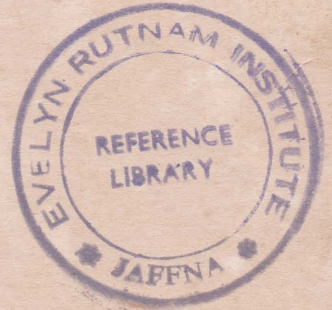


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THE SPOKEN DIALECT
OF THE MUSLIMS
of Sri Lanka

(CEYLON)



Paper read at the

FOURTH

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE SEMINAR

ON TAMIL STUDIES

Jaffna, Sri Lanka

(January 3rd to 9th 1974)

by

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“ Markazi ”

Henamulla, Panadura
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The Spoken Dialect of the Muslims of Sri Lanka

The concept of one world is found in the ancient Tamil literature. It is manifest in the classical texts written in the time of yore. The motto of the International Association of Tamil Research reflects this concept clearly as is the idea contained in a verse in Purana nuru that all the world is mine and all are my relatives. யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிர் (Yaatum Uree Yaavarum Keelir). There is also another saying in Tamil that there is 'only one group (of people) and there is only one god. ஒன்றே குலம் ஒருவனே தேவன் Onree Kulam Oruvanee Teevan). Even today we see the truth of these statements if we pause for a moment to analyse the composition of the cosmopolitan nature of the millions of people who speak the Tamil language. It is also true that a very large majority of them live in what is today known as Tamil NaaTu. There are also Tamil speaking people in various other countries like Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Burma, Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa etc. Again a very great portion of the Tamil speaking people are Hindus. This include both Saivites and Vaishnavites. Then there are the Buddhists, the Jains, the Christians and the Muslims who consider Tamil language as a language of their own because they find that the Tamil Literature caters in a large way to their religious needs. That is why people belonging to all the great religions of the world consider Tamil language as their sacred language, second only perhaps to the respective languages of their religions. For the Muslims Tamil language is sacred second only to that of Arabic, the language of their religion, Islam.

An attempt is made herein to analyse, in brief, the content, the extent and the important characteristic features of Tamil as spoken by the Muslims of Sri Lanka in their day to day life. This brief survey will also include the external influences that have contributed to the present state of the language as spoken by the Muslims in this country. For a correct estimate of this survey it is essential to ascertain the numerical strength of those who speak Tamil in Sri Lanka, and the Tamils in general and the Muslims in particular. The total populations of Sri Lanka today¹ is 12,711,143 of which Low-Country Sinhala number 5,445,706, Kandyan Sinhala 3,700,973, Ceylon Tamils 1,415,567, Indian Tamils 1,195,368, Ceylon Moors 824,291, Indian Moors 29,416, Burghers 44,256, Malays 41,615 and others 13,957. On a religious basis the break-up of population in Sri Lanka is as follows:— Buddhists 8,567,570, Hindus 2,239,310 Muslims 909,941 Roman Catholics 883,111; other Christians 103,576 and others 7,635. The Tamil speaking population in Sri Lanka consists of all the Hindus, a very large number of the Muslims and a reasonable section of the Christians. Among the Tamil speaking people I have not included the Malays who constitute the 0.3% of the entire population (4.5% of the Muslims in this country) as they speak Malay, a separate dialect of their own, although they could to a great extent speak Tamil. Therefore it is not wrong to say that more than 25% of the population of Sri Lanka are Tamil Speaking.

The Muslim population of Sri Lanka consists of Ceylon Moors, Indian Moors and Malays. The Ceylon Moors in Ceylon have a past history of about twelve centuries. They consider that their forefathers were of Arabic origin. Indian Moors are those whose immediate forebearers are considered to be of Indian origin. Malays are described as the direct descendents of those immigrants from the Indonesian Archipelago. Ceylon Moors and Indian Moors are generally Tamil speaking while Malays speak Malay, a dialect devoid of literature, although they are very conversant with Tamil as it fills the gap in their life as the language of the religious customs and practices.

In Sri Lanka Muslims live scattered in many parts of the country. How they are dispersed all over the country is amply proved by the statistics of the census of population. There are nine provinces in Sri Lanka and two of them the Northern Province and the Eastern Province are traditionally Tamil speaking areas. Sinhala language is spoken by the large majority of the people in the other provinces although there is a concentration of Tamil speaking people in the estate areas in the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces. The following table may give an indication as to how Muslims Population is scattered throughout the country.

<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Percentage of Muslims on total population</i>	<i>Percentage on the total Muslim population</i>
Western Province	7	26
Central „	6	15
Southern „	3	5
Uva „	3	3
Sabaragamuwa „	3	4
North Central „	7	4
North Western „	6	10
Northern „	5	5
Eastern „	34	28

This shows that 33% of the Muslims live in traditionally Tamil speaking areas the Northern and the Eastern provinces and 67% of the Muslims live scattered in the other parts of Sri Lanka.

