



Quarterly

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## The International Malay Secretariat & Cultural Centre

(Secretariat Malay Antarbangsa)

**SOUTH EAST ASIAN BRANCH INSTALLED AT THE COLOMBO  
MALAY CRICKET CLUB PADANG COMPLEX**

*Oleh : Fazeer Radin*

This Secretariat and Cultural centre is a magnanimous gesture of gratitude by Haji Muhammad Taib, former Minister of the rich state of Selangor in Malaysia to the Malays in Sri Lanka. They say had this philanthropist remained in his official capacity the Malays here in their adopted motherland would have continued to benefit. His was a chivalrous and gallant personage beyond measure, his charismatic humbleness, simplicity, geniality to the common touch by singing on the stage to the large crowd of audience who were there to welcome him at the Colombo Malay Cricket Club grounds is a model yet to be witnessed among dignitaries of eminence. It is their earnest hope and prayer that another personage of his calibre will emerge in the near future to do them proud and philanthropy.

I quote 'Terang' of April - June 1998: "The main objective of the Organization was to create and facilitate the net working of Malay communities all over the world. This net working will give the opportunity to the 60,000 strong Malay community of Sri Lanka access to about 300 million Malays all over the world. This access apart from helping to interact on cultural and linguistic affirmatives of the Malay communities will also serve as an important net work for business, commercial and investment links between Malays globally." (M.A. Sourjah)

It needs to be mentioned that this foundation was the brain child of the pioneers and their successors of the Sri Lanka Malay Association (SLMA). The responsible ones, with the best of intentions and the love and welfare of its community inaugurated in a ceremonial opening of pomp and pageant. What was witnessed invoked and imbued a sense of pride in their very been born as Malays. The exhilarating speech of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar took by surprise that he knew more of the

Malay ethos than them. It was the lengthiest, meticulously well covered true picture of the mighty deeds of their Malay ancestors, the contribution they have made towards their adopted motherland, the esteemed position they held in every department, their sportsmanship, their talent in literature music and drama, their charity and social service which merited national awards from the Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Here, the candid view without any insinuation of malice or sinister motive but solely in good faith is being adduced for the readers to evaluate the pros and cons of the various aspects and mutually arrive at a plausible decision with wider spectrum of Malay interest at heart. Such decision should inculcate the true spirit of the democratic ideal, which is of prime importance to harmonise the legitimate Malay sentiments and aspiration for unification with tribal value and care of their clan as a whole.

It is sincerely believed from the speeches that were delivered at the inauguration of this foundation that it was for the benefit of the entire Malay race (vis-a-vis limited entity) in Sri Lanka and a strong link to the ancestral homeland in Malaysia. Whereas in practice, it seems, what was preached is not being practised.

The name Sri Lanka Malay Association Secretariat and Cultural Centre was itself a misnomer as it appeared on the cover of its souvenir of the ceremonial opening held at Hotel Galadari on 22nd February 1997. Flagrantly unmindful that this institution was intended to belong to the entire Malays. Obviously the reason for this is that SLMA does not administratively represent the entire Malay Community of Sri Lanka but only a miniscule of the community as indicated in the foregoing paragraph and therefore it is most appropriate from the speeches that were delivered to name this foundation as 'The International Malay Secretariat & Cultural Centre'.

This lapse is no big deal to make amends of, if the decision makers are more alive and out grow their insular outlook in considering that this International Malay Secretariat and Cultural Centre is meant to be administratively brought about to serve as a broader base by amending not only the constitution of the SLMA but also the

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constitution of other Malay Associations to bear reciprocal affinity with this International Malay Secretariat and Cultural Centre.

It would be a very progressive and welcome step for the SLMA without further delay to convene a meeting of elders, intellectuals, policy makers, eminent men, representatives from Malay Organisations and resolve an agenda "To unify and incorporate all Malays through their representative associations in the Sri Lanka Malay International Secretariat and Cultural Centre".

For this purpose Saudara Nizam Samath, present Editor, of the *Terang* has written "I am of course ready to host the meeting of the SLAMAC at Kandy, if necessary" and Saudaras Farook Thalip, former Editor, and M.A. Sourjah senior member of the editorial board, of the *Terang* say if every Malay feels for the community in the same spirit as Saudara Samath feels many of their racial woes, fundamental rights and grievances can get redress. Solidarity is the backbone for amity and prosperity of a community.

Since the inauguration of this International Malay Secretariat and Cultural Centre, it is close upon two years and nothing substantial seems to have taken place either for its members or others. This building now serves mostly for the SLMA Meetings. There is more harangue and confusion than developments. Besides non-members, members themselves are clueless of its artefax nor have they access to the library as intended and as it should prevail. True, the building is elegant, serene, fresh, lively and attractive like a cute damsel of no personal value to her admirers.

According to reliable reports it is an open secret that the income received is barely sufficient to maintain this foundation. There is no concrete proposals for generating income. In the circumstances a suggestion is made here at the request of several Malays to start a "Reception Hall with provision for catering of food and refreshments etc.", which if operated on proper lines can bring the shekels in a big way.

In generally accepted terms a cultural centre, artefax, archives, museum of community or nation is a common property and must be shared and benefited by the public like the Public Record Office, Kew in England where there is access for the interested parties to gather information of the Malay ancestors who served in the British Army in Ceylon. There they provide details of their army records as sources for biography, genealogy and family records. The Sri Lankan Malay community needs such an institution and this could be done, though difficult but not impossible, for the simple reason Sri Lankan Malay heritage in this country is only three hundreds years old and its population is just about 60,000 at present. As the situation stands, in no way will the Sri Lanka Government assist the Malay community to attain this vision. However there are ways and means of obtaining some aid from certain sources if the right approach and proper people are contacted. To achieve this a common solidarity manoeuvring has to be operated on the basis of Sri Lanka Malay ethnicity and not as Sri Lanka Malay Association. If this could be activated and achieved at a com-

mon communal solidarity level, it will be a tourist attraction and enticement for British, Dutch, Indonesians and Malaysians to pay visit to this institution. I am personally aware of several foreigners and locals who are hungry for such information. These record hunters approach people like Saudaras B.D.K. Saldin, M. A. Sourjah, Farook Thalip and me. Unless the required interest is geared and activated with modern updated inputs this institution will lapse to dereliction and degeneracy.

This institution has become a no man's concern says a neighbour in the vicinity. I raise my hat to Saudara B.D.K. Saldin being concerned of its present state like he is concerned in seeing that the Malays learn their mother tongue and telling me "I really feel disappointed of the state of the SLMA." This is the true feeling and spirit that is required in other Malays for their community. This is also the reason that prompted me to write this article.

We must not take responsibility without bringing about success. Several good Samaritans also had contributed towards this institution. It does not seem a gesture of thanks in the indifference shown displaying the names of donors in this institution. It is an added insult to injury to these donors the way their well earned contribution towards this building is displayed. Had they known the questionable way the responsible ones maintaining the building and putting it to proper use they would have utilized their donation for a worthy cause.

The Malays fuss, complain and are hurt and disappointed that their ancestral motherland and kinsmen giving the blind eye and shown indifference towards them to retain their identity. It cannot be denied that the Indonesians and the Malaysians have from time to time responded to the appeal of the Malays by donating, books, typewriters, computers etc., which the Malay Community must be notified by media to make them aware of the truth that they are not alone but mindful in their struggle. Only then the seekers will not lose faith of their donor and the donor will be happy of their appreciation of their assistance extended.

