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## The Relevance of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* among the Muslims of Malabar

Muhammed Unais Kunnakkadan \*, Nadzrah Ahmad, PhD \*\*, Nashwan Abdo Khaled, PhD \*\*\*.

**Abstract:** *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is one of the renowned exegeses of the Qur'an since the 15th century. Thanks to its authentic interpretation and smaller size, it could garner more recognition in the Muslim world. The academic impact it made at the Malabar province of south India is an exciting fact unveiled yet. According to this particular region's long Islamic heritage and close relations with Arabs from an early time, such specific studies are much more significant. A qualitative approach based upon an extensive review of literature has been used to analyze the scholarly written contributions in this regard. This article mainly describes the latest four Arabic commentary works and two translations of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* penned by scholars of the region. Its place in the prominent curriculums of higher secondary *Madrassa* systems, conventional *Palli Darses* and Islamic institutions, in addition to several published editions are compared through field study. The participant observation helped to note its relevance in both religious and theological spheres. The study also provides historical data related to the regional socio-religious growth of the Muslim *Mappila* community of Malabar.

**Keywords and phrases:** *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, Muslims of Malabar, Qur'an, *tafsīr*, madrasa curriculum.

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## Introduction

In different stages of history, Noble Qur'an, the ever-ultimate guide of humankind has been elucidated by great scholars to meet the need of all times. All these Qur'anic interpretations played a vital role in the space of Islamic education and propagation, and thus secured an easy access for the entire society to understand the divine words.

*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* i.e. *tafsīr* of the two authors named Jalal, is recognized as one of the most widely popular exegeses of the Qur'an because of its conciseness and simplicity. It is a classical Sunni *tafsīr* of the Qur'an, authored by two famous Egyptian *Shāfi'ī* scholars, started by Imam al-Jalāluddīn Muhammad bin Aḥmad al-Maḥalli (d.1459) from *Sūrah al-Kahf* to *Sūrah al-Nās* and *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*<sup>1</sup> and the remaining parts commencing from *Sūrah al-Baqara* were completed in almost same methodology by his student Jalāluddīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin al-Kamāl al-Suyūṭī (d.1505) within forty days since the first Ramaḍān of 870 A.H in his 22nd age, as he stated in the conclusion of his portion at seventeenth chapter *Sūrah al-Isrā'*.

Despite the worldly fame of two authors, its comprehensive discussions and simple annotations enabled it to gather momentum among Muslim surroundings within a short span of time. Several years after the composition, in 1466, some manuscripts of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* were reported to have been transported transcending the Egyptian borders. It is noted that they had reached as far as India, Northern and Western Africa as well other diverse parts of the Muslim world by 1470 itself.<sup>2</sup>

The region of Malabar is referred to the historic and geographic area of southwest India, in the northern part of present-day state of Kerala. Arabs having good trade connections with this coastal area of Arabian Sea centuries ago verify the view of Islam's advent to Kerala to be happened in the lifetime of prophet Muhammad PBUH, which also remark the long history and heritage of Malabar Muslims known as *Mappila* community.<sup>3</sup> According to the recent census survey reports, this Hindu predominant area displays the one-fourth of population of Muslims as enjoying better socio-political status apart from other states of the country. Once arrived, Islam witnessed here a steady growth through centuries as an individual community with notable and peaceful advancements.<sup>4</sup>

There are several studies related to Islamic culture and unique tradition and movements in Kerala. This is an attempt to analyze historically the acceptance of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* among Malabar Muslims. The unprecedented response of scholars of the province shows their collective interest to a great extent on this specific work.

*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* had been translated to the local vernacular of Malabar in both Malayalam and Arabic Malayalam scripts, along with couples of additional Arabic explanatory notes. It was printed several times in the region by different publishers. The

<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Ḥussain al-Dhahabi, (n.d), *al-Tafsīr wal Mufasīrūn*, (Beirut: Shirkat Dār al Arqam bin Arqam), 1:169.

<sup>2</sup> Sartain. (1975), *Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti: biography and background*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 48.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen F. Dale. (1990). "Trade, Conversion and the growth of the Islamic Community of Kerala, South India", *Studia Islamica*. No. 71. 155-75.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, Roland Eric. (1973). *The Mappila Muslims of Southwest India; A study in Islamic Trends*, 13.

cyclostyle printing presses at Kannoor were the most popular in the region for a long time in this regard. The popular editions of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* published from Malabar are of; Tirurangadi Bookstall Calicut, Ashrafi Book Centre, C. H. Muhammad and Sons Printing Press Chandappadi, Aamirul Islam Litho Press and Parappaangadi Bayaniyya Book Stall.