Even though little more than two third of the Muslims live in areas predominantly Sinhala speaking, they continue to communicate with each other in Tamil, select Tamil as medium of instruction and read newspapers and literatures in Tamil. Even though the forefathers of original Muslim settlers in places like Beruwala in the Western Province spoke Arabic, their descendants in the present day Sri Lanka are not very conversant with the language of their ancestors except for the familiarity they have with Arabic for the purpose of reading the Holy Quran and performing the religious rites and practices. These facts show that the Muslims of Sri Lanka from time immemorial have eschewed Sinhala and have not taken sufficient interest to use Arabic as a means of communication among themselves. It may be that the Muslims after their arrival in Sri Lanka adopted Tamil as their language of communication as at that time the Tamil language would have been the commercial language of the regions of the Indian Ocean which according to a historian 'became a vaster Arabian Sea'.

In any social group language plays a role of primary importance³. The Tamil language being the commercial language of the area in which the forefathers of the Muslims of Sri Lanka lived, they have had no difficulty in adopting Tamil as their language of communication. The human being in the words of Aristotle is the most imitative of creatures and acquires all his first lesson by means of imitation⁴. They would have not encountered any difficulty in adopting Tamil as language of communication among themselves. Once a means of communication is selected, it continues to develop into full-fledged language. It is the result of a gradual growth 'as one language does not give birth to another and no philologist could give the hour of the birth of a language'⁵

In the process of the growth of language many external factors influence its content. The religion, the culture and customs and practices of the people tend to change the charac-

ter of the language they speak. It is more so in the case of the Muslims and their languages. The advent of Prophet Muhamed and the development and spread of Islam under his immediate successors brought Islam into touch at one sweep, with both Atlantic and Pacific Oceans including the lands in between them. Arabic is the language of Islam and therefore it is the sacred language of the Muslims. 'Furthermore the Arabic language is the universal mark of Muslim dominance or influence wherever Islam spread.'⁶ It is incumbent on Muslims to read Holy Quran and recite prayer rituals in Arabic. As a result, they come to know many words of Arabic origin. When a person becomes familiar with two or more languages he uses words from the both or all the languages he knows. It is said that 'when a person habitually has to express himself in two different languages, he will unconsciously employ the idiom of one while speaking the other'⁷ This explains for the presence of a large number of Arabic words in the spoken dialect of the Muslims in Sri Lanka.

Tamil spoken by the Muslims in the Tamil NaaTu differs from that of the others. Spoken Tamil changes from area to area, community to community and society to society. 'No two persons who speak the same language pronounce all the sounds of their words in precisely the same manner'⁸ Even in Sri Lanka the spoken Tamil changes from place to place according to the environment in which the Muslims live. Not only does their spoken language differ very much from that of other Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka, but even the Tamil spoken by the Muslims of Northern Province in particular and of the Eastern province in general varies from that of the Muslims living in the other provinces and the predominantly Sinhala speaking areas. Even the Tamil spoken by the Muslims living in various parts of the Sinhala speaking areas differs from place to place as far as the accent and pronunciation are concerned. Hence can we call the spoken Tamil language of the Muslims in Sri Lanka as a different dialect?

Dialect is a form of speech which is peculiar to a district, a class or group of persons. It is a subordinate variety of a particular language. It has its own distinguishable features. Its vocabulary content is one such feature. In regard to pronunciations and idioms too the dialect displays a characteristic features of its own. Very often phonetic conception give rise to the emergence of dialects which later develop themselves progressively. The dialect was the original form of the language. 'Hardly anyone speaks like anybody else and even the same dialect may have been changed during the course of the time'

The Tamil language spoken by the Muslims especially those living in the Sinhala speaking areas cannot be easily comprehended by others not only because the pronunciation of Tamil words differs much from that of others but also because the percentage of the words of other languages especially of Arabic used in Tamil is very much greater. When two ordinary Muslims are engaged in conversation in Tamil, it may be that the Tamil speaking non-Muslim peasant would not be able to follow the trend of their conversation. The fact that the off-shoot is different from the original language in matters of pronunciation may be due to the fact that 'the cardinal principle of sound change is economy of exertions'¹⁰. Again this kind of change is not due to laziness but convenience. There is an order of the day in language as elsewhere a survival of the fittest. According to F. N. Fink, a German linguist, a language must be considered only as an act of interpreting the soul of the people. Special languages or dialects are the result of the social divisions but they are always born of the very heart of the common language from which they usually continue to draw their sustenance. Dialects arise spontaneously through the natural interplay of linguistic acts. The appearance of a dialect may be due to the extension of an organised political power or the influence of a predominant social class or to the supremacy of liter-

ature. Whatever may be its recognised origin, there are always political, social or economic reasons which contribute to its preservation'¹¹. The Muslims have preserved their dialect of Tamil in Sri Lanka due mainly to religious reasons. According to E. Renan, a civilization alone can spread a language over a great mass of people. It is also true that the language is symbolic of the national character of those who speak it.¹² In the Tamil dialect of the Muslims the Arabic words so far as they are connected with Islam are by far the most numerous. There are also Persian words. Spoken Tamil of the Muslims of Sri Lanka is not without its quota of words of Sinhala origin. Now let us see these aspects in detail.