It must broaden its outlook, activate and prove this institution does not cater to certain interests alone and it will doom if not for these interests by providing useful service to other Malay Organisations, inviting those who are keen to impart the Malay Language, culture, tradition, customs and propagate the Malay ethnology by media. There are quite a lot of people of the calibre of Saudaras M.A. Sourjah, Farook Thalip, Nizam Samath and others who are prepared to help with no intention of personal benefit or glorification. These men must be allowed to tackle independently the net work covering the historiography, heritage, genealogy, artefax etc., They are dedicated like the artists and musicians.

The Malays in this mindset making must never see what is good for themselves alone, having seen what is good for their community at large. With the new century in the offing despite continuation of the old problems and crisis and conflicts that have balked our community should cultivate a new outlook and be pro-active to build a strong prosperous and self confident race and occupy its rightful place in the community of the national groups, attract the nation at large, establish stronger cul-

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## THE DOME OF THE ROCK IN JERUSALEM

By. T. Anniff Ahamed  
(Inspired by a visit to Jerusalem)

*"Glory be to Allah who did take his servant for a journey by night from the sacred Mosque to the furthest Mosque whose precincts we did bless in order that we might show him some of our signs for He is the one who heareth and seeth (all things)*

*Sura 17(1) Al. Isra*

The Prophet's way to Heaven was through the Holy City of Jerusalem a reminder to the Muslims that the path to Heaven lies through Jerusalem, one of those cities, a venerated city, where some of the deepest well springs in the history of Islam are found.

The sacredness of the City of Jerusalem for a Muslim is in its historic reality. This was the city that witnessed the life and works of the greatest prophets. Here the divine favour and grace for humanity was manifest in tangible form. Allah's Prophets had lived and moved in the valleys and crevices of Jerusalem. It is holy for the Muslims who have made it the third most important goal of pilgrimage after Mecca and Medina.

It was due to a theological understanding that the City of Jerusalem gained a very important place in the life of Prophet Mohammed (SAL) himself. In the year 620-C E almost one and half years before Hijra (migration from Mecca to Medina) the event of "ISRA" and "MIRAJ" occurred, with these two events taking place on the same night.

The story of ISRA and MIRAJ is full of wonderful signs and symbols and it has been interpreted by Muslim thinkers, mystics and poets in deep and meaningful ways, the essential point being the link between MECCA and JERUSALEM. The same prophetic message that came to JERUSALEM centuries ago came also to the Prophet in Mecca and he was really conscious of this reality.

During Mihraj (Prophet's ascension to Heaven) the Prophet also received the command from Allah for five prayers. Upon his return the Prophet established the five daily prayers for Muslims. But he made Jerusalem the direction (Qiblah) which Muslims must face when performing their prayers. Jerusalem is thus called the first Qiblah in Islam until the command of God came to change the direction of prayers from Jerusalem to Makkah. (Sura 2 (142-150)

The Ascension (Mihraj) is said to have taken place at the spot where the Dome of the Rock now stands which is set upon on level space, is as magnificent a tribute to the Glory of God as can be seen anywhere in the world.

Abd-al - Malik built the Dome of the Rock as the greatest possible expression of Faith which he and his people could achieve. It was an act of sublime devotion and one could still marvel at the artistry and craftsmanship of this building. It is the oldest Islamic shrine in the world and ranks in sanctity after that of the KAABA in MECCA and the tomb of the Prophet in MEDINA. The Dome of the Rock which is one of the oldest and most beautiful of Moslem shrines, is the most striking monument in Jerusalem. Its design is Byzantine as it was built by Byzantine artists, but all its decorations are oriental. The exterior is

a regular octagon, each side measuring 63ft, with a height of 180 ft. from the ground and with a diameter of 78ft. The octagonal structure is encased in marble slabs up to 18ft. and above that to the upper edge, the walls are decorated with brilliant Persian Tiles. The Dome is made of plates of Aluminium impregnated with gold which gleam in the brilliant sunshine, while the interior of the building with its beautifully decorated cupola, the richly coloured stained glass windows and lovely mosaic of the walls, offer a charming variety of colours and an enchanting atmosphere for worship.

Beneath the Dome of his magnificent building lies the rock of mount Moriah where according to tradition Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac whilst moslems believe that it was Ishmael and not Isaac.

The Rock is surrounded by a wooden balustrade. Below the rock is a cave approached by a flight of steps. An inscription above reads "O God pardon the sinner who comes here, and relieve the injured". In a grilled shrine nearby lie the relics of the Prophet. Tradition holds that, as the Prophet ascended to Heaven, the Rock tried to follow him. Here one may touch the place where the foot print is embedded in the rock.

Inscriptions of the Holy Quran are manifest where in the upper part of the outer walls are beautiful KASHAN tiles bearing the Chapter "YASIN" In the interior of the Dome, a circulated inscription around the apex is from Sura 2 (255 and 256).

At the Portico of the doorway of the Direction of Prayer are verses from Sura 9 (20:21). Across the top wall are verses from Sura YASIN (14-18) and then at the top of the Double door itself is verse 144 from Sura 2 In the drum and cupola of the Dome round the drum beneath the dome are verses from Sura 17(1 to 8). The lower inscriptions along the top of the octagonal sides are verses from Sura YASIN (22:23)

On the Southern part of the esplanade, the distant Mosque referred to in Sura 17(1) rises the magnificent AL AQSA mosque built between 709-715 by Khalif Waleed son of Abdul Malik who built the Dome of the Rock. In the mosque installed are a beautiful prayer niche, the mimbar and the Mihrab by Salah al Din. The grand interior is marked by monumental and imposing columns in carara marble while the ceiling has been presented by King Farouk of Egypt. Today group prayers are conducted here while individuals pray at the Dome of the Rock.

As night sleeps up from the Valley the Dome of the Rock and of the Al Aqsa Mosque blaze in the last rays of sunlight, a reflective beacon of faith, which stand at the centre of the unique and Noble Sanctuary as the Bait ul Mugaddis or Al Quds Al Shareef which is Jerusalem.

*Allah is our Lord and Your Lord  
unto us our works and unto you your works  
no argument between us and you  
Allah will bring us together, and unto him is  
the Journeying*

Sura XLII (15)



## THE EXPATRIATE SRI LANKA MALAYS OF SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

*Oleh : T. Anwar Dole (Australia)*

I agree with Saudara Aarifin Sourjah when he quite truthfully declared that the year 1997 has been "out-standing and propitious for the Sri Lankan Malays." (Ref Terang Vol. 2- April - June 1998)

In Sydney, at the time of writing, there are nearly 50 Sri Lankan Malay families who have permanently settled down and from what I gather, it would appear that Professor Razeen Sappideen, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Western Sydney, Nepean, is one of the first Sri Lanka Malay to emigrate to Australia.

In May 1997, an elder brother of the Professor, Nizar Sappideen, with a band of enthusiastic members of the community organised, for the first time in Sydney a get together for the benefit of the Sri Lanka Malay families, which afforded an opportunity for them to meet and socialize in each other's company and enjoy an evening of lively entertainment. This function was well attended and was a great success. The success being that all those who attended it were able to mix about freely in an atmosphere of friendliness and togetherness. Popular Malay songs were sung and the younger folk were seen dancing their cares away to some enchanting music.

