൾ പരാമർശിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെങ്കിലും 'ഒരേഴുത്തുകാരന്റെ തനതായ സവിശേഷതകളുടെ ആകെത്തുകയും ഭാഷാപരമായ അടിസ്ഥാനസ്വഭാവങ്ങളിൽനിന്നുള്ള വ്യതിചലനവുമാണ് ശൈലി' എന്ന പ്രഹരതമായ ധാരണയിൽത്തന്നെ പ്രബന്ധസ്രോതസ്സുകൾ തേടാനുള്ള വെമ്പൽ ശക്തമാകുന്നു. 2000 വരെ എഴുതിയ കവിതകളെ മുൻനിറുത്തിയുള്ള ഈ അപഗ്രഥനത്തിൽനിന്നു വെളിപ്പെട്ട പ്രധാനകാര്യങ്ങൾ ഉപസംഹാരത്തിൽ സംക്ഷേപിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. വസ്തുതാസംഭരണത്തിലും വിശകലനത്തിലും ഗവേഷകൻ വേണ്ട സൂക്ഷ്മത പാലിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഭാവുകത്വപരിണാമം വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുമ്പോൾ പ്രസക്തമായ വിദ്യാവിഭാഗങ്ങളെയൊക്കെ പ്രയോജനപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുമുണ്ട്.

സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ കാവ്യജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ആരംഭത്തിൽത്തന്നെ ആധുനികതയെ നിർണ്ണയിച്ച അസ്തിത്വവാദത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനം പ്രകടമാണ്. പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ കാല്പനികതയുടെ ഘട്ടം എന്നു വിശേഷിപ്പിക്കുന്ന കാലത്താണ് സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ ആത്മഗീതം പുറത്തുവരുന്നത്. അസ്തിത്വവാദത്തിന്റെ സ്വാധീനം ഇത്രമാത്രം പ്രഗാഢമായി മലയാളത്തിലെ മറ്റൊരു കാര്യത്തിലും കാണുകയില്ല. ഈ പുസ്തകം കുറച്ചുകൂടി ഗൗരവപൂർവ്വം പരാമർശിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ടതായിരുന്നു. നവീനകവിതയുടെ ആശയപശ്ചാത്തലം നിർണ്ണയിച്ചതിൽ സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ പ്രബന്ധങ്ങൾ വഹിച്ച പങ്ക് വളരെ വലുതാണ്. അദ്ദേഹം തന്നെ പ്രസാധനം ചെയ്ത് 'ഹരിശ്രീ'യ്ക്ക് അദ്ദേഹമെഴുതിയ 'അവതാരിക' നവീനഭാവുകത്വം പാരമ്പര്യത്തെ എങ്ങനെ കാണുന്നു എന്നു വ്യക്തമാക്കുന്നതാണ്. എൺപതുകൾക്കു ശേഷം സച്ചിദാനന്ദൻ നടത്തുന്ന പാരമ്പ്രാന്വേഷണം ഇതുമായിചേർത്തു വായിക്കേണ്ടതായിരുന്നു.

ഭൂതകാലരതിയോടെ പാരമ്പര്യത്തിന്റെ വേരുകൾ തേടുന്നത് ശക്തമായ ഒരു കാല്പനിക പ്രവണതയല്ലേ എന്ന ചോദ്യവും അവശേഷിക്കുന്നു.

സച്ചിദാനന്ദന്റെ കാവ്യജീവിതത്തിൽ രൂപംകൊണ്ട പരിണാമം സാമാന്യമായി അടയാളപ്പെടുത്താൻ പ്രബന്ധകാരൻ സാധിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ കുറിച്ചുകൾ തയാറാക്കുന്നതിലും, ഗ്രന്ഥസൂചി സംവിധാനം ചെയ്യുന്നതിലും രീതിശാസ്ത്രത്തെ നിഷ്കർഷയോടെ പിന്തുടർന്നിട്ടില്ല.പൊതുവേ നിലവാരമുള്ളതാണീ പ്രബന്ധം. പക്ഷേ ഭാഷയുടെ കാര്യത്തിൽ കുറച്ചുകൂടി സൂക്ഷ്മത പാലിക്കേണ്ടിയിരുന്നു. വാചാലതയും പ്രയോഗകാലുഷ്യങ്ങളും വാദമുഖങ്ങളെ അവിശദമാക്കുന്ന സന്ദർഭങ്ങൾ കുറവല്ല. ▲

COMPLEMENTING THE BOOKS

പുസ്തകപുരണം

കേരളപഠനസംബന്ധമായ പുതിയ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചു വായനക്കാരോ ഗ്രന്ഥകർത്താക്കളോ എഴുതുന്ന പുരണകുറിപ്പുകൾ ഈ പംക്തിയിലേക്കു ക്ഷണിക്കുന്നു.

- പത്രാധിപർ

P.M. Jussay *The Jews of Kerala*, General Editor Dr K J John, Head of the Dept of History, University of Calicut. Published by Publication Division University of Calicut. Price Rs.75/-

The Jews of Kerala

Ophira Gamliel

The publication of Jussay's papers, so far scattered around various magazines and books, is indeed a blessing for anybody engaged in the study of Kerala Jews. This small book is very informative, and at the same time full of loving appreciation of a Keralite towards a small, and almost extinct, community of fellow Keralites, whose peculiar faith and customs were almost forgotten in Kerala. Out of a sense of doing historical justice, Jussay got engaged in studying and documenting different aspects related to Jews he happened to know from his hometown, Chennamangalam. He vividly recollects and describes how his colleagues at Calicut university were attempting a special publication of articles, each describing the community of the specific writer – Muslim, Ezhavas, Christians Nairs, and so forth – so that the total sum of articles would be descriptive of the rich diversity of communities in Kerala. Jussay was the only one who had suggested writing about a community that was not represented by either of the participants, and to which he himself did not belong. He protested that his colleagues left out one community, the Jews. Eventually, Jussay was the only one to have accomplished the task, and his article was published in *Mathrubhoomi*, 22.1.1967 (pp. 12-13). It seems

TAPASAM, January 2006

താപസം 2006 ജനുവരി

to me that had this article been also re-published among the collection of English articles in this book, it would have been a great service for anybody interested in the heritage of Kerala Jews. The reason for ignoring it is understandable; it is in Malayalam, inaccessible to foreign scholars. However, the fresh and enthusiastic outlook that must have been guiding Jussay's writing in this article is indispensable, and it is an effort worthwhile taking on part of a foreign scholar to get this article translated or read.

The reader is introduced to the subject of the book through Jussay's loving and emotional eyes as presented in the foreword. Taking up the study of the Jews of Kerala seems to have been an adventurous task for Jussay, and I do think also for many of us who took up research in this peculiar subject. Jussay had spent many hours conversing with Jews from his hometown, Chennamangalam, and from other Jewish neighborhoods in and around Cochi. He had listened to their stories, tried to follow their mysterious ancient route of arrival to the Malabar coast (18-19) and the first settlements they have formed sometime before the tenth century (19-23), when they received the famous copper plates grant (23-27, 73). He watches his fellow countrymen with empathy and with a sincere attempt to understand the notions and currents at the root of their social divergence and inner struggles (26-27, 50-54). In that attempt Jussay is also attentive to conflicting voices narrating the history of the Jewish community (30-32).