It possesses an essential role of the syllabus used in *Palli Dars* (Mosque based education system) and other Islamic colleges from early times. Studying *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in the area of *tafsīr* literature is considered as the minimum qualification to be a member of supreme private religious authority of the region. Along with frequent sessions of Qur'an *va'z* (preachment talks) and new online lecture series, some serious discussions and critical debates like regarding *Isrā'īliyyāt* reports are mainly associated to the narratives of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. On the other hand, it is considered as an authoritative one concerning *sunni* perspectives of theological disputes while the *Salafi* scholars intentionally rely upon other exegesis works. In a nutshell, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* has gathered a definite impact among Malabar Muslims to a great extent.

*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* i.e. *tafsīr* of the two authors named Jalal, is recognized as one of the most widely popular exegeses of the Qur'ān. Thanks to its authentic interpretation and smaller size, it could garner more recognition in the Muslim world. The academic impact it made at the Malabar province of south India is an exciting fact unveiled yet. According to this region's long Islamic heritage and close relations with Arabs from an early time, such specific studies are much more significant. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* had been translated to the local vernacular of Malabar in both Malayalam and Arabic Malayalam scripts, along with couples of additional Arabic explanatory notes. It was printed several times in the region by different publishers.

## 1. Scholarly Works on *Tafsīr Al-Jalālayn* in Malabar

### 1.1 Translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Arabi-Malayalam

In its own emerging centuries, the Muslims of Malabar had used religiously a specific language system called *Arabi-Malayalam*, the complex bond of local language Malayalam and Arabic script with some orthographic features,<sup>5</sup> like the Jawi of Malaysia. In those abundant literature works, there was a translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This earliest effort of a Keralite scholar to interpret the holy Qur'ān was completed by *Mayin Kutty Elaya* and it was a literal translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. It is considered as the first published translation of noble Qur'ān in this local vernacular, which led to the debates of translatability and paved the way further to more than 40 complete translation works in Kerala.<sup>6</sup>

#### 1.1.1 Māyin Kutty Elaya

<sup>5</sup> Hussain Randathani, *Mappila Muslims: a study on society and anti-colonial struggles*, Calicut: Other books (2016) p81.

<sup>6</sup> Aabu Sāhib, *Arabi Malayala Sāhitya Charitram* (Calicut, National bookstall, 1970), p34.



Muhyuddeen bin ‘Abdul Khāder alias Māyin Kutty Elaya was born to the notable trader ‘Abdul Kādar Keyi in the antique Keyi family of Talasseri which had made numerous memorable contributions for the society. Being the fiancée of princess Sultana Maryam Beevi at the nominal city-state kingdom of Arakkal, he came to be known as Māyin Elaya of the royal family, locally derived from the name Muhyiddin. He is also recognized for building a shrine known as *Keyi Rubāt* near to holy Ka’ba of Mecca in 1292 AH, as a hostel to accommodate *Hajj* pilgrims from Kerala.<sup>7</sup>

His accurate birth date is not available in reliable sources. His father was very keen in his schooling under great scholars of time, including *Qāzi* Muhammad of Talasseri and Ahamed Musliyār at his own residence *Keyi Valiya Purakkal Taravaadu*. He learnt the mother tongue through folk *pīrs*. He also earned sufficient grounding in Persian and Urdu, within no time. He had an inclination toward *Mappīla* folk songs in his early childhood. The renowned poets named as Veeran Kutty and Muhammad Kutty trained him in *Mappīla* poetry. Quenching no thirst from merely the educational fields, he exercised the fighting and physical training of traditional Martial art *Kalarippayatte* under the skillful disciples of Changampalli Alavikutty, Mr. Ali and Sher Ali.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1.1.1.1 *Tarjumah Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*

By his reformatory views, he realized the incapability of ordinary Muslims to understand divine testaments, so that he knew its necessity and tried his best in this regard. The average Muslims of the era were literate to read only the early Muslim regional dialect of Arabic Malayalam. Initially, the translation mission was an adventurous enterprise, whereas all books except in Arabic were unknown and dealt strange before the present community. Ignoring the religious rivalry of orthodox scholars, he commenced the translation of Holy Qur’ān in AH 1272. It was based on prominent commentaries of the Qur’ān with special reference to *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.<sup>9</sup>

He prepared plenty of hand-written copies right before publication and dispatched those every significant centre and known family, as he employed many transcribers in royal Arakkal Palace at his risks.