There are certain Tamil words in the spoken dialect of the Muslims of Sri Lanka that have assumed the status of sacred words. Foremost among them is **Thozhukai** (தொழுகை) Muslims do not use this word in any other meaning other than to denote the prayer to Allah, the God Almighty. In Tamil **NaaTu**, *Namaz* is sometimes used to indicate prayer but not in Sri Lanka. An ordinary Muslim will go to the extent of saying this word as an Arabic word meaning it to be an Islamic Word. Another such word is **oothuthal** (ஓதுதல்). The Reading of Holy Quran in particular and the religious books in general is referred to **oothuthal** and not **vaaciththal**. Perhaps the Muslims wanted to show that the recitation of the Holy Quran and the religious books is not on par with the mere reading of literature **Nhoonpu** (நோன்பு) is yet another word used by the Muslims to denote the observance of fasting. The word **viratham** (விரதம்) with identical meaning is not in general use by the Muslims. **Alhharici** (அள்ளரிசி) is yet another Tamil word exclusively used by the Muslims in connection with the compulsory charity on the day of the festival of *Ramlan*. This term refers to rice in both-hands-full which is equivalent to about a measure. In the days of the fasting it is a common practice for the Muslims to consume rice-gruel along with it is taken chutney known as **thuvai** (துவை) as a 'vehicle of medicine.'

Palhhi (பள்ளி) is the term generally used by Muslims to denote the mosque, their place of worship and **palhhihkuTam** (பள்ளிக்கூடம்) a school where the recital of Holy Quran is taught and the children are trained in the recitals of the religious practices. The wing is **citaku** (சிறகு) in Tamil and the wings of the mosque are generally known by the Muslims as **citaku**.

Some of the classical Tamil words are still preserved in the spoken dialect of the Muslims in Sri Lanka in connection with the alms-giving held in the Mosques and in the houses on important occasions. One such word is **kalam** (கலம்) meaning utensils used to serve food. **ThaTuppu** (துடுப்பு) a large ladle used to cook foods in large scale as is evidenced in *Purananuru*,¹⁴ **Kalhari** (களரி) is yet another term used to denote the assembly. This word is used always to refer to the assembly of Muslims gathered in connection with the religious or social functions held either in the mosque or the houses of individual Muslims. There are a large number of Tamil words used by the Muslims in their conversation with the modification of sound. As 'the language is primarily the communication of ideas by means of articulate sounds'¹⁵, there is a possibility of a change in the sounds of the words used, resulting in a phonetic law. A phonetic law of a language is a statement of the regular practice of that language at a particular time in regard to the treatment of a particular sound or a group of sounds in a particular setting.¹⁶

Now let us see the phonetic tendencies in Tamil as spoken by the Muslims of Sri Lanka. Very often the initial **i** (இ) sound of the two syllabic words change into **e** (ஏ). **ITam** (இடம்) place changes into **eTam** (ஏடம்) **ilham** (இளம்) young chagnes into **elham** (எளம்) **nilam** (நிலம்) land changes into **nelam** (நெலம்) **nitam** (நிறம்) colour changes into

netam (நெறம்) **viral**, (விரல்) finger changes into **veral** (வெரல்). Trisyllabic words like **citaku** (கிறகு) wing too changes into **cetaku** (செறகு). There are other words like **ilai** (இலை) leaf where the initial 'i' changes into 'e' and the final 'ai' shortens to 'a' as **ela** (எல) **vilai** (விலை) price changes into **vela** (வெல) **nhilai** (நிலை) doorway to **nhela** (நெல). In some other words initial **i** changes into **u** and the final 'ai' shortens to **a** as in **piNai** (பிணை) security into **poNa** (பொண): **pizhai** (பிழை)—error into **pozha** (பொழ) **pitai** (பிறை) crescent into **pota** (பொறு). Special mention must be made of **iraNam** (இரணம்) exclusively used by the Muslims in their spoken dialect to mean food. Standard dictionaries¹⁷ give **iraNam** various meanings except food. This word may have been derived from **raNa** meaning flesh, also **raNa**-wound as food is an essential nutrient for the growth of flesh. In Tamil literature of the Muslims this word **iraNam** meaning food is very often used specially in the context of describing the might of Allah as provider of food to all **iraNam alhipparan Allah** (இரணம் அளிப்பவன் அல்லாஹ்) This word **iraNam** is used as **eraNam** (எரணம்) in the spoken dialect of the Muslims.