Being a Malayali Jussay has a great advantage over his colleagues, by and large foreigners, studying the Jewish community in Kerala. Malayalam culture, literature and language are readily accessible to him, and he uses it time and again in his attempts at analyzing data. Thus he turns to traditions of Christians (22, 30, 37-40, 80), and Jains (22, 65, 80), to literary heritage in Tamil and in Malayalam, such as the *Chilappathikaram* (35, 80) and the *Kokasandesham* (21, fn. 35), to the Christian drama *Chavittu Natakam* (38) and the ballad *Sarah Vijayam* (37), and most important to the Jewish Malayalam literary heritage of folksongs, which he compares with the Canaanite Christians Malayalam folksongs (118-128).

Though Jussay was not the first to have read and commented on the Jewish Malayalam folksongs, he was the first to have related to them out of their own merit. The first writer who had brought to light their existence was Simon (1947). Unfortunately Simon was noting them in the purpose of scoring more points in favor of his community in the four centuries old battle between Malabari and Paradeshi Jews over Jewish prestige and pedigree, so his treatment of the songs was neither literary nor linguistic. Simon was actually preceded by T. K. Joseph in an attempt to publish the songs and study them, but the latter eventually dropped his

attempt. It was not until Jussay became interested in the history and heritage of Kerala Jews that the study of these songs was taken up again. Jussay was sensitive enough to have read some of these songs for their literary and linguistic value. He emphatically states at the conclusion of appendix V in his book: "If a laymen could glean so much from a causal survey of the songs, how much more cannot an expert gather by delving deep into them and making a systematic study of them?" (116-117).

Jussay was not aware of the songs being written down in notebooks until he was approached by foreign scholars (13). Thus he was "snatched" by Shirley Isenberg and Barbara Johnson for a deeper study of the songs. The three had conducted an extensive fieldwork in a joint effort to salvage out of oblivion texts (as written down in notebooks) and tunes (as recorded with women who could still remember them), cataloguing and indexing these songs. With Johnson's relentless motivation to bring the songs into the awareness of Jewish scholars, Jussay had received a grant from a Jewish foundation in the USA to continue his research in Israel. He was cordially accepted as a research scholar in the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem, which allowed him to further study the songs and intermingle with other Jewish scholars. The Ben-Zvi institute further published in Hebrew Jussay's article analyzing in detail "The song of Evarayi" (Jussay, 1982), which appears also in this book as appendix III. Jussay's work in Israel had ignited the imagination of local scholars too, and provoked Shalva Weil into publishing an article about the Jewish community in Kerala (1986). Jussay and his research topic were received with such enthusiasm, that when his funds had been exhausted after a three months stay in Jerusalem, it was the then president of Israel, Yitzhak Navon (well known for his attachment to the study and preservation of oriental Jewish culture and heritage), that had come up with further financial support, and out of his own pocket, to have Jussay stay for three more months (13).

My own research topic is the Jewish Malayalam folksongs, and as I was reading Jussay's papers collected in this book, I had the feeling that Jussay was aware of an important aspect of these songs, that was somehow neglected by later scholars who were dealing with these songs. It seems that by and large the songs were **wedding** songs, albeit the great varieties of themes and styles involved in them. Thus Jussay refers in passing to the songs for clarifying this or that idea in connection to the Kerala Jews, and denotes them here as "wedding songs", there as "folk songs" and next as "ancient Malayalam songs" (20-21). From that much of reading, I realized that for Jussay, at least in the initial stages of his research, "wedding", "folk" and "ancient Malayalam" were synonymous attributives he had applied to the songs. Johnson, in a recent article, states that "[m]ore than fifty songs are associated with weddings, many of them performed for specific events during the elaborate sequence of

marriage rituals, which used to last for two weeks” (Johnson, 2005:214). According to the updated index of the songs there are 257 songs listed in five thematic categories, one of them is the category of “occasions” (wedding, pre-wedding and post-wedding ceremonies, circumcision etc. songs). Yet, as Johnson acknowledges, about a fifth of the whole corpus is composed of songs designed for wedding rituals alone. At the moment, it is hard to tell how many more songs have been sung during the two weeks wedding ceremonies, as many of these songs are indexed according to the thematic index, which usually does not take into consideration the performative context of the songs. From the little work that I have been doing during the past few months I have noticed that many songs indexed as Biblical are in fact sung during the *Kāppū Rātri* pre-wedding ritual (III-52, 55, 83, 87, 48). There is even one historical song, I-17 (see Zacharia 2005:54-55; Gamliel, 2005: 51-52), which was sung for the *Kāppū Rātri* too according to notebook B9. Approximately half of this notebook is occupied with songs destined for the different wedding rituals, albeit their varying thematic concerns. I therefore suspect that many other songs dealing with a variety of themes might have been originally performed during this or that of the wedding festivities. So far I have seen only two notebooks, namely B3 and B29, which have **thematic** titles for the songs (in Hebrew and in Malayalam). It is indeed interesting to guess the reason behind this thematic concern, for it seems to be exceptional, as otherwise the songs in the notebooks have either first-word, performative (f.i. *cēmbū keṛṛumboḷ cēllunnatū*), or generic (f.i. *kuṛukkan*, *kaṭāppu*) titles, or otherwise no titles at all. That the corpus as a whole has wedding songs for its roots and trunk is of course merely a hunch (and rather wild too), yet I do believe that those who read the songs should seriously take this possibility into consideration.

Jussay had laid the foundation stone for a scholarly treatment of the songs. When he relates to the songs he often takes into consideration their inherent connection to ritual activities, especially those related to the wedding ceremonies. Thus, when he describes the elaborate ceremonies connected with the wedding he makes it a point to refer also to Malayalam songs sung at the different occasions (96-98). Some of the songs he mentions might be traced through the first words Jussay mentions. However, many of the songs, which he mentions in passing, might only be recognized after a thorough reading of the whole corpus, and it is indeed a pity that their first-word title or alternately their index number is not given in his essay.

In the essay dedicated to the songs (105-117) the reader studying the songs is again left with only clues to enable a guess work determining which song is being discussed. Jussay does give numbers to the

songs, which he describes as “historical”. Assuming he was relating to songs from the “historical” section of the index, I turned to it (index I), and tried to locate the songs under discussion. That was a futile effort, for the result was finding songs which have nothing to do with the songs in the discussion (f.i. the “Song of Evarayi” is numbered as 7, while in the index it is numbered I-12). This confusion might be due to changes in the index during the course of time since this essay has been written. I do hope that no more changes are to be done in the index, lest future scholars get confused as I did.

Jussay was the first to come up with a **generic** distinction in describing the songs (107). The misleading thematic division was inherited by Jussay, Johnson and Isenberg, from the first person to have noticed the songs and to have published them, namely Simon (Johnson, 1975:121). It is then on par of Jussay’s sensitivity to literature and culture that enabled him to pay attention to these important details, and write a number of essays dealing with these songs out of their own merit (appendices III, V and VI).

The last article in the book is also focused on the songs, this time in order to conduct an intertextual study of the songs, again an enterprise, which Jussay was the first to have undertaken up. In this essay (appendix VI) Jussay compares the Jewish songs with songs collected from the Canaanite Christian community. His list of words is very useful, and it is indeed a pity that it never grew into a mature, fully developed study. In fact, since Jussay had studied these songs until the yoking of Scaria Zacharia into the “project” (as some of the people involved affectionately term the study of the Jewish Malayalam folk songs), there was nobody attempting a research of that sort in regard of the songs. The comparison of the Jewish songs with the Canaanite songs is indeed inspiring and informative. However, there seem to be many other cultural and linguistic elements expressed in the songs that call for comparison with other literary corpuses of Kerala. Thus for example there is the possibility of intertextual connections with Muslim songs (Zacharia, 2005:193).