Meanwhile, vehement oppositions emerged from nooks and crannies of Kerala because some orthodox scholars delivered *Fatwā* against his Qur’ān translation. Specifically, the enterprise sparked a fresh controversy among social and religious activities of the time. Someone banned the hand-written copies, and unfortunately some others came forward to collectively drone these into the sea, tied up on stones.<sup>10</sup>

Regardless of such oppositions, Māyin Keyi stepped ahead of the herculean task with his immense determination, intending to print the book in litho-press. Hence, he established

<sup>7</sup> Shahul hameed, “Payakkapplukalil Mecca Pattiya Hajimar”, *Thelitcham Deshadana padipp 15<sup>th</sup> Annual*, Chemmad: Darul Huda Press, (2013). p115.

<sup>8</sup> C.K Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Charitram Stidi Vivara Kkankku*, Calicut, Charithram publication, (1991), p3/266.

<sup>9</sup> Mayen Kutty Elaya, *Tarjumatu Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, (Talasseri: ‘Ali bin Abubaker publishing house, n.d), Vol.1, p.1158.

<sup>10</sup> C.K Kareem, ed. *Kerala Muslim Charitram Stidi Vivarakkankk*, 3:269.

his own litho-press at Thalasseri in AH 1286, which led to the collective popularity of Arabic Malayalam books henceforth. In 1885 he printed *Tarjumah Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* as Six volumes, probably in an expense of a hundred thousand rupees. It was further reprinted entirely in 1287 AH at Ali bin Abubaker publishing house in a count of 1158 pages. One of the original and hand-written copy is now being kept in Arakkal palace museum at Kannoor. The library of Aḥmad Koya al-Shāliyāti at Chaliyam and Moyin Kutty Vaidyar Memorial library at Kondotty also have the copies of *Tarjumah Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. Māyin Kutty Elaya is also the author of numerous books in Arabic- Malayalam namely: *Āqibat Māla*, *Dhabīḥ Māla*, *Qissat Sulaymān bin Dawūd* and *Liqā'* as well *Tasharuq al-Qur'ān* describing dignity of holy Qur'ān.<sup>11</sup> Even though, the styles and the explanatory dialects he used are no longer existing and completely outdated.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2 Translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Malayalam

The evolution of Malayalam as an independent language is traced back to post 1600 CE.<sup>13</sup> The literature of *Mappila* Muslims witnessed the radical change of transforming the community's language system from Arabi-Malayalam to Malayalam only by the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which later led to their active participation in the mainstream literature of Kerala. The 1960s and subsequent decade mark the scholarly engagements in translating Quran from distinct sectors amid some discourses regarding its translatability. In 1974 T.K. 'Abdulla Moulawi Māttool produced an independent Malayalam translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* by the name *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* in 604 pages of a single volume. It was the first *tafsīr* to be translated to the real Malayalam language.

### 1.2.1 T.K. 'Abdulla Moulawi

He was born in 1927 to MK Muhammad Hāji and Khadīja. He started the primary education in native land Trikkarippur and pursued the religious education in *Dars* under famous scholar Kanniyat Aḥmad Musliyār.<sup>14</sup> He was the Chairman of religious educational wing of the supreme mainstream organization of Kerala Muslims *Samasta Kerala Jam'iyyatul Ulamā* (S.K.J.U), named *Samasta Kerala Islam Mata Vidyābyāsa Board* (S.K.I.M.V.B). He also served memberships in *Waqf* Board and *Haj* Committee under the Government of Kerala state. With these active participations, he showed much interest in literature and wide writings in his youthfulness.

He shifted to Parappanagadi to start Bayaniyya Book Stall and Printing Press in 1950s. Many well-known books both in Malayalam and Arabi-Malayalam were published here. He had submitted many remarkable contributions to the Muslim literature in Malayalam

<sup>11</sup> Kerala Islamic Heritage Library, "*Mayen kutty Elayav*", [http://www.islaminkerala.in/2017/09/blog-post\\_33.html](http://www.islaminkerala.in/2017/09/blog-post_33.html), Accessed on 7th November 2019.