The initial **u** (உ) becomes **O** (ஓ) **uTal** (உடல்) body becomes **oTal** (ஓடல்) **ulaakam** (உலகம்)—world becomes **olakam** (ஓலகம்) **uvamai** (உவமை)—similar becomes **ovama** (ஓவமை) and at times it becomes **okama** (ஓகமை). **Ukappu** (உகப்பு) pleasure becomes **okappu** (ஓகப்பு) **ulakkai** (உலக்கை)—pestle becomes **olakkai** (ஓலக்கை) **urai** (உரை)—conversation becomes **orai** (ஓரை) **ural** (உரல்) —mortar becomes **oral** (ஓரல்) **uyaram** (உயரம்) and also **ocaram** (ஓசரம்) **ulhavu** (உளவு)—spying becomes **olhavu** (ஓளவு) **utavu** (உறவு) —relationship becomes **otavu** (ஓறவு); **utaippu** (உறைப்பு) pungency becomes **otappu** (ஓறப்பு) In this case **ai** (ஐ) the second sound becomes **a** (அ) **uNavu** (உணவு) becomes **oNavu** (ஓணவு) food. The word **oNavu** (ஓணவு) is also used to indicate warmth. **uNarcci** (உணர்ச்சி)—feelings, becomes **oNarcci** (ஓணர்ச்சி).

The head is **thalai** (தலை) in Tamil and in the spoken dialect of the Muslims it is **thala** (தல) as is the case in Malayalam and Telugu. The surd character **k** is used to write both the surd and sonants but whenever the **k** comes in the middle of the word as so ant like in the word **kaakam** (காகம்) it is more or less pronounced as **kaaham**. The words **makan**—son and **makalh**—daughter are also pronounced in a similar manner. In some part of Sri Lanka Muslims go a step further and pronounced them respectively not as **mahan** and **mahalh** but as **mavan** and **mavalh**. In the same way **marunakan**—nephew and son-in-law and **Marumakalh**—niece and daughter in-law are respectively as **marumavan** and **marumavalh**. A large dinner dish is called **sahan** in Arabic with a hard **h** but it is pronounced as **savan** to denote the same meaning in the spoken dialect. It is a general phonetic tendency for surd of **k** to become a sonant of **k** and then becomes an **h** and finally changed into a **v**.

Generally the vocative in Tamil is formed merely by affixing or suffixing some signs of emphasis. The most common vocative in Tamil is the emphatic **ee** which is simply appended to the noun. The noun **Makan** in the vocative is **makanee** (மகனே) with emphatic **ee**. It is also used as **makeen** (மகேன்) with the changing of the place of the emphatic **ee**. Those who use **mavan** and **mavalh** make their own vocative forms by adopting **maveen** and **maveelh** in their spoken dialect.

Now we come to what is called a 'phonetic phenomenon'. According to J. A. H. Murray, 'the total loss of grammatical gender in English and the almost complete disappearance of cases are purely phonetic phenomena'¹⁸. In fact a 'phonetic law is not an explanation but something to be explained.' Let us pick out a verb in Tamil. **Poo** (போ) to go is a monosyllabic root. The masculine singular past tense form of this root **poo** is **poonaan**.