From my own little experience with reading the songs, I can testify for the recurring of lexemes, which Gundert (1872) defines as specifically Muslim (*Mappiḷḷa*), such as *nāyan* and *ōppana*. In a seminar held in Sreeshankaracharya University of Sanskrit previous to the publication of *Kārkuḷali* (Zacharia, 2005), students came up with many other suggestions for comparing the Jewish songs with other materials (Gamliel, 2005: 217 fn. 161 and 222 fn. 171). Songs II-16, and II-16a (Zacharia 2005: 117-119; Gamliel, 2005:121-125) start with formulaic lines that seem to be intertextually connected with a *torraṁ pāṭṭū* from North Malabar. See the following lines in II-16:

pōlika pōliyēṭā kalyāṇa-pantalil
tān pōlika poyi pōlika
ciriyantara tān pōlika
ēṇṇattil pōlikēṭō manassil pōlikkēṭa
manasotē maṇavālan makka pōlikēṭō
manasotē maṇavāṭṭi makka pōlikēṭā...

and compare with the following verses from the *uccitṭattoṛṛam* (Viṣṇunambutiri, 1998:182) and from the *pōṭṭan torṛam* respectively:

pōlika pōlika daivame pōlika daivame
daivam pōlika daivame tirunāl pōlika
āl pōlika daivame ahaṃpaṭi pōlika
āloṭ iṭava-janma-bhūmi pōlika daivame
etta-kkiṇarū mulla-pantal pōlika daivame
nāṭaka-śāla naṭaya-raṇṇū pōlika daivame...
āti pōlika mannil antam pōlika
bhūmi pōlika maṇi-puṣpaṃ pōlika
pantal pōlika maṇittaṛayam pōlika...

Note that it is not only the word *pōlika* that is common to the *torṛam pāṭṭu* and the Jewish *pāṭṭu*, but also the word *pantal*. See also the recurring closing lines of many of the Jewish Malayalam folksongs, such as I-17, III-14, III-14a, III-8, III-72, III-5, II-60, II-22 and II-4 (Zacharia, 2005:55, 57, 61, 73, 76, 79, 102, 103, 110 respectively; Gamliel, 2005:52, 55, 61, 76, 79, 83, 104, 105, 113). I shall give here for example just one, and the reader is referred to the references given above for the variations on these lines:

vāḷuka vāḷuka eppoḷum vāḷuka
eṛṛammāyi vāḷunna tamburān tān anna.

And compare with the opening lines of *uṛaccil-ttorṛam* (Viṣṇu nambutiri, 1998:163):

vāḷka vāḷka daivame
devam vāḷka daivame

and with the interesting combination of both formulas in the *kāṭṭu-maṭanta-ttorṛam* (op. cit. 268):

vāyka vāyka¹ daivame vāyka daivame
katticca kaiviḷakkū pōlika daivame...

No doubt, the comparative intertextual study conducted by Jussay was a great service to anybody in the field. However, it seems to have been taken to support an extreme position by some scholars, arguing for a

“symmetrical pattern” between Kerala Jews and their fellow countrymen the Canaanite Christians (Weil, 1986). Such a neat cultural symmetrical pattern is highly unlikely in a “kaleidoscopic” society, such as Kerala’s, where cultural elements travel freely between the many communities, reflecting and reflected in each other, ever turning round and round to form new colorful and multi-shaped cultural phenomena.

There was a disturbing question that was irritating me as I was reading the book. I have not been disciplined in the field of history, and it was never my interest to sift out of any kind of data any facts about days long past. I have read in quite a few studies that the Jewish community as a whole had its origins in Kodungallur (also referred to as Shingly). Kodungallur is accepted as the seat of a Jewish “kingdom”, having Joseph Rabban, the beneficiary of the famous copper plates, as its “king”.² However, Jussay lists some more possibilities, such as Palur, Pulloot, Madai, Maliankara (20) and Chennamangalam (33). My curiosity has risen, and I went back to some studies, which I had already read, this time having this question in mind – could it be that the so called history of the Kerala Jews originating in Kodungallur (also called Cranganore) is but one of several other possibilities?

Perhaps the richest reliable source for providing other origin myths of the community is Johnson (1975). Thus for example she lists some sources for giving Calicut and Paloor as possible places of origin, a tradition she associates with the Malabari Jews (60-61). When Jussay writes about the song of Evarayi, he seems to be suggesting at least one more possibility for historical Jewish origin in Kerala: “But Paloor does not frequently appear in the legends and songs probably because it was eclipsed by the dazzling glory of the city of many names, Cranganore, which was the “first emporium of India” [...]. Still Paloor appears in a couple of Jewish songs, and where it does appear is significant. [...] Only a few lines of another song mentioning Paloor are remembered by an elderly woman who now lives in Israel. This song is about Paliath Achan, the feudal lord of Chennamangalam where there was a colony of Jews” (80-81). It might prove beneficial to reconsider the theory of one place of origin, namely Kodungallur, of the Kerala Jews, and to keep in mind while studying their history or their literary heritage that the Jewish community in Kerala might have had its first settlements in more than one place. It is also interesting to examine how and why the Kodungallur history became the most dominant and widely accepted.

There is yet another interesting source for dealing with the origin of Jews in Kerala in Walerstein (1987). Though it is not as comprehensive and exhaustive as that of Johnson in terms of giving out and listing of data and sources, Walerstein does pose some important questions about the tradition that regards one singular source for the Jewish

community in Kerala and connects it with Kodungallur and with the copper plates grant. She even dares asking whether Joseph Rabban, the beneficiary of the grant was a Jew at all, and raising doubts concerning the exact nature of the group which received the decree of rights (Walerstein, 1987:33). Walerstein further comes up with the interesting statement that many of the elder Malabari women, whom she interviewed, never even heard of Joseph Rabban (124-125; Johnson, 1986:167). I think that such skepticism is indeed in place, for it might bring out more possibilities for understanding the origin of the community and its history.

Jussay is indeed interested in multiple historical narratives, and so when he writes of the Jewish Malayalam folk songs, he takes care to cite also origin myths contra to the Kodungallur story (109-111). This interest of his might have been the ground of elaborating on "The Song of Evarayi" (1-12), writing a detailed essay, with translation and word etymologies (77-92). This article is definitely one of his best studies, and it seems to have given a proper stage for opening up new directions for the study of historical narratives within the Jews of Kerala.

Reading in Jussay's collected papers I have noticed a recurring numerical item, often coming up in other scholars' essays. That is the number "seventy-two", and as it comes up again and again in different contexts, it seems to be a typological number, a matter for folklorist investigation rather than historical. Thus there are seventy two privileges listed in the copper plates (24; Narayanan, 1972:81; 2005:10; Johnson, 1975: 20), seventy two kings in the line of Joseph Rabban (Johnson, 1975:83, who also suggests taking this number as mythical), seventy two families in the entourage of Thomas of Cana upon his arrival to the Malabar coast (118; Weil, 1986:182, 191, who notes this number as a "symmetrical" historical detail common to both Jews and Canaanite Christians), and in a tradition altogether different, there is a repertoire of seventy two acts, from which a performer might select for a Kutiyattam play (Nair, 1971:60). As the latter tradition is both as ancient and as Keralite as the copper plates, it seems reasonable to assume that this typological number is peculiar to Kerala culture. I do not think that this number as such has any peculiar meaning in the Jewish tradition, though seventy does have – seventy facets of the Torah, seventy elders in the Sanhedrin counsel, and so forth.