<sup>12</sup> AP Kunchamu, "Qur'ānum Sahityavum", *Prabhodhanam weekly Qur'ān Visheshal Pathipp*, Vol.4, No.8, Calicut: Silver Hills (2002), p145.

<sup>13</sup> Parvathy Prasad & Rose Mary, "*Emergence of Malayalam as an Independent Classical Language-An Overview*", International Journal of Science and Research, 2319-7064, <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v5i8/ART20161013.pdf>. Accessed on 15th November 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Kabeer Kannadipparamba, "Ibnu Batutayude Mātūl", *Darul Hasanāt Arabic College AnnualSouvanir*, vol. 1, Kannur: Kannadipparamba (2013), p. 67.



including translations of *al-Adhkiyā*, *Sabīl al-Najāt*, *Hādī al-Hujjāj*, *Qurbāt al-Zawjayn*, *Uddat al-Mu'minīn*. His demise was on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1977.<sup>15</sup>

### 1.2.1.1 *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Malayalam Translation & Commentary)

T.K. 'Abdulla Moulawi's translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Malayalam language named *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* was published in 1974 to respond to the public need of understanding *Sunni* perspective of *Qur'ān* in Malayalam language. He utilized his own Bayaniyya Book Stall and printing press to publish and reprint it since 1975 several times. Roland E. Miller acknowledges this in his book as: "this *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* with Malayalam translation is the solid evidence against modernists arguing that the orthodox haven't any traditional description of holy Qur'an in that time to be printed"<sup>16</sup>.

The author introduces about Qur'ān, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and necessity of understanding holy words in detail. By translating famous Arabic *tafsīr*, he may have selected a safe zone from the contemporary hot debates within the traditional scholars on the translatability of Qur'ān. It was K.V. Muhammad Musliyār Kootanad firstly initiated after 1980s to have an ideologically *sunni tafsīr* named *Fath al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, a five-volume independent *Sunni* exegesis responding to C.N. Aḥmad Moulavi's modernist misinterpretations.

T.K.'s translation was mostly sufficient to overcome the general view of the untranslatability of the Qur'an due to its preface authored by Panakkad PMSA Pookkoya Thangal, the contemporary supreme spiritual leader and the president of Indian union Muslim league of the Kerala state. Its submission to late famous crowd-puller Sayyid 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bāfaqi Thangal was also an additional factor. In the above-mentioned preface, Sayyid opined that this is to be released very earlier in reply to the counter views of *Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'a* in some commentaries.<sup>17</sup> The author explains about *Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, and the relevance of recitation following the *Tajwīd* laws. He asserts that this translation is written only for Muslims and it shouldn't be handed over to non-Muslims at any cost.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3 Arabic Explanatory Notes of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*

It's also worth mention that four Arabic explanatory notes have been written by scholars of Malabar on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* namely Sayyid Shihābuddīn Imbichi Koya Tangal, his student Anwar 'Abdullah bin Abd al-Rahmān al-Faḍfari, 'Abdu Rahman Bāva Bin Muhammad al-Malaybāri and Ismā'īl al-Nellikuti al-Malaybāri. It's a clear evidence to the wholehearted acceptance of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in the scholarly part of Malabar.

Respectively, *Ala Hāmishi al-Tafāsīr Ta'līqātun 'Alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in seven volumes was published in 2007 by Ministry of Qatar acknowledging his good language accompanied with explanations of some scientific discoveries, new trends and technological

<sup>15</sup> C.K. Kareem, *Kerala Muslim Charitram Sthidi Vivara Kkankke*, p. 267.

<sup>16</sup> Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala; a Study in Islamic Trends*, p.269.

<sup>17</sup> T.K. Abdulla Moulawi, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, (Parappanagadi: Bayaniyya Book Stall, 2007), Vol.1, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.10.

innovations; while *Tanwīr al-ʿAynayn Sharah Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in four volumes gives much importance to unveiling rhetoric and syntax through Tafsir which made it able to be printed by *Dar al-Nashr* from Riyadh. The remaining two books, *Taysīr al-Jalālayn ʿalā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn maʿa Shurūḥ wa Taʾlīqāt* mainly aimed at simplifying *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* especially for the students, by collecting opinions of authentic interpretations and from *Tafsīr al-Rāzi* and *Rūḥ al-Bayān* and different *Hashīyas* of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. Whole these books are published in this current century.