(போகூன்)—he went, the present tense form is **pookitaan** (போகிறூன்)—he goes, and the future tense form is **poovana** (போவான்)—he will go. If we dissect **poovana** into its component parts we have **poo**+**n**+**an** wherein **poo** is a verbal theme **n** is a medial particle indicating past tense and **an** is the pronominal termination denoting the masculine singular. The finite verb from the verbal theme **poo**, Muslims use their spoken dialect is **poona**. According to the Tamil Grammarian this word **poona** is a relative participle or the adjective participle, a participle which is invariably followed by a noun and preceded by the words or phrases that depend upon the relative. In Tamil relative participle is known as **peyareccam** (பெயரெச்சம்) which in fact means a word which requires the complement of a noun to complete its signification. Muslims of Sri Lanka use this word **poona** as a finite verb irrespective of gender, person and number. **Nhaan poona** (நான்போன)—I went. **nhaanga poona** (நாங்கபோன)—we went, **nhii poona** (நீ போன)—You went (singular) **Nhinga poona** (நீங்க போன) **avan poona** (அவன்போன)—he went **Aval poona** (அவள்போன) she went **avanga poona** (அவங்கபோன)—they went. **MaTu poona** (மாடுபோன)—ox went. **maatuka poona** (மாடுகபோன)—oxen went. It should be noted that whenever the subject is plural the consonant **lh** (ள்) is of the plural suffix **kalh** (கள்)—is dropped in the spoken dialect. This practice is maintained even in asking a question. When did you go? **nhii eppeen poona**? (நீ எப்பேன் போன). The answer is that I went yesterday. **Nhaan neththu poona** (நான் நேத்துப் போன); I went now **Nhan ippa poona** (நான் இப்ப போன) It is observed that **neettu** (நேற்று) has changed into **neththu** (நேத்து) and **ippoohatu** (இப்பொழுது) into **ippa**. The construction is little different in the question did you go yesterday? **nhii nhee poonoo** (நீ நேத்து போன) The answer would be yes. I went yesterday. **oo nhaan neththup poona** (ஓ நான் நேத்துப் போனே). As far as the finite verbs in the spoken Tamil of the Muslims are concerned, there does not seem to be any difference between the present tense and future tense. The relative participle denoting the present tense **pookita** has been made use of by the Muslims. The verbal theme **poo** and medial particle **kita** denoting present tense constitute the relative participle **pookita**. In the Muslim usage **pookita** has become **poora**. **Nhan ippa poora** (நான் இப்ப போற)—I go now and **nhaan nhalhaikku poora** (நான் நாளைக்குப் போற)—I will go tomorrow. **Niiippa pooroo?** (நீ இப்ப போன)—Do you go now? and **nhii nalaikku pooroo?** (நீ நாளைக்குப் போன)—will you go tomorrow? are two questions to which the respective answers would be **nhaan ippa poora** (நான் இப்ப போற)—I go now and **nhaan nhalaiikku poora** (நான் நாளைக்குப் போற)—I will go to tomorrow. I would like to quote here the views of a Dravidian Philologist.¹⁹ He says :

“In ancient times as may be gathered from Malayalam poetry and especially from the inscriptions preserved by the Syrian Christian and the Jews, the pronouns were suffixed to the Malayalam verb precisely as they still are in Tamil. At present the verb is entirely divested, at least in the colloquial dialect, of signs of plurality; and with the pronouns the signs of number and gender also have necessarily disappeared Though the personal signs have been abandoned by the Malayalam verbs, the sign of tense or time have been retained and are annexed directly to the root..... Thus whilst we should say in Tamil **aTiththeen** (அடித்தேன்)—I beat; **aTiththai** (அடித்தாய்)—thou didst beat; **aTiththan** (அடித்தான்) he beat, Malayalam uses in those and all similar cases the verbal participle with prefixed pronouns I, thou, he etc. thus **nhaan aTiccu**, I beat; **nhii aTiccu**, thou didst beat; **avan aTiccu**, he beat.

The Tamil form of the Malayalam **aTiccu** is **aTiththu** which is a verbal participle-**vinaiyeyccam** (வினையெச்சம்) while the equivalent finite verb of the Muslims is **aTicca**. Therefore the

difference between the Malayalam and Muslim usage of finite verbs is that the former is a verb's participle while the latter is relative participle. The few other examples are **kuTicca** (குடிச்சு)—drank; **piTicca** (பிடிச்சு)—caught, **vaicca** (வைச்சு)—kept, **piricca** (பிரிச்சு)—divided, **maTicca** (மடிச்சு)—folded, **kaTicca** (கடிச்சு)—bit, **parththa** (பார்த்து)—saw, **ooTina** (ஓடின)—ran, **paaTina** (பாடின)—sang etc.

Muslims the world over have inherited the legacy of Islam including the Arabic language. Islamic religious terms which are in Arabic are indispensable for every Muslims, wherever he may be, to perform his religious duties which are interwoven with his daily life. The Islamic terminology in Arabic cannot be translated into an indigenous language. Their transliteration will not convey the exact shades of the original meanings either. Therefore, wherever Islam spread the indigenous people have considered it nothing but proper to absorb into their native dialect all the Arabic words of Islamic terminology that are indispensable. It is due to this factor that the vast multitude of pilgrims that assemble in Holy Mecca do not find it difficult to perform their religious practices which they discover not only common but also consist of identical terminologies. Muslims saw to the preservations of such Arabic words in their indigenous dialect at any cost. This explains how the Arabic words became a part and parcel of the Tamil language spoken by the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

There is hardly a language which in one sense may not be called a mixed language. One philologist describes the cosmopolitan nature of the English language in this manner. "Every country of the globe seems to have brought some of its verbal manufactures to the intellectual market of England".²⁰ Every country of the globe, where Muslims reside, seems to have received some of the verbal manufactures from the intellectual market of Arabia, the birth place of Islam. Since Muslims of Sri Lanka have come in contact with more than one language, they have used appropriate words from those languages in their spoken dialect. It is an accepted fact that no language is entirely free from borrowed words because no nation has been completely isolated. It is also true that there are innumerable Arabic words in the Tamil usage but not vice versa. This is what Fredrick the Great of Germany said of French and German languages, "We avoid using the native phrases in foreign tongue but we use foreign words in our native speech."²¹ Now let us select the Arabic words used in the spoken Tamil of the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