All good things must come to an end, but the merry makers were reluctant to leave the dance floor and pleaded for an extension of time.

In view of popular requests, the organisers under the guidance of Nizar, his wife Surathy and along with his faithful followers, got together and organised the second function in December 1997. A group of ladies and gentlemen, sang some popular Malay songs, to name a few, they were 'Kembali', Geetha Boongie and Burung Kaka'. Music was provided by Faiz Lye (Organ), Zarina Jaleel (Violin & Piano Accordeon) and Ezmal Lye (Guitar). A good time was had by all and as all good things must come to an end the function ended on a good note with the majority requesting for many more functions of this nature and posing the question "Why can't we too form an Association of our own?"

In pursuance of this inquiry, Nizar Sappideen, the evergreen, together with his band of energetic supporters held a meeting to consider this vital issue and decided that it was time that an Association was formed in Sydney for the expatriate Sri Lanka Malays. It was also agreed that the new Association should be called "The Sri Lanka Malay Association of Australia" A draft constitution is being drawn up, making provision for Branch Associations from any other State in Australia to seek affiliation to the parent body.

The inaugural meeting was fixed for 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1998, which will be followed by a Social. A group of singers and dances were seen practising for this historical event. The 'Tari Liling' and the 'Rongeng' two popular and colourful Malay dances are being taught by that talented exponent of Malay dances, Yolande Koch nee Ahlip and with her abiding interest and enthusiasm, the ladies, I am sure will put up a wonderful performance. A lively evening of entertainment is assured and the organisers are expecting a record crowd both at the inaugural meeting and the social.

## Beef Eating

It is a very well known that Sri Lanka Malays are great beefeaters. Not only do they eat the flesh of the bull, they are voracious eaters of barbuth, thombong and even kaki soup.

Medical science states that beef has saturated fat and this fatty substance forms a living within the arteries of a person who eats beef. Over the years this fatty lining builds up and when a person reaches adulthood the arteries become blocked. The buildup of fatty lining in the arteries is faster in people who eat offal.

Gradually over a period of many years, atherosclerosis chokes off the flow of life - sustaining blood. The disease, resulting from the build up of fibrous materials, or plaque, in the arteries, has been killing people for centuries.

This disease of advancing age actually begins in youth, especially in cultures where the diet is rich in fatty food.

The Finns, with the fattiest diet, had the highest cholesterol levels and the highest rate of heart disease. The Americans, with a diet only slightly less rich, were a close second. But the Japanese, who eat a diet low in fat, had the lowest cholesterol levels and the least cardiovascular disease. Their rate of fatal heart attacks was one - fourth the American incidence. A later study showed that when Japanese emigrated to the US and adopted Western diet, their incidence of heart disease soared ten times.

There is no longer any doubt that lives can be saved by lowering cholesterol levels in the blood, but this can be achieved just by changing diet. According to Colombia University Cardiologist Robert Levy, who directed the study, the answer is YES.

If anyone wishes to reduce the cholesterol level in the blood begin by avoiding such cholesterol rich foods such as eggs and organ meats and most cheeses. Ice Cream, Whole milk and butter are dairy products that are in rich in cholesterol are also to be avoided.

Some of you might ask from where do we get protein if we avoid eating beef. Beans, dhal, green gram and soya beans are good sources of protein.

I have been on a beefless diet for some years now and feel quite fit.

I hope this letter will induce the Malays of Sri Lanka to switch on to beefless diet.

*M.Z. Rahaman*

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tural links with their ancestral motherland, above all.

Our advancement as an artistically vibrant multicultural society should be reflected and immersed in to the national cultural fabric of Sri Lanka to gain the proud concern of even our ancestral homeland, who might be persuaded to relieve restraints and hindrance for travel and migration to homelands - Indonesia and Malaysia on a preferential basis of heritage rather than protocol.

*"Kaya pun miskin pun tidak peduli  
Semua Melayu kalau satu hati  
Minta doa ya Tuhan Maha Esa  
Kejayaan kita Melayu Bangsa."*



# MALAY KINGS OF SRI LANKA

By M. Farook Thalip

The history of Sri Lanka abounds with reference to the presence of Malays in this country from the beginning of the Christian era. It was during the time of the Buddhist - based Sri Vijaya Empire of the Malay peninsula that Malays first set foot in this country. The Malayu Polynesians of Indonesia were plying the spice trade between the Far East Africa, and Madagascar. Their sampans or boats docked in for stocks of water and food at the bay of Hambantota in South Sri Lanka as they did frequently due to the overlordship of the Indian Ocean.

The Sri Vijaya Empire, which comprised South-eastern Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Southern Philippines, the numerous Islands in the Pacific and the South Chinese Seas, held sway for nearly a millennium until the advent of the Arabs into the Indian waters, and the subsequent conversion to Islam of the Malay Buddhist and Hindus.

Next to India, the closest neighbouring country eastwards from Sri Lanka is Sumatra, and in the olden days Sumatra was known as Sinhapura, Swarnapura, Swarnabhumi and Swarnadvipa. Evidence of Malay rule of North Sri Lanka can be gleaned from the pages of history. According to the chronicles Mahawansa, Culawansa, Pujavali, Rajavali and rock inscriptions, there had been close affinity between the royal houses of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya, brought about by matrimonial alliances as well as mutual defence strategies, in the face of Indian threat of dominance in the region. King Mahinda IV, son of King Sena II of Sri Lanka, married Malay princess Sundari of Sumatra. King Wijayabahu, grandson of King Kasyapa, was married to Malay Princess Tilokasundari, daughter of the Maharaja of Sumatra, and grand daughter of the Malay queen Sundari and King Mahinda IV. Tilokasundari had two children Wickramabahu and Ratnavali. Wickramabahu became the ruler of Polonnaruwa and Ratnavali was the mother of king Parakramabahu the Great. Malay prince Nissankamalla from Sumatra married princess Subadra, daughter of Parakramabahu I. On the death of Wijayabahu II, Son of King Parakramabahu I, the throne of Polonnaruwa passed on to Prince Nissankamalla, which he ruled from 1187 to 1196. After the death of king Nissankamalla there was unrest and chaos in Sri Lanka due to an invasion from South India resulting in Polonnaruwa being ruled by an Indian Pandya Prince.

Magha or Maharaja of Sumatra, son of King Nissankamalla's daughter Savangasundari, was a prince of the Sri Vijaya Empire. In 1213 in order to snatch his hereditary right to the throne of Polonnaruwa, Prince Magha invaded Sri Lanka with a force of 24,000 soldiers comprising Malalas (Malays), Tamils and Javanese. Magha defeated the Indian invader and ruled the Northern kingdom of Sri Lanka for 20 years. Although driven out by the King Parakramabahu II's son Wijeyabahu and nephew Virabahu, Magha managed to rule Jaffna peninsula from one of the fortresses in the north. Thereafter in 1247, another Malay prince, Chandrabanu or Dharmaraja

of Thailand) invaded Sri Lanka to take away the tooth relic and the bowl relic of Lord Buddha from the possession of king Parakramabahu II. Despite being defeated by the forces of king Parakramabahu II on two occasions, Chandrabanu continued to rule the Jaffna peninsula for a good number of years until he was ousted by a Tamil King of Arya Chakravarti. Thereafter Magha's son Prince Sendemain arrived and successfully claimed the throne once ruled by his father. Prince Sendemain ruled the Northern Kingdom of Sri Lanka for the best part of a century as a vassal of Arya Chakravarti.