### 1.3.1 Sayyid Shihābuddīn Imbichi Koya Tangal

Sayyid Shihābuddin was born in 1936 as the son of Hussain Koya Tangal and Kunchi Beevi. His father was a peerless Greek medicine and Ayurveda. He grew up under his uncle's patronage, after mother's demise. He implied the knowledge from eminent scholars like Shams al-Ulamā E.K Abūbaker Musliyyār and *Qāzi* of Calicut ʿAbdu Rahman Musliyyār. He enrolled at Dārul Uloom in Deoband for his higher study, which excelled him both in Arabic and English languages. Then he turned attention towards Islamic education, working as teacher in *Palli Dars* in several regions including Elatur, Payyoli, Parkand, and Talipparamba. After his service at Ummatur Islamic college, he founded Zahrā Islamic college for art and literature at Mokeri in Kannur, later known as Jamia al Zahrā.<sup>19</sup> Attributed to homeland, he is famous as Panoor Thangal in Kerala and it is the same place where he was buried in 2007.

In his teaching career, he had authored *Ādab al-Muslim fī Manhaj al-Islām*, *Ṣafwat al-Kalām fī Āqibāt al-Islām*, *al-Mantiq fī sharaḥ al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Kalām fī sharaḥ Aqā'id al-Nasafiyya*, *Nukhbtun fī Tārīkh al-Islām*, *al-Nibras fī Maslak al-Fiqh al-Shāfiʿ*, *al-Madārij fī Tārīkh al-Ghayat wal-Taqrīb* in Arabic, as well *al-Tahaddiyāth* and *al-Inhirāfath* in the local language Malayalam.

#### 1.3.1.1 ʿAla Hāmishi al-Tafāsīr Taʾlīqātun ʿAla Tafsīr al-Jalālayn

Panoor Thangal combined the styles of both classical and modern texts to include advanced discussions and scientific explanations in his great work. *ʿAla Hāmishi al-Tafāsīr; Taʾlīqātun ʿAla Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in seven volumes were result of his constituent efforts longing a decade from 1998-2007.<sup>20</sup> Later it was published by Qatar Ministry for Islamic affairs acknowledging its academic excellence.

In the preface, he introduces *Tafsīr* literature with shedding light on *Isrāʾīlyyāt* and false fables in some anti-Islamists narrations. Started with *Sūrah al-Fātiḥa*, the author advances detailed explanations adopted from *Qurʾān*, *Ḥadīth* and other numerous texts. In the beginning of each *Sūrah* he denotes different concepts of topic and mentioned issues, summarizing its relations with other *Sūrahs*, and then he starts exegesis. The well-organized titles make it very reader friendly.

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Bahauddin Muhammad Nadwi, “ʿAla Hāmishi al-Tafāsīr: Khuṭwatun Jadīdatun Fī Fanni Tafsīr”. Tafsīr literature in modern period, Department of Arabic, Chennai: University of Madras, Vol. 7, no. 2 (2012). p45.

<sup>20</sup> Sayyid Ismāʿīl Shihabuddin, *ʿAla Hāmishi al-Tafāsīr taʾlīqātun ʿAla Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, (Panoor, Jāmiat al zahrā, 2008), Vol.1, p.1,2.

Sayyid Shihābuddin includes some scientific discoveries, new trends and technological innovations. For instance, in the explanation of verse 193 from *Sūra al-Shu‘arā*, “*Nazala bihi al-Rūḥ al-Amīn, a lā Qalbika litakūna Min al-Mundhirīn*”, he describes hypnotism, which makes the readers conscious about the contemporary depths of the divine words to a great extent. It is also notable that author elaborates the revoking arguments and *Bida‘i* allegations and then emphasizes theological conclusions of *Ahlussunna wal-Jamā‘a* throughout the book. “Shortly, this book is an encyclopaedia and treasury of knowledge in the light of Qur’anic verses and prophetic sayings. Whoever reads it enters the worlds of divine thoughts and depths of mysterious contexts, in addition to his valuable opinions and helpful discussions”.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3.2 Anwar ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abdu Rahman al Faḍfari

He was born in 1959 to ‘Abdu Rahmān al-Faḍfari alias Kutty Musliyār at Padinjattumuri village of Malappuram. His maternal well-known family ‘Faḍfariyyah’ advocated him to gain adequate acquaintance in Islamic subjects in his early childhood itself. It’s believed that his lineage is basically traced back to Arabs, who landed three centuries ago at Chaliyam near Calicut and later inhabited at Pallippuram. Thus, the family became famous as Faḍfariyyah.<sup>22</sup>