The large number of Arabic words in the spoken dialect of Muslims can be grouped into several categories. A number of such words are connected with the marriage ceremony of the Muslims. The marriage contract itself is known as **NIKAH** and the other participants connected with the ceremony are all known by Arabic words. The person performing the marriage ceremony is known as **WAKIL**—the agent of the **WALI**, the next of kin or attorney who actually sings on behalf of the bride in the presence of *Saheed*-witnesses. The acceptance of the marriage contract by the bridegroom is known as **QABUL**—consent. The amount of money a bridegroom has to pay to the bride is known as **MAHR**—the bride money. It is enforced on the husband by law as a mark of respect for the wife, in exchange or the usufruct of the wife. The nuptial feast is known as **WALIMAH** for which he who is invited must attend according to a saying of **PROPHET MUHAMED**. Muslim divorces by husband is known as **TALAK** and **IDDAAH**, literally number means the term of probation incumbent upon a woman in consequence of a dissolution of marriage, either by divorce or death of her husband.

Life is *Hayat*. Death is *Mout* as well as *Wafat*. The former is used in connection with the death of ordinary people and the latter with that of dignitaries. The dead body is *Mayyat*. The word *Janaza* is used both for the dead body and for the funeral prayer. *Kafan* means shroud in white used to cover the dead body. It is from the Arabic word *Kafan* the English word coffin has been derived. The grave is *Qabr* in Arabic. Angel of death is known as *Malakal Mout*. Memorial service invariably with

giving and the conclusion of the recital of Quran is known as *Khatm*. The shrine of a Muslim dignitary is known as *Ziyarah* from the Arabic word *Ziyarath* meaning viciation. *Talqin* is instructions given at the grave of a departed Muslim immediately after the burial.

There are also Arabic words used by the Muslims in connection with the mosque and the prayers performed in the mosque. *Wagt* means time and in the phraseology of Muslim the word has a connotation of the hours of prayers. At the appropriate time the crier *Muazzin* summons the faithfuls to the prayer from the *Minarah* an anglicised minaret, which is a lofty turret of a mosque, the anglicised version of the Arabic word *Masjid*, literally the place of prostration. The actual call or summon is known as *Azan* meaning announcement. On hearing the call - *Azan*, a Muslim makes a bee-line to the *Masjid* before entering which he should cleanse himself. If necessary he enters the public urinal for *Istinja*-abstersion. In the dialect of the Muslim the public urinal attached to the mosque is known as "the room for *Istinja*". The next important act is ablution *Wulu*. And for this purpose every mosque has a attached pond *havu* in Arabic at the entrance. The ablution consists of washing the exposed parts of the body namely the hands, face, arms, forehead and feet upto the ankles.

With the mosque are associated many Arabic words such as *Minbar*, pulpit in a mosque from which *Khateeb*, the preacher delivers *Khutba* sermon to the *Jamaath*, the congregation, assembled in the Mosque for the *Jumah* (the Friday) prayer. *Jum'a* means the day of assembly. Actually the Prayer in congregation preceded by *i'ymath* which though literally means 'causing to stand', is recited almost simultaneously with the beginning of the prayer. *Musalla* is prayer carpet. Then the prayer commences, with *Imam*-leader who stands at the *Minrab*, a niche in the centre of the wall in the direction of Mecca heading the congregation. Each posture has a name of its own in Arabic. With the *Niyath*, the intention, the payer begins. The recital of *Allchu Akbar*, the God is great, is the *takbeer*. The standing position in the prayer is called *Qiyam*. Making an inclination of the head and body and placing the hands upon the knees is *Ruku*. Standing erect from this position is called *Tasmi*. The act of worship in which a person's forehead touches the ground in prostration is known as *Sajda*. To come to this position the worshipper puts first his nose and then his forehead to the ground. As he sits up from this posture one *Rakaath* is complete. The other posture is *Attahiyyath* literally the greetings in which the worshipper kneels upon the ground with his left foot bent under him, sits upon it and places his hands upon his knees. Prayer is *Salat*. *Fathiha* is the opening chapter and *dua* is the prayer in supplication at the end of the prayer. All the prayers are known by the Arabic names namely, *Subh* or *Fajr*, (before day breaks) performed between dawn and sunrise, *Luhar* at noon, *Asr* during mid afternoon, *Magrib*, immediately after sun set and *Isha* during early part of the night. There are also Arabic words like *Fard*-obligatory, *Wajib*-essential, *Sunnath*-optional, *Shart*-conditions with *Zikr* a kind of liturgical prayer recited in remembrance. *Takya* a religious place of repose, *Zavia* a place of religious resort are some other Arabic words. Another Arabic word of importance connected with the prayer is *Qiblah* direction to which all Muslims turn in prayer. *Qibla* is anything opposite but for the Muslims it is the direction of Holy *Ka'ba* in Mecca. All the words of Arabic origin are more or less technical terms confined to a particular aspect of the life of a Muslim.