In order to consolidate and stabilise his position Magha settled in north Sri Lanka a large number of Tamils brought down from South India. Incidentally, it was Magha, the Malay king, who was responsible for the creation of the Jaffna kingdom. This is borne out by the fact that certain towns in Jaffna originally bore Javanese names, which have with the passage of time got corrupted to be called by their present names as described at the end of this article.

The intrusion of the Indians in to the Malay peninsula since the beginning of the Christian era left an indelible imprint of their Sanskrit language, culture, religion and the names of places and persons. They introduced the concept of Kingdoms in the east and in fact none of the Indonesian languages were put into writing before the introduction of Sanskrit and Indian vernaculars. The Indians gave the names of Indian towns and cities in certain places in the Malay Peninsula. The Kalinga and Sailendra dynasties that were originally founded in India were established in the Malay Peninsula too with the emergence of Melayu, Sri Vijaya and Madjapahit empires. The influence and power wielded by the Indians were so great that even the Malay kings came to be known by Sanskrit names and titles. For example, Prince Nissankamalla of Sumatra who was brought down to Sri Lanka by Parakramabahu I to become his son-in-law was not a Sinhalese but a Malay (Javaka) by race, and King Parameswara of Malacca, who embraced Islam and asked his subjects to follow suit, was not a Tamil but a Malay (Javaka). Unlike the other Malay kings of Sri Lanka, Prince Chandrabanu was in no way either connected or related to any member of the royal families of the Sinhalese. He invaded Sri Lanka with a large force armed with poisonous arrows claiming that as a Buddhist he too had the right to the possession of the relics of Lord Buddha. Though badly defeated on both occasions, yet he refused to leave the island until the relics were delivered to him. Prince Sendemain of the Kalinga dynasty in the Malay peninsula, who was the son of Magha, grandson of Nissankamalla and great-grandson of Parakramabahu I, was the last Malay (Javaka) king to rule the northern kingdom of Sri Lanka.

Consequently, among the Malays of Sri Lanka, there are several people even today bearing Sanskrit names, such as Singhawansa, Dharmawansa, Weerawansa, Gunavijaya, Bangsajayah, Raspathy, Jurangpathy, Surathy, Sundari, Dharma, Dharmani, Dharshan, Jayah, Veero, Laxana, Indra, Chintha, Devi, Soori, Ratna and so forth. The tamils pronounced the name 'Java' as Chava or Sava and called a Javanese as Chava -aal or Sava-aal meaning Java-man (a Javanese). On the contrary, the Sinhalese called the Javanese with the abbreviation 'Ja' and



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they referred to the Malays as ja-minissu meaning Javanese people. In the olden days Malays were also referred to as Malala. At this point one might pose the question as to what happened to the Malay and Javanese soldiers of Magha and Chandrabanu. Well, it is not wrong to presume or believe that as a result of their natural assimilation and integration with the majority Tamils and Sinhalese, they got swallowed up and lost their identity.

What remains of Malay occupancy in Sri Lanka are place names such as Jaffna derived from Java- Patnam, Chavakachcheri from Java Katchi, Chavakote from Java Fort etc., in the north, and Hambantota from Sampantota, Udumalla from Uda Malala, Pallamalla from Pahala Malala etc. in the south. However, there appears to be close similarities of the features of the Malay man in such Sinhalese in down south who bear the prefix 'Malala.....' to their names, such as Malalasekera, Malalagoda, Malalagama etc.

Following Dutch and British rule, other places in Sri Lanka bore evidence of Malay occupancy, such as Ja-watta, Ja-ela, Ja-kotuwa, Java Lane, Malay Street, Malay Colony at Ambalantota, Cassimgama at Tissamaharama etc. Kompannaveediya, meaning Street of Companies, which refers to the Malay Rifle Regiment (its parade ground was at Rifle Green) home of Malay activity until World War II, was dominated by Malays during British rule.

Source :

1. Prof.S. Paranavitane - " Ceylon & Malaysia", Lake House - Colombo.
2. Allen M. Seivers - "The Mystical World of Indonesia", The Jones Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London.

## A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR 'TERANG'

*Oleh : Mansour Aarifeen Sourjah*

'Terang' is the only Malay research - oriented, cultural, non-political, independent quarterly Newsletter in circulation in Sri Lanka and abroad, since the 'Alamat Lankapuri' and 'Wajah Selong' were published by the Malay literary savant Baba Ounus Saldin over a hundred years ago. This reflects the lacuna that existed for such a long time in the Malay literati conscience in particular and the cultural ethos of the community in general.

However, what meets our immediate concern is the retrieval of that situation by the thoughtful publication of the 'Terang' in 1987. Despite the existence of the prestigious and affluent Malay Organisations in and around Colombo, it was the dedicated members of that rural Kurunegala Malay Association who felt inspired by the sentiments and aspirations expressed at the Second Dunia Melayu Symposium held in Colombo in 1985, and launched the 'Terang' Newsletter. Our gratitude goes to Saudara T.S. Jamalun, Saudari Hidayah Jamion and Saudara Farook Thaliph founder Editor for being the pioneers in this regard.

The present situation is that having successfully published the Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Issue of 'Terang' (1987-1996), the Newsletter is being published under the able editorship of Saudara Nizam Samath a livewire of the Kandy Malay Association. The Newsletter has been re-oriented with a printed face-lift and brought much in line with journalism norms.

However let - us come to the most important aspect of the publication itself. It must be emphasised that during the last twelve years of uninterrupted publication of the 'Terang', the recurrent problem of financial constraints largely existed. The annual subscription fees did not regularly flow in as was reasonably desired and donations too were few and far between resulting in the Editor being made to undergo considerable difficulties in making ends meet.

In the first instance, 'Terang' has to be made broad-based in - its circulation to reach the majority of the Malays all over the Island and abroad. How could this be best achieved. It certainly calls for a co-operative effort on the part of the readership individually and by our Malay Organisations collectively. The individual reader with some effort on his part could introduce another Malay to join the membership and help set in motion a chain- process thus some success could be arrived at. Similarly if 'Terang' reaches every Malay Organisation in the Island, then the Secretary/Literary Secretary could be requested to enlist its members in joining membership of 'Terang'.

This is an appeal to individual Malays and every Malay Organisation to overlook their tidapathy attitude and come forward in a proactive effort and light up the path of 'Terang' in its dedicated cause in working towards Unity (Kerunan), Progress (Kemajuan) and Prosperity (Kejayaan) for the uplift and well - being of the Malay Community as a whole.

Let us give 'Terang' that much needed 'shot-in-the arm'

" Kaya pun Miskin Pun Tidat Peduli  
Semua Malayu Kalau Satu hati  
Saudara Saudari Minta Doa pada tuhan  
Lagi Lagi Tahun 'Terang' Menyiarkan."