In spite of its great merits, there are a few misleading issues in Jussay's book. One of them is the importance given to a source called "The Diary of David Reuveni" (25, 29, 63). This is a 16th century diary, written in awkward Hebrew by a man who came from the East to offer the pope in Rome an alliance between Jews in his land and Christians in Europe against Muslims. Reuveni's offers were not taken seriously, and he was turned down. He started going around preaching to people, got

arrested by the inquisition and died lonely and dejected in a prison in Portugal. He is described as small, dark and charismatic, and in his diary, he does mention a kingdom of Jews ruled by a Jewish king in Shingly. Jussay derives this name from Changala Azhi, and identifies it as Kodungallur (62, 66). Reuveni claims he comes from "*Habor*", normally taken by scholars to be a place in the Arab peninsula (Walerstein, 1987:36). However, some have inferred that Reuveni was of Indian origin (69, fn. 26; Johnson, 1975:63), regardless of the latter's own statement to have come from a place named "*Habor*". As I have not fully read Reuveni's diary with attention and care, neither the source Jussay cites, I can not at the moment pass any judgment, except for raising my doubts. Neither can I altogether rule out the possibility that Reuveni was indeed a Keralite Jew. It does however seem a bit hasty to conclude that Reuveni was of the family of Joseph Rabban, and establish an etymological connection between Rabban and Reuveni (63). That might be plausible for a Malayalam speaker, but not for a Hebrew speaker.

Another misleading data analysis is in regard to a small Hebrew poem, cited in many other sources, and attributed to Ran, initials for Rabenu Nissim, a famous Hebrew poet from Barcelona (25, 63). The poem is cited also by other scholars in order to show the ancient ties of Kerala Jewry with the "external" Jewish world (Koder, 1986:128, 140 fn. 40; Johnson, 1975:103-106, who expresses doubts regarding the identification of the composer of this song with the famous Ran). The poem appears in the anthology "Areshet Sfateynu" (1980) as part of the liturgy preceding the *kadiš* prayer during "*šabath be šalah*" (see Johnson, op. cit., for speculations in regard of the liturgical function of this poem). The editor marks it as bearing the acrostic "Nissim". There are many works attributed to the famous Ran, and there are and were many Jews called "Nissim". The song might have been composed by one Nissim, who might or might not have come from Spain to Kerala, but it is indeed highly unlikely that the famous Ran had composed this song. For one thing, as Johnson notes, the Ran has never left Spain (Johnson, 1975:104). And moreover, the poetic qualities of the poem do not pass the test of a skilled Hebrew poetry connoisseur to have it attributed to such an eminent poet and scholar as Ran (Shulamit Elizur, personal communication).

But perhaps the greatest confusion in the book concerns the social divisions among the Kerala Jews (51 and elsewhere in the book). According to Jussay, there is a dichotomy between *Meyuhasim* and *Meshuhrarim*, which he equates with White and Black, rich and poor, Paradeshi and Malabari, respectively. The picture is not that simple, neither is there any clear cut dichotomy. Much has been written about the social divisions among the Kerala Jews, and the issue has sparked many quarrels, debates, and interference of "external" authorities, Jews and

non-Jews alike. The most comprehensive account of these caste-like divisions is Mandelbaum (1986), and the issue is tackled also by Johnson (1975:2-3, 24-25, 80-83) and Walerstein (1987:3-4). Let me just briefly set the terminology straight. There are two major groups among the Jews of Kerala, Paradeshis and Malabaris (elsewhere referred to as “White” and “Black” Jews respectively, though no group is exclusively “white”, “black” or “brown”). Each group is further divided into sub-groups. The “*meshuhrarim*”, “freed (slaves)” are a sub-group among the Paradeshis. The Malabaris are divided into two sub-groups, the “*meyuhasim*”, i.e. those of pedigree, and the “non-*meyuhasim*”, those lacking of pedigree. The majority of Kerala Jews were Malabaris, and as far as I am aware of they were not exclusively poor in comparison to the Paradeshis, neither were all Paradeshis rich so as to conclude that these divisions were the outcome of an age long socio-economical conditions.

This issue was taken up by scholars with great interest. As many of the researchers are Jews, it had ignited their imagination and enthusiasm in attempting to trek down the “roots” of Kerala Jews. In 1937 the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal published an article on “The Racial Affinities of the Jews of Cochin”. The author, Eileen Macfarlane, resorted to “scientific” “medical” methods in her pursuit after answers to “origin” questions. Such methods might have been popular among anthropologists at those times, before the Nazis abused science to establish “pure Aryan” identity. Thus, blood was drawn out of Paradeshis and Malabaris, to be examined for its type, and statistically analyzed (Mandelbaum, 1986:89). I also happen to know of a research from the early sixties comparing the teeth of Cochins (i.e. Kerala Jews) with those of Yemenites (perhaps in an attempt to prove, or otherwise refute, the “Yemenite origins” of Malabari Jews?). I have not been able to see neither studies with my own eyes, however I find it somewhat astonishing that hardly one decade after the Nazis were using such dubious “scientific” methods in establishing their racial ideologies, Jews are following this line of “research”, while probing into inter-communal struggles and disputes in a far off Jewish community on the Malabar Coast.

The initiative to have Jussay’s essays collected and republished in one book is a good and beneficent one. It is a pity that it was done in a somewhat hasty manner, though the sense of urgency that has led the editor to execute the work in such a short time is definitely understandable. As a result of this urgency, some important editorial matters have been neglected. Had the problem been typoids alone it might have been overlooked. The problem becomes more acute when embarrassing mistakes are left out and printed, such as the unfortunate confusion of Chayim Rabin’s name with the first word of the title of his book “Loan Word Evidence in Biblical Hebrew for Trade between Tamil Nadu and Palestine in

the First Millennium B.C.”. The Late Hebrew University linguist and Bible expert turned out as Rabin C. Loan in this book. Another problem is in leaving out notes and data in the footnotes, which seem absurd to be included in a Kerala publication, such as the lengthy note explaining what is Malayalam (89). It would have been good to spend some time in preparing a bibliography and a small index. In spite of these shortcomings, the book is indeed a must for anybody interested in the rich heritage of Kerala Jews.

Notes :

- ¹ <vāḷuka
- ² For the nature of such “kingdoms” in Kerala of the first millenia, see Narayanan, 2005:11-12.

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The Author(ity) of Experience: Nalini Jameela and the Politics of Autobiography

Josy Joseph

“The genre of women’s autobiography should be understood as a strategic necessity at a particular time, rather than an end in itself.”

Diane Elam, *Feminism and Deconstruction*

“The ‘private life’ is nothing but that zone of space, of time, where I am not an image, an object. It is my *political* right to be a subject which I must protect.”

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

This paper attempts to look at the way Nalini Jameela’s book, *Autobiography of a Sex Worker* problematises conventional notions of authorship, the genre of autobiography, the profession of prostitution, as well as the generalisations of classical feminism.