His early schooling was from the elegant scholars of the age, including his father Abdu Rahmān al Faḍfari, the chancellor of Vellore Baqiyat al-Salihah, his elder brother Muhammad Sālim Moulawi at Grand Mosque of Padinjāttumuri, Vilayil Muḥyuddīn Kutty Musliyār and Oorakam O.K. ‘Abdu Rahmān Musliyār. He pursued his higher learning from Vazhakkad Darul Uloom, Ummathoor College of Panoor Thangal and Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama at Luknow. Presently he is working as a religious teacher at Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Apart from his usual lectures, he had written many books in Arabic like *al-Istithnāt min al-Qawāid al-Lughwiyya*, *al-Balgha fī Funūn al-Balāgh*, *Shrah al-Manzūmāt al-Fazfariyya ‘Ala Qawā‘d al-Fiqhiyya*, *al-Mīrāth wa Tatbīqātiha* and *al-Naẓm al-Wafī fī Fiqh al- Shāfi‘ī*.<sup>23</sup>

#### 1.3.2.1 Tanwīr al-‘Aynayn Sharḥ Tafsīr al-Jalālayn

This recent endeavour to write an Arabic commentary of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* by a contemporary young scholar Anwar ‘Abdulla Faḍfari was in later 2014s, which is to be published by *Dar al-Nashr* from Riyadh in four volumes.

Comparing to previous works, *Tanwīr al-‘Aynayn Sharḥ Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* has given ample importance for comparing scholarly views and preferring the one conforming his perspectives. He explains ideologies of *Asha‘ri* schools of belief, as well strengthens problematic juridical opinions in the light of *Shāfi‘ī* school of *fiqh*. He also elaborates on the

<sup>21</sup>Nadwi, *Tafsīr literature in modern period*, p.51.

<sup>22</sup>Anwar Abdulla Faḍfari, ed. *Muhammad Salim moulawi Smaranika* (Padinchattumuri, Fazfari educational complex, (2009), Vol.1, p.32.

<sup>23</sup>Muhammad Jabirali Hudawi Pallippuram, “Fazfari Kudambathinte Karmashasthra Sambavankal”, *The Ilticham Monthly*, Vol. 5, no. 17 (2015), p.25.

rhetoric and syntax, while discussing ways of pronouncing the word and describing several types of recitations included in authentic *Qirāts*.

The latest work of Anwar ‘Abdulla Faḍfari is a thorough analysis and comparison of both methodologies like decoding of terminologies which he exemplifies in the preface as word “*Qad*” in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. Usually, it is used before verbs of past tense to denote its grammatical side of describing conditions of *īrāb*. He makes it clear that such word related indications have methodological importance to be discussed in detail. He is very concerned at attributing *Hadīths* to considerable references in *takhrīj*, supplemented by strengthening statements by producing the source and evidence of traditions like some stories reported in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. For instance, we can see it in 32nd verse of *Sūrah al-Baqara*, the story of prophet Sulaymān regarding keeping the secrets of sorcery under his throne which was revealed after his death by some devils.

### 1.3.3 ‘Abdu Rahman Bāva bin Muhammad al-Malaybāri

He was born at Kodampuzha in Calicut district to Muhammad Musliyār and Ayisha in 1946; and thus, became regionally famous as Kodampuzha Bāva Musliyār. He did his studies from Beypore Madrasa al-Rahmāniyya and Vāzhakkad Dārul Uloom through elegant scholars of time comprising Kanniyath Aḥmad Musliyār, C.H. Abd al-Rahmān Musliyār and Perumukham Beeran Koya Musliyār. As an author of more than twenty valuable books primarily in *fiqh* and Islamic history, he made many international academic visits, including an invited talk at Dubai Book Fair fest of 2014.<sup>24</sup>

Bāva Musliyār is the founding father of Darul Ma‘ārif Islamic Center at his native place and an active member of curriculum committee of both Arabic books of Kerala Government and Islamic books of the Samastha Kerala Sunni Educational Board (S.K.S.V.B). His major works are: *Sīrat Sayyid al-Bashar*, *Rizq al-Asfiya*, *Tārīkh al-‘Alam al-Islamī*, *Kulasat al-Fiqh al-Islamī*, in Arabic and *Hadith Arthavum Vyakyanavum*, *Urukum Manthravum*, *Janithaka Shāsthrathinte Indrajālam* in regional Malayalam language.