### - TERANG -

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## DR. JAYAH - A GENTLEMAN POLITICIAN

*Oleh: B.D.K. Saldin.*

I refer to the article entitled "Jayah a gentleman politician" by Mr. E.C. Ahlip which appeared in the Sunday Island of the 5 July. Whilst enumerating the numerous achievements of Dr. Jayah, Mr. Ahlip also states "the Malays must realize that they are safe and sound in Sri Lanka thanks to Dr. Jayah heading the Muslim votes for freedom of Sri Lanka which was decided by his votes for freedom. Had he as a Malay voted against the need for freedom one can then imagine what would have been the hatred of the rest of the country for the Malays, a national crisis with Malays as victims".

The Malays are fully conscious of the part played by Dr. Jayah in supporting the resolution for freedom. Mr. SWRD Bandaranayake himself was full of praise for Dr. Jayah's action. Therefore how could Dr. Jayah who voted for this bill as a Muslim vote against it as a Malay. Does Mr. Ahlip presuppose that the wishes of the Malay community at that time were diametrically opposed to that of the Muslims? As his son in law, was Mr. Ahlip privy to Dr. Jayah's thought processes? Why should Dr. Jayah vote against the bill as a Malay? If Mr. Ahlip is trying to answer Mr. M.A. Sourjah's contention that a good many Malays believe that Dr. Jayah did not do as much for the Malays as for the Muslim community, then Mr. Ahlip has failed miserably.

What some Malays have against Dr. Jayah is not so much what he did but what he failed to do ie; his failure to identify himself with the Malay Community. Nevertheless this flaw does not in any way detract from his greatness.

## ON THE MALAYS, SOURJAHS AND HUSSAINMIYAS

*Oleh-Jainudeen Ahamath*

*President - National Council of YMMA'S*

Mr. Fazeer Radin's invectives published by Terang of January - March 98 on Dr. B.A. Hussainmiya, a renowned Sri Lankan Malay Scholar are interesting, albeit defamatory. Fazeer's objective is to defend the pure 'Malay' ancestry of Mr. M.A. Sourjah, while haranguing about Dr. Hussainmiya's claim for similar heritage. Thus the article raises a hornet's nest as to what constitutes ethnicity, much less about the Sri Lankan Malay selfhood. In fact, the controversy surrounding the Malay ethnicity is not peculiar to Sri Lanka. It is a frequently debated issue even in Malaysia, legal and constitutional definitions notwithstanding.

Fazeer has dug into all the major works published by Dr. Hussainmiya besides referring to his statements propounded in seminars and newspapers about the Sri Lankan Malay identity. Interestingly Fazeer betrays a

spark of pseudo- intellectual capability which has deplorably little original material to offer other than verbal barage on a scholar who has pioneered a scientific study of the Sri Lankan Malay community and well received in international academic circles.

Dr. Hussainmiya's researches have helped to raise fundamental questions regarding the Malay identity. One is compelled to ask how much any one has contributed to Sri Lankan Malay Studies ever since Dr. Hussainmiya has exhaustively written on this subject? Cowardly letters to the editor columns in popular newspapers and journals are not the places to refute the learned scholar's findings. Without producing any new evidence, first Sourjah and now Fazeer are engaged in vain and simplistic attempts to dismiss Hussainmiya's national identity as well as his assertions on the Malay ethnicity.

In order to refute Dr. Hussainmiya's theories about the progressive loss of cultural indicators among the Sri Lankan Malays, a scientific scrutiny becomes imperative. It requires primarily a re-examination of the sources, the authorities he has cited in his works. These include not only the colonial records in the British, Dutch, Indonesian and Sri Lankan Archives, but also hitherto undiscovered Jawi manuscripts and vernacular newspapers unearthed by him. Also Hussainmiya refers to wide ranging authorities such as an early 19th century British soldier, Robert Percival and a distinguished Malay late Tungku Abdul Rahman who had dealings with the Sri Lanka Malays, and vouched for the dilution of Malay characteristics in the community, including their typical physical features. Despite the reality of such historical cum cultural phenomena, it is Hussainmiya's lasting contribution to have underlined the fact that the Malay community in Sri Lanka has succeeded in maintaining its separate identity in a degree far higher than the so-called Malays of South Africa. If otherwise, why should an eminent researcher like Dr. Hussainmiya takes a 'harakiri' pride in claiming, as he always does, a Malay? Some misguided people are doing a great harm to the good- name of our community by unduly condemning Dr. Hussainmiya's person rather than his studied opinions.

Dr. Hussainmiya has read Fazeer Radin's article in question, and feels very flattered as someone has diligently read his works, and even displays competency to carry on the valuable work he has done.

Dr. Hussainmiya's latest writing focus on the political history of Brunei Darussalam, especially the role played by the Sultans. It is rather regrettable and a great loss to the community when he no longer seems active to pursue his interest in Sri Lankan Malay studies. Nor he is inclined to enter into empty polemics of this nature unless someone challenges him on a serious academic platform. He truly regrets that Mr. M.A. Sourjah has misinterpreted his views. The latter personally felt insulted to be told of a Batavian Christian slave, a fact Hussainmiya highlighted in a 1996 Daily News letter to the editor column in response to Mr. Sourjah's assertions on the former's Indian origins. What Hussainmiya actually conveyed was the pitfalls of recognizing Malay ethnic identity based on the nomenclature of family names. I think it is a brilliant piece of argument for argument's sake when Hussainmiya

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threw a gauntlet at Sourjah, by inviting attention to a slave convict banished to Sri Lanka by that name which occurred in a document kept in the Indonesian Archives. That did not necessarily mean that Mr. M.A. Sourjah himself is a descendant of that slave. It may even be that Sourjahs were former princes. It is amusing how Fazeer Radin fell trap in this gauntlet on behalf of Sourjah to unduly dig slave records in the Sri Lanka Archives and to admit the slave ancestry of at least some of them !

It is equally farcical to perpetuate an argument whether Hussainmiya is a Malay or not based on his name. The most important question is what constitutes a Malay? Are Sourjahs more Malay than Hussainmias because the latter have Indian blood in them? What about all the Indians who have been absorbed as Malays in the Peninsula? Or what about a larger number of Malay men and women who have married into other Sri Lankan Communities like Burghers, Sinhalese and Hindus? Or should the Sri Lankan Malays feel that they have blue blood and therefore are superior to other inhabitants in the island. The plain truth is that the Malays of Sri Lanka are not even a statistical category lately as they are being dumped with 'others' in the Government documents.

The Malays are neither like Jews or Nazis to worry about the purity of race. The term Malay is an all embracing term independent of, say constitutional interpretations by the Malay Governments. Through conversions and other processes, the Malay numbers are all the time multiplying. It is a well-known fact that when a non-Muslim embraces Islam it is accepted as *Masuk Melayu*, or 'entering the Malay' (ethnicity). So Islam and the race becomes identified in the Malay context to begin with. As Tan Sri Professor Dato Ismail Hussein, a well-known Malay intellectual (whose forefathers were Achenese), has admitted "the Malay is but a state of mind".