I

It is interesting to look at the genre and history of autobiography and see how far Nalini Jameela’s work fits into its formal scheme. Though Autobiography emerged as a distinct literary genre only since the eighteenth century, the form was recognised quite earlier and St Augustine’s *Confessions* (400AD) is generally regarded as the starting point of this kind of writing in the Western tradition. By its very nature, the genre brings into debate such concepts as selfhood, authorship, representation, historicity, and literariness. If we look at all the early models, as well as the majority of texts written till date, we find that there is a consensus among the reading public regarding the eligibility of a subject to represent itself. Autobiographies are written by people who

have some claims to greatness, or some reason for others to be interested in their lives. Among autobiographical texts, a distinction is usually made between serious books and popular ones. Serious autobiographies are written by great people, while popular (or pulp) autobiographies are written by celebrities such as film stars and sports personalities.

Traditionally, the serious work is favoured and canon construction, as usual, takes place only with and among a certain selection of texts. A reviewer writing in 1829 in *Blackwoods Magazine* talked about ‘a legitimate autobiographical class’ which excluded the ‘vulgar’ who try to ‘excite prurient curiosity that may command a sale’. Autobiography should rather belong to people of ‘lofty reputation’ or people who have something of ‘historical importance’ to say (Marcus 31-2). Literary distinctions became class distinctions and by the nineteenth century, a hierarchy was established not only among the subjects but even among forms of autobiographical writing (these include memoirs, journals, diaries, letters, and testaments) with the full ‘autobiography’ occupying the highest position.

It was distinguished from the other forms by the kind of self-reflection its ‘subjects’ displayed. In other words, autobiographies were written only by people capable of self-reflection, while anybody could attempt any of the other forms. The classical autobiography guaranteed the ‘identity between the author, the narrator, and the protagonist’ (Lejeune 193). Also, the ‘intention’ of the author became crucial in providing the link between the three, guaranteeing the ‘truth’ of writing. For instance, Roy Pascal asserts that the validity of autobiography depends on the ‘seriousness of the author, the seriousness of his personality, and his intention in writing’ (Pascal 60). Moreover, in classical autobiography, the whole narrative centres on a romanticised notion of the self which attributes each individual a selfhood that is both unified and unique. And this notion of the selfhood often borders on the metaphysical. For instance, according to James Olney, ‘the explanation for the special appeal of autobiography...is a fascination with the self and its profound, its endless mysteries’ (Olney 23).

A related marker was the ‘developmental narrative’ inbuilt in a traditional autobiography. This presupposes the notion of life-fulfilment and both time and personality are controlled by the narrative to suit a set purpose or objective. The ‘bildungsroman’ motif is inseparable in the narrative pattern of most autobiographical texts. This developmental version of the self that is socially and historically specific also provides a way of interpreting the history of the genre as well. All autobiography should tend towards a goal—the fulfilment of the achieved version of

itself (Anderson 9). This raises problems not only about the definition of autobiography as a genre, but also what Derrida calls 'the law of genre' which legitimises certain autobiographical writings and not others. To quote Derrida, "As soon as the word *genre* is sounded, as soon as it is heard, as soon as one attempts to conceive it, a limit is drawn. And when a limit is established, norms and interdictions are not far behind...." (Derrida 224).

In his famous essay entitled 'Autobiography as De-facement', Paul de Man argues that autobiography is 'plagued' by a series of unanswerable questions, which arises from the fundamental attempt to conceive of it as a separate genre at all. He takes a radical position which almost signals the end of the genre. As an alternative perspective, de Man suggests that instead of seeing it as a genre, autobiography should be treated as 'a figure of reading or understanding' that is in operation not only within autobiography but also a range of texts. He identifies autobiography with a linguistic dilemma which is likely to be repeated every time an author makes himself the subject of his own understanding (de Man 171-4). The author reads himself in the text, but what he is seeing in this self-reflexive or specular moment is a figure or a face called into being by the substitutive trope of *protopoeia*.

Feminists have always pointed out how the politics of genre is at work in its turn towards a patriarchal law which delegitimises women's writing and how they were kept out in the reckoning of life narratives. In other words, the genre of autobiography has always been implicitly bound up with gender. By focusing on a particular historical canon of texts that celebrate the extraordinary 'lives of "great" men', the genre equates itself with the masculine gender. Thus autobiography becomes a man's mode of expression. This is only to be expected in a system of discourse where even history is constructed almost entirely in patriarchal terms. The arguments and evidences are pretty obvious and they form some of the basic statements in feminist criticism. For instance, most feminist critics writing about autobiography in the 1980s encountered the glaring absence of women's texts from an accepted canon of autobiographical writing. As with the other genres, it was not that women did not produce autobiographical writing but that it was largely dismissed as unimportant, crude, illegitimate, or failing to meet the necessary standards.

However, the writing of women, or any subject who is deemed to be different, allows us to read back into genre the heterogeneity and transgression it tries to exclude. This is particularly important when the text relates to subjects who are marginalised, oppressed or even

silenced. It becomes a political imperative for such people to constitute themselves as subjects in order to escape the eternal bondage of being determined as objects. What Diane Elam (65) said about women's autobiography—that the genre 'should be understood as a strategic necessity at a particular time, rather than an end in itself'—applies equally to the writings of all marginalised subjects. It applies to all women within patriarchal systems, to all gay and lesbian subjects within 'normal / normative' heterosexual discourses, to subaltern subjects within an oppressive and selective system, and finally to any subjectivity that hegemonic systems and power structures determine as variant, abnormal, or illegitimate.

As strategy, autobiography rejects the choice of a universal model of subjectivity, but rather employs 'local uses of the self', ways of expressing a self or a position which 'arises from the situation as it comments on it' (Probyn 98). Thus in 'strategic' autobiographies what is important is not what it *is* but what it *does*. As Regenia Gagnier says, there is a 'pragmatics of representation' where truth is less the issue here than 'the purpose an autobiographical statement serves in the life and circumstances of its author and readers' (Gagnier 4). Marginalised social groups thus find autobiographical writing a powerful political strategy to get their voices heard in the mainstream discourse. In the process they construct textual subjectivities with potential for creative and political intervention. This new and radical use of autobiography has been identified by Julia Swindells thus:

Autobiography now has the potential to be the text of the oppressed and the culturally displaced, forging a right to speak both for and beyond the individual. People in a position of powerlessness – women, black people, working-class people – have more than begun to insert themselves into the culture via autobiography, via the assertion of a 'personal' voice, which speaks beyond itself (Swindells 7).

When autobiography thus becomes 'the text of the oppressed', through one person's experience, it makes representative articulation of the experiences of a whole marginalised group. It also becomes both a way of testifying to oppression and empowering the subject and the group it represents through their cultural inscription and recognition.

This is the theoretical framework which my paper suggests can be employed in reading a text like Nalini Jameela's *Autobiography of a Sex Worker*. Seen thus, the book should be taken along with the several 'strategic' auto/biographical narratives that have appeared in

Malayalam in recent times. These include books or articles written / narrated by C K Janu, Vinaya, Pokkudan, Nilambur Ayisha, Yirimyav as well as the translated texts of Kancha Ilayya, Sharankumar Limbale, and Baby Haldar.