There are other words of Arabic origin that are of common use. *Asl*-origin, *Amal*-work, also religious duties, *Halal*-the lawful, *Haram*- the unlawful or that which are prohibited, *Makruh*-avoidance preferable, *Hasad*-envy, *ilm*-knowledge *Aql*-intelligence *Faraq*-carefree, *Alam*-the universe, *Adab*-conduct, *Hayavan*-animal, *Fitna*-quarrel, *Hadya*-presents, *Hikmat*-diplomacy, *Himmath*-determination, *rooh*-soul, *Sa'ath*-time, *Rizk*-food, *Khalq*-creation, *Hukum*-judgement, *Fatva*-religious decision, *Makr*-deceit, *Inam*-gift, *Jahl*-ignorance, *Kitab*-book, *Muhabbath*-kindness, love, *Museebath*-curse, *Karamath*-miracle, *Miswak*-a tooth brush, cleanser made of wood, *Sabr*-patience, *Dunya*-this world, *Ahirath*-next world, *Safar*-journey, *Shukur*-gratitude etc.

Two more Arabic words may be cited which the Muslims use in their spoken dialects which are Quranic words. One is *Kameez* which means shirt. This word is mentioned in several instances in the Holy Quran²². The other word is *Ajal* meaning a term, Muslims in their spoken dialect use the Arabic word *ajal* to indicate the time of the expiry of the term of the life of a Muslim. Muslims would say that the *Ajal* of so and so over. This would mean he has passed away. This word too occurs in the Quran²³, in several places.

Let us consider few words of Persian origin that have found places in the spoken Tamil of the Muslims in Sri Lanka. The Prophet is *Nabi* in Arabic but *Payaghambur* in Persian. In the same manner which is *Allah* in Arabic, *Khuda* is in Persian. Persian words *payahambur* and *Khuda* are household words among the Muslims. There are other words of Persian origin like *Saman* articles, wears, *camca*, spoons, *arasari*, average, *sifaris*, recommendation, *sumar*-approximately, *kulla*-cap, *tayyar*-ready, *tarasu*-scale etc.

It is interesting to note another word of Persian origin namely *Kanduri*. Although this word has become obsolete in Persian most of the religious feasts held in both mosques and private houses in Sri Lanka are called *Kanduri*. This word denoting religious banquet has spread far and wide through the Tamil speaking people. Calling the faithful to the mosque to perform the prayer is called *Bangu* in Persian, an equivalent to *Azan* in Arabic. Like *Kanduri* this word too has spread as far as Indonesia through the Tamil speaking people. It will take some time for an ordinary person among us if he hears someone says '*Paravaa Illai*' (பரவா இல்லை) never mind to realise that the word '*Parava*' is of Persian origin. Another word of Persian origin '*Pingan*' denoting porcelain ware is in common usage not only in Tamil but also in other languages like Sinhala. Its use is very common among the Muslims in their spoken dialect.

Yet another word of Persian origin that has a religious significance to Muslims is *Yar*. This word is used to signify exclusively the four caliphs of Islam who were the immediate successors of the prophet Muhamed. Very often they are referred to in writing as well as in ordinary conversation as *Phaalu yar* (நாலு யார்) four caliphs. Another notable word of Persian origin is *Yathu*. In context of *Yaathu Illai* (யாது இல்லை) the word *Yatu* is used to indicate memory. *Yattu Illai* means I do not remember. *Arumuka Navalar*, the prolific writer of Tamil prose from Jaffna, has used in one of his essays a sentence to the effect that '*Peyar Yaatillai*' (பெயர் யாதில்லை) which means I do not remember the name²⁵. *Kalkandu*, sugar candy is yet another word of Persian origin that has crept into Tamil.

As more than two thirds of the Muslims in Sri Lanka live in predominantly Sinhala speaking areas it is necessary to assess the influence of Sinhala language on the Tamil language as a spoken dialect of the Muslims. Isolated linguistic nuclei thrown by chance into the midst of a population speaking a different language can hardly be maintained intact and are rapidly absorbed no matter whether the environments into which they fall has a highly cultivated language or not²⁶. As such the languages of the Muslims have had an impact on Sinhala, the language of their environment, explaining the presence of the words of Arabic and Persian origin in Sinhala and at the same time the Sinhala language has had influenced the spoken dialect of the Muslims. Two languages existing side by side can be compared to the confronting armies. There is no longer an army drawn up in battle array nor is there any question of territory gained by the conquerors, as they force the conquered to retreat. There is merely a continual passage of numerous elements from one language to the other. They are like deserters constantly going over to the opposite camp. There is naturally the peaceful penetration rather than a war of conquest. On the basis of this analogy it is possible to explain the survival of the spoken Tamil dialect of the Muslims of Sri Lanka in spite of their existence in predominantly Sinhala speaking areas for the last twelve centuries.