Historically too Malay, or the idea of Melayu has been an evolving concept meaning that throughout several centuries it came to encompass wide variety of races when there was a heavy mingling of nationalities in Southeast Asia based on the lingua franca of Malay tongue. In fact, Dr. Hussainmiya's seminal researches on the Sri Lankan Malay identity has opened up a whole Pandora's box among the Malayologists in defining the nature of Malayness. Recently there has been a spate of discussions on this subject in the context of an emerging Malaysia and its vocal leader Dr. Mahathir Mohammed. For example, Professor Adrian Vicker's article on "The Malay identity": Modernity, Invented Tradition, and Forms of Knowledge " that appeared in the international Journal called RIMA (Review of Malaysian and Indonesian affairs), Vol. 31, No. 1 June 1997, pp. 173-212 has been inspired by Dr. Hussainmiya's ideas. Professor Vickers has devoted several pages to discuss Hussainmiya's theory and exhorts in turn that "This outside example of a 'Malay' community whose 'Malayness' resulted from colonial intervention should kept in mind when reexamining 'Malayness' in Southeast Asia" (p.189). Also Professor Anthony Read, a renowned Australian Scholar of the Australian National University is currently preparing a full-length book to discuss Hussainmiya's views on Malay identity. Perhaps, they can take note of the emotional outburst of your writers who display such jingoistic atti-

tude about the purity of their Malay blood vis-a-vis Dr. Hussainmiya's.

The problem is that Hussainmiya has been more often highly misquoted or selectively quoted by the Sri Lankan Malay polemicists who highlights his statements about the dilution of Malay cultural indices. What does his book 'Orang Rejimen' convey in reality? What is the message it is carrying? How does the real world of scholarship view his contributions? Does he give the impression that Sri Lankan Malays have no claim to a Malay identity? It is quite the contrary. If there is any recognized piece of scholarship that cogently argues that the Sri Lankan Malays have kept up their identity amidst heavy odds of cultural annihilation, it is no other than Dr. Hussainmiya's researches originally conducted for Ph. D. research in Australian Monash University in the mid 70s. The end result of the book is that it has brought acute awareness among the contemporary Malay intellectuals, especially in Malaysia, not only to treat the Sri Lankan Malays as their long lost cousins, but also to extend the boundaries of the Malay world to Sri Lanka which previously stopped short of Sumatran island. Through Hussainmiya's researches which brought to light Sri Lankan Malay literary traditions little known until then to the outside world, now Colombo has been recognized as one of the great Malay Literary centers of the by-gone era at par with Malacca, Singapore, Penang and Batavia. And Baba Ounus Saldin of Sri Lanka (1832-1906), the Editor and publisher of *Alamat Lankapuri* the first Malay (Jawi) language newspaper in the world is accorded high esteem as one of the great Malay literary giants of all times. It is mischievous to quote Dr. Hussainmiya out of place without reading his whole book and message it conveys.

Because of their involvement with he soldiering occupation as colonial troops before the 20th century, people generally came to regard the Sri Lankan Malays only as brawny men, but not brainy men. It was Hussainmiya who pioneered the researches on their literary contributions which came as big surprise to the Malayan scholars. Lately several books have appeared appreciating the unique cultural contributions made by the Sri Lankan Malay to the development of Malay classical literature. Furthermore, a number of Sri Lankan Malay works have been edited and annotated by the Malayan scholars. Such activities reinforce the Malay identity in Sri Lanka at least in the eyes of those to whom it matters much - ie: the Malays of the East. Thus, Dr. Hussainmiya has successfully reestablished the worth of the Sri Lankan Malay community in Malaya and abroad.

One must admit that Hussainmiya is not writing a political treatise solely to defend the purity of Malay race. Rather his is an objective work of scholarship substantiated by historical, anthropological, ethnological, and literary evidence. If going by the purity of blood, the numbers of Sri Lankan Malays, would come down not by hundreds but by thousands. Besides it is a dangerous game to investigate one's 'darah keturunan' in the context of Sri Lanka. When Malay women do not wear Malay Baju Kurong, and Malay men do not wear Malay dress and songkok even on occasions, and speak a creole language which is mutually unintelligible to the real Malays of the Peninsula, how can outsiders identify a Sri Lankan

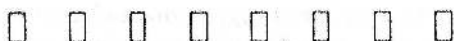
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Malay? By their colour, features? Unless they themselves come forward and declare their race. This fact emerged to the surface when the Malaysian delegates who attended the 2nd World Malay Symposium held in Colombo in 1985 initiated by Dr. Hussainmiya with Professor Tan Sri Ismail Hussain of Malaysia. The Malaysian delegates received a culture shock in seeing our women clad in saree which the Peninsular Malays always identify with the South Indian Tamils. Despite that, if there was any true fraternal feeling they felt towards our Malays, it is largely because of the groundwork solidly laid by Dr. Hussainmiya by his researches which have beyond doubt demonstrated the Sri Lankan Malays have their own self identity based on their affinity with the Eastern Malays rather than the Tamil-speaking Moors or the Arabs of the West.

Of course as Dr. Hussainmiya says, the latter communities helped a great deal to reinforce the religious identity of the Sri Lankan Malays having shared cultural traits with their compatriot Moors. Besides, the religious survival of the Sri Lankan Malays owes to a greater extent to the support lent by the majority Moor Muslims who have been their closest neighbours. In the past the Malay kampungs in Sri Lanka grew around or in close proximity to the Moorish quarters as they had to share initially the common Mosques, until the Regiments helped the Malays to establish their own Mosques. For present and future security of the Sri Lankan Malays, these facts need to be respected however distasteful to chauvinistic Malay minds. Sometimes the Malay literary traditions influenced the Moorish traditions to an extent that the first attempt at Arabu-Tamil lithographic newspaper publication in Sri Lanka was performed by a Malay-Baba Ounus Saldin, who was a devotee of a Moor Sufi. Dr. Hussainmiya's proficiency in both Tamil and Malay has proved to be of great asset for scholars in the field of comparative literature.

Dr. Hussainmiya does not like to get involved in any more controversy about his own ancestry. He follows strictly the principle he himself has discovered after consummate research, namely that the Malay identity in Sri Lanka is largely a matter of self-identity. He is a Malay, a fact entered in his birth certificate, brought up as a Malay, taught Malay manners, perceived as a Malay by his Moor colleagues. More importantly Hussainmiya is a rare person from Sri Lanka who can speak standard Malay and reads and writes Malay including the traditional Jawi Script. He, who was a joint chairman for a first great world Malay event held in Sri Lanka, came to be publicly hailed by the Malaysian Scholars as the cultural ambassador for the Sri Lankan Malays during the 2nd Malay World Symposium held in Colombo 1985. No one needs to throw a grenade at him to destroy that identity which he is proud of. It is up to the Malays themselves to cherish him and beseech him to write more on the Sri Lankan Malays to carve a place for themselves in history rather than being shoved upon the dustbins of History.



# THE MALAYS OF SRI LANKA

## An epoch of the descendants of the exiles, matyrs and kinsmen of Indonesia and Malaysians.

Human society is necessary. The philosophers, sociologists as well as the economists express this truth by saying that man is social animal by nature, that he needs a city of his kind; so that he could have his own ilk and co-exist like birds of a feather, flock together, where he could safeguard his hereditary race, interests and develop his egalitarian features.

It is not feasible for an individual living in a foreign environment to preserve his language, culture, customs and traditions to a great extent, especially where his traditional values and sentiments receive not even scant respect and are overshadowed and engulfed by all-pervading majority influences.