II

Autobiography of a Sex Worker is a candid recollection of the experiences a sex worker in Kerala had in several decades of her professional life. The book has in it the potential to 'go against the grain'. The name Nalini Jameela itself is problematic as it represents the mixing of two different identities and as it turns out from the narrative, this was just of a matter of expediency which overstayed its purpose. Nalini Jameela did not actually write this (her formal education did not go beyond the third year at school), but narrated it to Mr I Gopinath, a journalist, thus problematising the idea of authorship even further. Though titled 'autobiography', the book actually defies generic categorisation. It is more of a memoir (a recollection of experiences) than autobiography, but the book is also a strong commentary of her world and time. It lacks the logical coherence or the narrative sequence of a 'well-written' autobiography. The author is not a celebrity or a public figure who has earned the respect and admiration of the people so as to arouse in them an interest (in the usual sense) in her life. Nor can she claim of any great achievement that merits or even justifies the sharing of her life experience. It is rather a political statement that a sex worker is also a human being who has a life to tell and that her story too deserves attention. In this sense, it is the loud voicing of the marginalised.

Those readers who look in the book for steamy stuff will be disappointed. The only voyeuristic gratification that the book provides is the detailed description of the management of the trade and the variety of the clients as well as their sexual preferences. The focus is more on the circumstances than the act itself. The book is more a social text that documents those realities of the world which never appear in the mainstream of public discourse. It throws light on the lives of several people — not just the sex workers and their clients but also those who the sex workers deal with as part of their profession, including the police, the judiciary, the politicians, and the media. It is also the record of the way these helpless women united for their common cause and started demanding their legitimate human rights. It is also a thorough exposal of the hypocrisy of our conservative society, particularly in addressing sexuality.

The book is episodic in nature with fifty-six chapters that are more or less independent. The opening chapter titled 'the Manifesto of the Sex Worker' not only sets the tone of the narrative that follows, but

also makes clear the political import of this 'marginal' text. In addition to narrating the experiences of one individual the book also voices the strong opinion of her professional community / social group on many issues including questions of morality and legality. Nalini Jameela comes off in all these accounts as a liberated woman with strong convictions and opinions. She also comments on a number of events, issues, and personalities. At the end of the book is given the lengthy interaction that Ms Jameela and her colleagues had with the representatives of the public and the media as part of the National Conference of Sex Workers held in Thiruvananthapuram in 2003. This interview highlights and restates all the issues involved. Apart from its political content, the book also traces the dramatic life of a poor girl beginning with her difficult childhood, through her life as a labourer first and prostitute later, her three husbands, many lovers and friends, numerous clients, her many struggles, other jobs, journeys, social activism, attempts at cinematography, her role as the most important spokesperson of sex workers and finally to her present status as some kind of a celebrity in Kerala.

III

Most feminist theorists and activists see prostitution as a practice instituted and maintained by men for their own selfish need or gratification. Prostitution is also seen as a blatant display of possession and oppression of women by men, a system which reduces women to mere objects or bodies. All prostitutes do not have the same social standing. There are 'high class' women who trade their bodies for monetary or political favours, there are women who indulge in the trade secretly (by hiding their identities) for money, but the majority of them are out in the street or on the move. They have no means to hide their identities or aspire for any respectability or higher social positions. These women, known by different names, 'enter' this profession due to their misery and economic constraints and continue in it for want of a better alternative. In most societies prostitutes constitute the lowest caste in the social hierarchy. As Simone de Beauvoir argues in the chapter on prostitution in her celebrated classic, *The Second Sex*, they are a caste of 'shameless women' (who) allows the 'honest women' to be treated with the most chivalrous respect. The prostitute is a scapegoat; man vents his turpitude upon her, and he rejects her. Whether she is put legally under police supervision or works illegally in secret, she is in any case treated as a pariah.' (Beauvoir 569).

However, Beauvoir also points out that 'it is not their moral or psychological pressure that makes the prostitutes' lot hard to bear. It is their material condition that is most often deplorable. Exploited by their

pimps and their madams, they live in a state of insecurity, and three-fourths of them are penniless' (Beauvoir 577).

But for the majority of people, this is almost always a moral issue that threatens the safety of their family lives. The social, political and economic issues are largely ignored or overlooked. Moreover, in an oppressive patriarchal system, any relationship between a man and a woman tends to be the expression of power and control. Beauvoir quotes Marro's statement that 'the only difference between women who sell themselves in prostitution and those who sell themselves in marriage is in the price and the length of time the contract runs' and adds that 'the great difference between them is that the legal wife, oppressed as a married woman, is respected as a human being; this respect is beginning definitely to check the oppression. So long as the prostitute is denied the rights of a person, she sums up all the forms of feminine slavery at once' (569). This view is also shared by Kate Millet as is evident from the following excerpt from her classic text *Sexual Politics*:

There is...a sense in which the prostitute's role is an exaggeration of patriarchal economic conditions where the majority of females are driven to live through some exchange of sexuality for support. The degradation in which the prostitute is held and holds herself, the punitive attitude society adopts toward her, are but reflections of a culture whose general attitudes towards sexuality are negative and which attaches great penalties to a promiscuity in women it does not think to punish in men (Millet 123).

Nalini Jameela, in her book, takes a radical position that unsettles the widely held opinions about sex workers and their plight. Rejecting the designation of 'prostitute' and instead deliberately calling herself a sex worker, Nalini Jameela fires the first salvo by considering the institution as a profession and not as a condition. She accepts the social and economic dimensions of the institution and hits hard at patriarchal structures and conventions. But it is in the attempts at validating her profession and the joyous assertion of her liberty that she distinguishes herself and in the process antagonises feminist activists and sympathisers. In the opening chapter 'The Manifesto of the Sex Worker' which also forms the prologue to her narrative, we read:

I am now fifty-one years old and if I wish, I can hide my past and start a new life. I can go somewhere else and work full-time as Coordinator of the Kerala Sex Workers' Forum. Or else, I can concentrate on camera work, which I learned, and try and live as a professional.... In

fact, several people have approached me with offers. But I'm not interested. I really wish to continue as a sex worker. Having gone through the kind of experiences which no other profession can give, I cannot imagine myself in the fetters of another life.

I believe that in Kerala, a sex worker is far more liberated than an ordinary housewife. I don't care whether feminists will agree with me or not. Who else in Kerala can roam the streets at night—or for that matter even in daylight—and still feel safe? (Perhaps those in purdah might)Moreover, who else can have the kind of sexual freedom that I enjoy? A sex worker can choose not to sleep with a client she does not like; but is it easy for an ordinary woman to free herself from a sexual relationship that she no longer enjoys? Does any other woman have the freedom to choose the father of her child? How many poor women in Kerala—weighed down by some misconceptions—are forced to suffer miserable lives with their husbands who often physically assault and habitually rape them?

...I believe that my life, which has been a journey through a variety of experiences, is certainly far better than such lives. I intend to continue in this field as long as my physical fitness permits. Just as there are occupations which make use of one's brains or arms, so is any profession which makes use of any other part of the human body. For this reason, I don't consider a scientist, who uses his head; or a labourer, who uses his limbs; or a teacher who uses his mouth as any better or greater than me. I will not object a bit, even if my daughter (who is 23), chooses to follow my path. In fact I have openly conveyed this to her....

Feminists everywhere have always faced the dilemma about prostitution which stems from the perceived choice to be made between supporting prostitutes and rejecting / critiquing prostitution. Ever since it was published, feminist theorists and activists in Kerala have objected to Nalini Jameela's book and have pointed out that it consists of a number of contradictions and inconsistencies regarding the 'liberty' that she claims to be enjoying as a sex worker. These feminists – most of them are academics — are also very eager to attribute ulterior motives on her and some even do not hesitate to call her a stooge of Neo-capitalist intentions of preparing an ambience of consensus for the increasing demand of sex trade in a globalised world.