A few Sinhala words may be cited to show how these words have found a place in the spoken dialects of the Muslims. The intensity of the influence of Sinhala varies according to the region in which they live. More isolated they are in Sinhala areas more is the influence of Sinhala on the spoken dialect of the Muslims. 'Kammali' (කමලි) is a Sinhala word meaning laziness and the Muslims use in their dialect 'Kammali anam' (கம்மலித்தனம்) to indicate laziness. Words like 'Goca' (ගොඋ) abundance, 'Gata' (ගැට)-knotty, 'Pila' (පිල)-side, occasion, 'Jati' (ජාති)-best, 'Bora' (බොර) mucous, 'Kabal' (කබල)-dam, 'Kalabala' (කලබල)-confusion are found in the spoken Tamil of the Muslims. As a note of exclamation of sympathy Muslims, while speaking Tamil use Sinhala words like 'Ane' (අනේ) 'Aiyo' (අයියෝ) etc. 'Onrum Gonu Illai' (ඔன்றුම ගොනු இல்லை) is a sentence often heard among the Muslims. 'Nothing is in proper order' is the idea conveyed in this sentence. It is interesting to note that a Sinhala word 'gonu' (ගොනු) is included as the second word of this sentence. 'Gonu' in Sinhala is used at present to indicate a file where documents are kept in a proper order. 'Enakku Pitapita Kaccal, Doctor' (எனக்குப் பிடப் பிடக் காச்சல் டொக்டர்) is another sentence heard very often. I have fever again and again, Doctor, is the sense expressed herein. The Sinhala phrase 'Pitapita' (පිටපිට) has been used here to stress again and again. In the vocative too, Muslims in some areas use the suffix as in Sinhala. 'Oh Mother' is expressed in Sinhala as 'Amme' (අම්මේ). The Muslim word for mother is 'Umma'. This word 'Umma' is used in the vocative as 'Umme' (உம்மே) (உம்மே). This is in Sinhala (வாப்பா) 'Vappa' is the Muslim word for father and the vocative of this word is 'Vappe' (வாப்பே).

There is a usage among the Muslims living in certain parts of Sri Lanka where they say 'Kallahora' (கள்ளதொற்று) meaning a thief. This phrase consists of Tamil word 'Kallan' (கள்ளன்) and Sinhala word 'Hora' (ஹொ).

There is another aspect worth noting. Sinhala words are used with Tamil terminal endings. This could be observed very often in the case of masculine names. 'Vaduwa' (වදුවා) in Sinhala means carpenter. In the spoken dialect of the Muslims a muscular terminal ending 'An' (அன்) is added and it becomes 'Vatuvan' (வடுவன்). 'Gana' (ගන) is used to refer to a Buddhist monk and in the dialect of the Muslims it becomes 'Ganen' (கணன்) with the addition of the suffix denoting masculine gender. The word 'Pissa' (පීසා), a mad man in Sinhala becomes a 'Pissan' (பிஸ்ஸன்) in the dialect of the Muslims. 'Modaya' and An becomes 'Modayan' or 'Moden'. (மோடயன்). Carter in Sinhala 'Karattakaraya' (කරත්තකාරයා) and in Tamil 'Karattaikkaran' (கரத்தக்காரன்). The liar is 'Paccaya' (පච්චයා) in Sinhala and 'Pacen' (பச்சன்) in the dialect of the Muslims.

This paper is by no means an exhaustive study of this subject but only an attempt to gather together various important facts in regard to the spoken Tamil dialect of the Muslims of Sri Lanka. This paper spotlights the way in which the Muslim population are scattered throughout the country, the manner in which the spoken dialect of the Muslims are constituted, the pattern in which purity of some of the ancient Tamil words are preserved therein, the system in which the Tamil words due to the necessity of phonetic tendencies that have arisen from time to time have changed, the method in which the Tamil verbs are altered to the demanding exigencies of the environment in which the Muslims live, the order in which foreign languages especially the Arabic and Persian languages have made their impact felt on the indigenous languages of the Muslims and the designs in which the words of Sinhala origin have become an inseparable part and parcel of the Tamil language spoken by the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

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Transliteration

அ	a	ஆ	aa	க	k	ங	ng	ய	y
இ	i	ஈ	ii	ச	c	ஞ	nj	ர	r
உ	u	ஊ	uu	ட	T	ண	N	ல	l
எ	e	ஏ	ee	த	th	ந	mh	வ	v
ஓ	o	ஔ	oo	ப	p	ம	m	ழ	zh
		ஐ	ai	ட	t	ன	n	ள	lh
		ஔ	ua						

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