It also needs to be mentioned that men are by nature in contact with and tied to each other even where kinship is absent; though such ties are weaker than where they are reciprocated by kinship bonds. Such contact may also produce a solidarity nearly as powerful as that produced by kinship, provided that their values and identity are sincerely and sacredly assured by providence.

One factor for Islam to have flourished was when they respected the values of others like their own. The Islamic empire, where some caliphs strictly adhered to the commandments of Holy Quran (49:14) "Oh men, we created you all from a single male and female. We constituted you into nations and tribes that you may enrich and cooperate with one another. Noblest among you in God's eye, is the most virtuous."

In today's context such respect for human kind is available only in mere verbiage of polity but not in practice; hence it becomes necessary for the strugglers to live in their commune or get assimilated with the majority community and become degenerated under their banner. This is just the situation where the Sri Lankan Malays are to fight against. Social solidarity is found only in groups related by blood ties or by the ties which fulfill the same functions. This is because blood ties have a binding force on most men, which makes them concerned when any injury is inflicted on their next of kin. Men resent the oppression of their relatives, and hence the impulse to ward off any harm that may befall their relatives. It is the natural and deep rooted in them for instance in defence of Indonesia's homogeneous spirit; in a man like Dr. M.P. Drahman such a feeling arose. He was the stoutest defendant in Ceylon who campaigned vigorously for Indonesia's freedom organizing and whipping up popular sympathy to Indonesia in all sections and having caused hindrance to Dutch ships and aircrafts entering Ceylon. Similarly, Dr. T.B. Jaya campaigned for Malaysia's independence. Even now in Malay circles in Sri Lanka they boast of Mahathir Mohammed, who is in the limelight for lashing

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the west for their naked exercising of power and dictatorial attitude towards the east. These Malays intuitively tend to think Indonesia and Malaysia as part of their life.

If the degree of kinship between persons helping each other is very close, it is the blood tie, which by its evidence, leads the required solidarity. If the degree of kinship is distant, the blood is somewhat weakened but in its place there exists a family feeling based on the widespread of kinship. Hence each will help the other for fear of the dishonor that would arise if he failed in his duties towards one who is known by all to be related to him.

This confirms that saying of Prophet Mohamad (Pbuh) "learn your genealogy to know who are your near kinsman" meaning that kinship only serves as a function when blood ties leads to actual cooperation and mutual aid in times of crisis and danger.

The infrastructure of making a society's solidarity had to be explained in the context under discussion so that those interested, involved, victims and proactivists will be aware the cause and effect and the remedy towards the dilemma of the Sri Lanka Malays who are struggling to preserve their racial identity as summarized below which if not explained, it will be like treating a patient without revealing his ailment to him as well as to the physician. A people scans critical analytical thinking as a recipe for racial catastrophe.

There is ample evidence in support of the ancient links, between Sri Lanka and Malay Archipelago in chronicles, epitaphs, texts, research and at its best the scientific evidence. It could be briefed by citing that in Malay peninsula there were /are regions as Lanka, Kama Lanka, Lanka Suka, Lanka Padjong etc.. In their chronicles there are also words such as Jaya Lankara, Sangkala (Sinhala) and in Sri Lanka there are place names to be proof of the early Malay settlements - Chavakachchari (Java Kachchari), Yalpanam (Japanam), Japanna, Jagoda, Jakotuwa, Jagedera, Malagama (Malay Gama) etc.. The medical discovery that the Veddhas of Sri Lanka and the Senoi aborigines of Malay Peninsula belong to the same blood group and haemoglobin E as available in the Royal Anthropological Institute's journal published in 1862 volume 930 part 117-125. These pioneer Malay settlers have got merged with the natives and have become part and parcel of the ethos of the indigenous people of Sri Lanka; so that they have no qualms or quests whatsoever of their original ancestral identity.

Whereas it is not so with the Malays who suffered the vicissitudes of fortune to be banished by the cruel Dutch between 1650 to 1770 to this Island and subsequently were lured and imported here by the diplomatic British on condition that they will be returned to their homeland as and when asked for. The off spring of these exiles and the imported Malays are determined to maintain their ancestral identity unblemished.

When the British took the reign of Ceylon from the Dutch in 1796, they not only absorbed these exiled Malays but also imported further of their kind from 1800 onwards from the Strait Settlements in Malay Peninsula to serve for them as they found that Malays were intelligent, brave, dependable, God fearing, persevering and able soldiers and to this effect there are ample well docu-

mented evidence by British themselves, in the Sri Lanka National Archives.

There is an old Sinhalese saying: "Thuttu Thekata Ali Ganda Apu Javo" which mean the British lured the Malays that an elephant can be purchased in Ceylon for a tuppence. As much as to say our forebears have been enticed that things in Ceylon were so cheap and lucrative for trading than in their native land, which our elders cite as an example of the craftiness of the white men.

At the inception these Malays in Sri Lanka dwelt with their clans in 'Kampongs' (quarters). However, when the government demolished their houses for expansion and modernization of cities and roads, they had no alternative choice but to take shelter wherever it was available according to their means in isolated suburban towns and were naturally vulnerable to the element of majority environmental influences.

In majority of the schools in these remote areas where their children attended they had to offer in the absence of Islam the majority community's religion - Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity as a subject for their studies. At Muslim schools they were objected to wearing 'sonko' but the Moor headgear (kulla) was allowed and the Malay teachers were prevented from wearing 'baju kurung' but saree or the Arabic cloak. There are none. No avenues and facilities to impart their language, the traditional values. These values are virtually dead for them like the dead language. The more matured Malays gathered and learnt something of their racial aspects from the media and the like.

To make matters worse the so called Moor co-religionist, though they may not openly advocate to assimilate the Malays to their community based on the Muslim unity as such or are not even opposed to Malay unity and conscientiousness, yet may still be harboring some part of the ideology in their subconscious mind.

It is only at some critical juncture that exposes this ambivalence; and dichotomy. This reminds me of the Dustoevakan character who proposed to love the whole of humanity but refused to have another fellow in the room just for one night- no room in Islam in Sri Lanka for other races; other than the Moors, appears to be the selfish outlook of the Moors. Under the guise of brotherhood of Islam they attempt to assimilate all Muslims- Malays, Borahs, Memons, Afghans, etc., as Moors. It is their desire from the beginning that no other race should be allowed to be considered as Muslims other than the Moors. Refer Cabinet Memo No. 3/92 dated 21.12.92 Minister of Home Affairs and the Indo - Sri Lanka Agreement "....., and for the safety, well being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities in Sri Lanka." It stipulates on the subsequent Para 2.2 "acknowledgment that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multilingual plural society consisting, inter alia, of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors) and Burghers." Also it is stated in the constitution chapter 341 of Maradana Mosque "The right of managing of affairs appertaining to the said shall be exercised by Ceylon Moors....."