This kind of traditional anxiety (the haunting spectre of global / multinational capital about to descend on our settled socialist fabric) does not go beyond the usual leftist rhetoric. As a metaphor, it also assumes sexist connotations in the manner in which the multinational

city is portrayed as a greedy male about to assault the virgin female that is village Kerala. One also gets the impression that at least some of the detractors of Nalini Jameela and her book are less worried about the continuation of the institution of prostitution and the socio-economic issues involved as about the articulation of these issues.

The real significance of Nalini Jameela's book lies in the way she has brought the whole debate to the forefront of public discourse. Andrea Dworkin, while addressing a symposium entitled "Prostitution: From Academia to Activism," at the University of Michigan Law School in October 1992 said:

"I want to emphasize that in these conversations, these discussions about prostitution, we are all looking for language. We are all trying to find ways to say what we know and also to find out what we don't know. There is a middle-class presumption that one knows everything worth knowing. It is the presumption of most prostituted women that one knows nothing worth knowing. In fact, neither thing is true. What matters here is to try to learn what the prostituted woman knows, because it is of immense value. It is true and it has been hidden. It has been hidden for a political reason: to know it is to come closer to knowing how to undo the system of male dominance that is sitting on top of all of us."

In articulating her own experiences as well as the concerns of those she represents Nalini Jameela is also 'looking for language' and in the process, giving voice to a section of silenced /marginalized / oppressed people who have been denied even the basic human rights. It is also the invention of a language for the hitherto speechless millions of sex workers in India, many of whom do not even figure in official records as legal citizens. They do not have identities or addresses and are forced to hide in the sun. We should remember that Nalini Jameela's book deals with these women and not the privileged ones doing the same 'offence'. That is why it should be regarded as addressing a social issue and not a moral one. The fact that the book has been in great demand all over Kerala and has attracted attention of the media as well as the academic community within and outside the country indicates that it has more to it than what generates initial curiosity. Those who fail to see the political import of *Autobiography of a Sex Worker*— but instead worry about public morality and the discomfort of having to accept a sex worker as human with as much right as anybody else — are perhaps unwittingly subscribing to the patriarchal and oppressive agendas masquerading as righteousness.

Notes

1. The phrase 'the authority of experience' is the title of a feminist critical anthology edited by Lee Edwards and Arlyn Diamond.
2. Not feeling happy with the outcome of her autobiographical attempt, Nalini Jameela completely revised the book and brought out another version with a new title in December 2005, six months after the first one—which ran into several reprints—was published. The new version, *Njan Lyngikathozhilali: Nalini Jameelayude atmakatha* is not significantly different structurally or thematically, but the author claims is more accurate and closer to her intention and style. Some stories have been elaborated, some new ones added and a few deleted, but the most striking difference between the two texts is perhaps the omission of the 'Manifesto' in the latter. If the first version was prepared by just one person, the second version has engaged a 'team' of writers. In several interviews she gave, Nalini Jameela had argued that the mediation of another person distanced her book from herself. She is not sure of the propriety of revising (and hence rejecting) a well-received book, but does not mind doing so. The whole issue of 'revision' has problematised the question of 'authorship' and has underlined the textuality of the genre even further.

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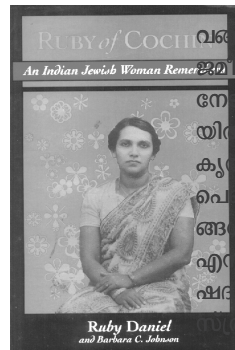
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**കൊച്ചിക്കാരി റുബി
ഒരു ഇന്ത്യൻ ജൂതസ്ത്രീയുടെ ഓർമ്മകൾ**

സ്കരിയാ സകരിയ



മലയാളത്തിൽ ഇപ്പോൾ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ആത്മകഥകൾ വിലപ്പെട്ട വിഭവങ്ങളാണല്ലോ. 2005-ൽ ഏറ്റവും കൂടുതൽ ശ്രദ്ധിക്കപ്പെട്ട മലയാളഗ്രന്ഥം നളിനി ജമീലയുടെ ആത്മകഥയായിരുന്നു. പല പതിപ്പുകളിലൂടെ വ്യാപകമായ പ്രചാരം നേടിയ ആത്മകഥയ്ക്ക് ലൈംഗികത്തൊഴിലാളിയുടെ ജീവിതകഥ എന്ന നിലയിൽ പ്രത്യേക കൗതുകം ഉണ്ടാകാമെങ്കിലും അതു മാത്രമായിരുന്നില്ല ആ കൃതിയുടെ പ്രാധാന്യം. ആൺകാഴ്ചകൾ വായനയിലൂടെ ശീലിച്ച മലയാളിക്കു പെൺകാഴ്ചകൾ നൽകിയ പുതുമകുടി ആ കൃതിക്ക് അവകാശപ്പെടാം. പെണ്ണുങ്ങൾ എഴുതിയതുകൊണ്ടുമാത്രം പെൺകാഴ്ചകൾ പ്രകടമായിക്കൊള്ളണം എന്തില്ല. ആണുങ്ങളെപ്പോലെ എഴുതുന്നതാണ് എഴുത്ത് എന്നു ഭ്രമിച്ചു പുരുഷാക്ഷിയിൽ നോക്കിക്കണ്ട് ആണനുഭവംപോലെ എഴുതുന്നവരാണ് പല സ്ത്രീകളും. മാധവിക്കുട്ടിയാണ് തികച്ചും വ്യതിരിക്തമായ നിലയിൽ പെണ്മയുടെ അനുഭവം സമകാലിക മലയാളത്തിൽ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്. ഇപ്പോൾ നളിനി ജമീലയും. സാറാജോസഫിനെപ്പോലുള്ള മികച്ച എഴുത്തുകാരികൾ സ്ത്രീയുടെ അനുഭവങ്ങളെ സവിശേഷമായി അവതരിപ്പിക്കുമ്പോഴും പെണ്മയുടെ ആവിഷ്കാരങ്ങളായിമാത്രം അവ വേർതിരിച്ചു രേഖപ്പെടുത്തണം എന്നു ശഠിച്ചു കാണുന്നില്ല. മാധവിക്കുട്ടിക്കും നളിനി ജമീലക്കും സ്ത്രീയുടെമേൽ സമൂഹം കെട്ടിയേല്പിക്കുന്ന ബാധ്യതകളെക്കുറിച്ച് തുറന്നെഴുതാനുള്ള വ്യഗ്രതയുണ്ട്. അതുകൊണ്ടുതന്നെ ഇരുവരുടെയും രചനകളെ കലാപസ്വഭാവമുള്ള ജീവിത രേഖകളായി വായിക്കാനും വിമർശിക്കാനും സമൂഹത്തിലെ മേലാളർ നിർബന്ധിതരായിത്തീരുന്നു. സമൂഹത്തിന്റെ കെട്ടുപാടും സദാചാരവും തകരുന്ന