There has been suggestions and considerations now and then by the majority community Sinhalese and the Tamils to appoint a Malay in the highest legislature to

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# "OPERATION BALEK"

- migration of Malays to their ancestral land -

By Fazeer Radin

*This article is dedicated in memory of the late Saudara Chandra Putra S. Laxana who passed away on April 23, 1998 at the age of 62. Several of our kith and kin have left the shores of their adopted motherland seeking green pastures overseas but none other than Saudara Laxana, who was concerned and tried all what he could to get the Malays to their native land. His untiring efforts and dedication, his sponsorship of his Malay kinsman in Sri Lanka to migrate or "Operation Balek" to their ancestral land- Malaysia- could be attributed as " he was a man with a dedicated mission".*

Paradoxically it is a violation of basic amenities, fundamental rights and natural justice for an individual or a group of persons to be deprived of such inherent rights. The Malays of Sri Lanka, whose ancestors were matyrs hailing from Indonesia and Malaysia, having been rejected of humanitarian care and concern for over three centuries by their homeland are now being meted out step-motherly treatment in their prospects of returning to their native homelands-Indonesia and Malaysia.

## Symposium on Malay- Polynesian elements in the Commonwealth

A Symposium on Malay- Polynesian elements in the Commonwealth was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 27 to 29 November 1998 at the University of Malaysia under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism, the Federation of Writers of Malaysia ( Gapena) and the University of Malaysia. The symposium was attended by delegates from the Malay- Polynesian countries in the Commonwealth including Western Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and South Africa. Other neighbouring Malay countries such as Indonesia and Thailand have been invited as observers.

The aims of the symposium are:-

1. To bring about contacts between Malay and Polynesian groups.
2. To do research and compare the Malay consciousness in several contemporary fields such as art, literature, language and culture.
3. To initiate culture, cooperation among the peoples of Malay and Polynesian Diaspora.
4. To examine the possibility of future economic and social cooperation.

The Sri Lankan delegation comprised Farook Thalip, founder editor of the Terange, B.D.K.Saldin, a pioneer in Sri Lanka Malay studies, Dr.M.S.Jaldeen, Attorney-at-law and Kartini Mohamed, Research Officer, Rupavahini Corporation. Each of them will read papers in their respective fields.

LET'S LEARN ISLAM .....  
oleh Mass L.Usuf

## SHARIAH - THE ISLAMIC LAW

The main sources of Islamic Law are :

**The QURAN** : in which is contained the direct commandments of Allah;

**Sunnah** : This refers to a way, practice, rule of life, conduct and model behavior of the Prophet (Sal) in what he said, did or approved.

**IJMA** : The consensus of the opinion of the learned men and jurists; and

**QIYAS** : The analogical deductions which is one of important instruments that is able to develop the Islamic shariah to cater to changing circumstances and new needs of different times.

### Neither Pray or Bury

There were three times at which Allah's messenger (SAL) used to forbid us to pray or bury our dead:

- \* When the sun began to rise until it was fully up.
- \* When the Sun is in it's peak at midday till it passed the meridian
- \* When the sun drew near to setting till it had set

## Marriage Proposals

\*Aunty seeks respectable, kind hearted, professionally qualified partner with sober habits, age between 35 to 40 years for her smart, attractive, social, modest, responsible minded, qualified niece presently employed as an Administration Programme Officer in an International Organisation of the United Nations in Europe. All details in first letter, please c/o The Editor

MP/12/98

\*Parents seek marriage partner for their daughter 38 years. Well educated very good family background and of means. Divorcee considered. Reply c/o The Editor

MP/13/98

\*Uncle seek marriage partner for 19 years niece. Attractive. House and property with jewellery and dowry available. Reply c/o The Editor

MP/14/98



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represent their community ; but here again it is the Moor politicians who manipulate the cog in the wheel by the false pretense that the Malays and the Moors are Muslims and therefore would be superfluous to have two representatives for a single Muslim entity. Thus they utilize the Malays as their carrier- the donkey with the carrot dangling in front to ride to destinations of their whims and fancies with the whip in their hand. This is clear from the fact that there are several Muslim members in the parliament and ambassadors- all are Moors; not one single Malay. This explains the dilemma of the Malays like the lost tribe of Maya in Guatamela and Mexico and the gradually vanishing Red Indian tribe of America. The Christian missionaries were responsible for degenerating these two tribes. The Muslims (Moors vide Indo- Sri Lanka agreement ) so called preachers of Islam want the Malays to shed their identity race, dress, culture , customs, traditions etc., and to fall in line with them, which they claim as Islamic.

Whereas astronomical amounts are being spent, much hue and cry highlights in world wide head lines, media are propagated re- excavating, preserving archeology and caring of extinct animals, birds, fauna and flora in Sri Lanka, but are showing the Napoleon blind eye and deaf ear to those struggling human beings- the Malays in front of their very noses begging to save their withering race by deprivation of justice by the successive governments who claim to be pillars of democracy and cover, repeated editorials to this effect in the lop sided media.

The most noble, highly praise worthy, most meriting among citizens of any country are their martyrs and patriots, whether they are alive, dead, close or far apart. It is charismatic, divine, ethical and moral to pay due respects, give credit and monetary rewards for their bravery and patriotism out of gratitude by their respective homeland countries.

Martyrs and patriots in any country not only fight against their enemy and oppressors from their national wealth being plundered but also from preventing their culture , customs, traditions and religion being eroded. Such sentiments and values had the forebears of the Sri Lanka Malays been able to foresee would befall on their descendents - the Sri Lankan Malays - and those in their motherland being unconcerned of this predicament and quite oblivious to the cry of these victims in Sri Lanka struggling to salvage them from their sentiments and values being raped and destroyed, their ancestors would have preferred to remain non-committed and enjoying the fat of their country.

It is in appreciation and feeling for their kind that Burghers in Sri Lanka are given preference to migrate to countries like, Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand etc. Mao-tse-Tung welcomes the Chinese from all parts of the world to come back to China. Israel keeps their doors open for the Jews to return to their native land. The Tamils in India used their influence with their government to come to the rescue of their race in Sri Lanka. The Japanese and the British have paid tribute to their soldiers who lost their lives in Sri Lanka during World

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War II by planting plaques here in Sri Lanka in memory at the burial grounds and in addition their country men often pay tribute to these dead soldiers.

The British, French, German, Japanese and others encourage the Sri Lankans to study their language and heritage and reward those who excel by giving them scholarships and lucrative employment in their country.

The immigrants in Malaysia and Indonesia , where they left their ancestral motherland to seek better pastures did so; not for the love of the adopted motherland but in their own economic interest should have no qualms of the direct descendants of their native martyrs and patriots returning to their motherland; but the latter should be accorded preferential immigration rights.

How much more sentimental welcome should the descendants of the martyrs and patriots be accorded in the event of Sri Lanka Malays opting to return to their motherland.

Whatever circumstances or reasons may be , it is the bright right , fundamental right , natural justice, intuition and urge for the love of the Sri Lankan Malays to return to their ancestral motherland. Besides whatever changes these Malays have to make and adopt themselves in their native motherland it is part and parcel of their racial identity, which they would like to sacrifice for the motherland - its pleasure is more than the pain. At its best they will always be loyal and patriotic towards their homeland than the migrants who seek green pastures and not the value of their adopted motherland.

There are only about 60,000 Malays in Sri Lanka. Out of them all would not like to 'balek' to their motherland. The Malays of Sri Lanka who wish to return to their homeland must be helped without restraints - it is the incumbent duty of Malaysia and Indonesia being their ancestral homeland.

*" As Tahafir Ullah Al Haleem "*

I seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah.

*" Wa in Lam - Tagh firlana Wa Tarhamna "*

If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us.

*"La Nakoonanna Minal Kharfireen. "*

We will certainly be lost

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