എന്നതാണ് 'എന്റെ കഥ'യ്ക്കും 'ലൈംഗികത്തൊഴിലാളിയുടെ ആത്മകഥ'യ്ക്കും എതിരെ ഉയരുന്ന പ്രതിഷേധത്തിന്റെ മർമ്മം. മാധവിക്കുട്ടിയുടെ രചനയിൽ ശരീരപരതയുടെ തോത് താരതമ്യേന കൂടുതലുണ്ട്. നളിനി ജമീലയുടെ കൃതി വായിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളവർക്കറിയാം ലൈംഗികതയുടെ സാമൂഹികതയിലാണ് അവരുടെ ശ്രദ്ധ. ലൈംഗികത എങ്ങനെ കൂടുംബം, സമുദായം, രാഷ്ട്രം എന്നിവയുടെ ചിട്ടവട്ടങ്ങളുമായി ഇണങ്ങിപ്പിണങ്ങിനില്ക്കുന്നു എന്നു ആത്മകഥ വെളിവാക്കുന്നു. ഇരുവരുടേയും ആഖ്യാനതന്ത്രങ്ങൾ അനുദിനജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ഭാഷണശീലങ്ങളുമായി ഉറ്റബന്ധം പുലർത്തുന്നവയാണ്. പരമ്പരാഗത സാഹിത്യഘ്യാനങ്ങളിൽ നിന്ന് അകന്നു നിൽക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുമ്പോഴും അവരുടെ ആഖ്യാനമാതൃകകൾ ജനപ്രിയസംസ്കാരത്തിന്റെ സങ്കേതങ്ങളിൽ കുരുങ്ങുന്നുണ്ട്. സ്ത്രീകളുടെ ആത്മകഥാപരമായ രചനകളിലെ ആഖ്യാനതന്ത്രങ്ങളും ആഖ്യാനമാതൃകകളും കേരളീയപശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ സവിശേഷപഠനം അർഹിക്കുന്നു. ഭാഷയ്ക്കും ആഖ്യാനതന്ത്രങ്ങൾക്കുമപ്പുറം കേരളീയ സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സ്വതന്ത്രആഖ്യാനങ്ങളെ പ്രചോദിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ആശയാവലികളുണ്ടോ എന്ന ചോദ്യം പ്രസക്തമാണ്. അത്തരം അന്വേഷണത്തിൽ ഫലപ്രദമായി ഉപയോഗിക്കാവുന്ന മറ്റൊരു ഗ്രന്ഥമാണ് 1995-ൽ അമേരിക്കയിൽ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ പ്രസിദ്ധീകരിച്ച *Ruby of Cochin - An Indian Jewish Women Remembers*. റുബി ഡാനിയേലാണ് ഗ്രന്ഥകാരി. സാമുദായികവും മതപരവുമായ പശ്ചാത്തലമാണ് റുബിയുടെ ആത്മകഥയെ ഉജ്ജ്വലമാക്കുന്നത്. കൊച്ചി



Dr. Barbara Johnson and Ruby Daniel

യിൽ ജനിച്ചു വളർന്നു നല്ല പ്രായത്തോളം കേരളത്തിലും ഇസ്രായേലിലുമായി ജീവിച്ച (1912-2002) റുബി സ്വന്തം ബാല്യവും യൗവനവും വാർധക്യവും സംഭാഷണരൂപത്തിൽ പകർന്നുകൊടുത്തതു അമേരിക്കൻ നരവംശശാസ്ത്രജ്ഞയായ ഡോ. ബാർബറാ ജോൺസൺ കേട്ടെഴുതി ഗ്രന്ഥരൂപത്തിലാക്കി. എറണാകുളം സെന്റ് തെരേസാസ് കോളജിൽ പഠിച്ച റുബി ഡാനിയേലിന് എഴുതാനും വായിക്കാനും അറിഞ്ഞുകൂടാത്തതുകൊണ്ടല്ല, ആത്മകഥാരചനയിൽ



A 'Trio' of friends - Christian, Jewish and Hindu - worked together in the Munsiff Court, Cochin.

കമ്പമില്ലാതിരുന്നതുകൊണ്ടാണ് കേട്ടെഴുത്തു വേണ്ടിവന്നത്. എങ്കിലും ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥം തന്റേതാണ് എന്നു അവകാശപ്പെടാൻ കഴിയുന്ന തരത്തിലായിരുന്നു ഇതിന്റെ രചനയിലും പ്രസാധനത്തിലും റുബിയുടെ ഇടപെടൽ.

കൊച്ചിയിലെ ജൂതരെക്കുറിച്ചു ധാരാളം പുസ്തകങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടായിട്ടുണ്ട്. അവയിൽ ഒട്ടുമിക്കവയും പാശ്ചാത്യ ജൂതരുടെ ഗവേഷണപഠനങ്ങളാണ്. പാശ്ചാത്യകേന്ദ്രിതമായ ജൂതലോകത്തിന്റെ ആശയാവലികൾക്കുള്ളിൽ നിന്നുകൊണ്ട് കേരളീയജൂതരെ ഗവേഷണക്കണ്ണിലൂടെ പഠിക്കുന്നതിന്റെ പരിമിതികൾ ഇത്തരം രചനകൾക്കെല്ലാമുണ്ട്. റുബി ഡാനിയേലിന്റെ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിലൂടെ കടന്നുപോകുമ്പോൾ കേരളീയജൂതരുടെ ആത്മദർശനത്തിന്റെ സൗഭാഗ്യം പഠിതാക്കൾക്കു ലഭിക്കുന്നു. ജൂതസമുദായത്തിനുള്ളിലെ വിവേചനങ്ങളെ നിശിതമായി വിമർശിക്കുന്ന അനേകം ഭാഗങ്ങൾ ഈ കൃതിയെ ഒന്നാംതരം 'നിഷേധി' രചനയാക്കുന്നു. ജൂതസമുദായത്തിനുള്ളിലെ വീഴ്ചകളെ കേരളീയ ആശയാവലികൾ ഉന്നയിച്ചുകൊണ്ട് അവർ നേരിടുന്നു. സമുദായവിമർശനം, മതവിമർശനം ഇവയൊക്കെ മലയാളികളായ എഴുത്തുകാർ മറന്നു കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു. (ഇക്കാര്യത്തിൽ അടുത്തകാലത്തു കണ്ട അപവാദം സാറാ ജോസഫിന്റെ ഒതപ്പാണ്.)

സാമുദായിക സഹിഷ്ണുത, സ്ത്രീകളുടെ സാമൂഹിക പദവി, സ്ത്രീ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, മതപരമായ കാര്യങ്ങളിലെ സത്യസന്ധത എന്നിങ്ങനെ വിവിധ വിഷയങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചു സംസാരിക്കുമ്പോൾ അവരുടെ കൃതിയിൽ ഒരു കേരളീയവനിതയുടെ കർത്തൃത്വം പ്രകടമായിക്കാണാം. പഠിക്കാനും വായിച്ചു രസിക്കാനും വകയുള്ള ഈ ഗ്രന്ഥത്തിനു ഇംഗ്ലീഷിൽ രണ്ടു പതിപ്പുകളായി. മലയാളത്തിൽ ഒരു പരിഭാഷയുണ്ടാകുന്നതു ഇന്നത്തെ നിലയ്ക്കു പലതരത്തിലും നന്നായിരിക്കും. അമേരിക്കക്കാരിയായ കേട്ടെഴുത്തുകാരി പ്രഫസർ ഇതിലെ മലയാളിയുടെ ഇംഗ്ലീഷിനെ ഏറെ പരിഷ്കരിച്ചിട്ടില്ല എന്നതു ഈ കൃതിയുടെ സവിശേഷതയാണ്. ▲

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