#### 1.3.3.1 *Taysīr al-Jalālayn ‘Alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*

Admitting the fact that *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* provides the most important interpretations of available *Sunni Tafsīr* works in a single book, he summarized both *Al-Futūhātul Ilāhiyyah Bi Tawḍīhi Tafsīr al-Jalālayn li al-Daqāiqil Khafiyyah* of Shykh Sulymān bin Umar al-Ajīlī and *Hāshiyat al-Sāwi ‘la Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* of Shykh Aḥmad bin Muhammad al-Sāwi. *Hāshiyat al-Jamal* and *Hāshiyat al-Sāwi* were the two famous explanations of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* required in curriculums for extra readings of students.

As the title indicates, it’s an endeavor to make an easy understanding of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* for learners and beginners. The first volume of *Taysīr al-Jalālayn ala Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is an annotation of the thirtieth *Juz’* (part) of *Qur’ān* starting from *Surah al-Naba’*. Darul Ma‘ārif Kodampuzha made the first publication in 2008. The second volume deals twenty

<sup>24</sup> Editorial board, “*Islamika Grandha Rachana Lokathe Veritta Vyakthitham*”, Siraj Daily, March 5, 2016. <http://www.sirajlive.com/2016/03/05/226514.html>

ninth part starting with *Sūrah al-Mulk*. Later he explained the first to eighth parts in separate volumes. And with broad discussions in each of ten volumes, it remains yet incomplete.

### 1.3.4 Isma'īl al Nellikuti al-Malaybārī

He was born in 1939 to Musliyārakath Aḥmad Musliyār and Kottakuth Maryam Beevi at Nellikuth in Malappuram. After primary education from K.C. Jamaluddeen Musliyār and Manjeri 'Abdu Rahman Musliyār, he went to Dārul Uloom at Deoband for further studies. He served as a religious teacher in different *Palli Darses* and as vice principal in Darussalam Arabic College at Nandi and Markazu Saqāfa al Sunniyya at Kāranthur. He rose to limelight in the name of *Sheikh al-Hadith* after authoring *Mir'āt al-Masābīh Sharah Mishkāt al-Masābīh* in eight volumes. *Fiqh al-Sunna*, *Aqīdat al-Sunna*, *Hāshiya Risālat al-Māradini*, *Hāshiya Tasrih al-Mantiq*, *Taqrir Mullā Hasan* are his Arabic works, whereas, he has many books and articles in Malayalam relating theology and jurisprudence in addition to his fifteen-year editorship of *Sunni Voice* monthly. He passed away on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011 and was buried nearby his personal library at Nellikuth.<sup>25</sup>

#### 1.3.4.1 *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn ma'a Shurūh wa Ta'liqāt*

It was an excellent attempt to bring different opinions of authentic interpretations like *Tafsīr al-Razi*, *Rūh al-Bayān* etc. along with *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* text in the margins. Nellikuth bookstall at Manjeri Central Bazar published it in two volumes. It's considered useful for students as it's simple in size and covers enough data of different books in a single space. The handwritten copy was scanned and reprinted so that it is available in low price for readers as both merged in the same volume. He gave more preference for Arabic grammar and *i'rāb*, as he sometimes explained a few word meanings in Arabic-Malayalam script.

## 2. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Islamic Curriculum of The Region

From an earlier time, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* occupied a central position in the religious education of the Malabar. By the time of Imam al-Suyuti's student Zainuddin Makhdūm al-Ṣaghīr (d.1028 AH), it is considered this famous Tafsir had acquired its place among Islamic curriculums. Apart from specialized students, some portions of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*is included in three years of higher secondary level of Muslim Madrasas under *Samastha Kerala Islam Matha Vidhyābhyāsa Board*; abbreviated as S.K.I.M.V.B, (Board of whole Kerala Islamic religious education).

### 2.1 The Background of the Traditional *Dars* System of Malabar

*Palli Dars*, the traditional Masjid-centred method of schooling is to exemplify prophetic teaching at the holy mosque of Medina. They played a significant role in keeping

<sup>25</sup> Editorial Board, "Ormakalile Sheikhul Hadith", Siraj Daily, March 9, 2013. <http://www.sirajlive.com/2013/03/09/5636.html>



Kerala's religious awareness alive, conveying the spiritual messages and reproducing knowledge through generations.

Tanur Valiyakulangara mosque *Dars* founded by Imam Muhammad bin 'Abdulla Al-Haḍrami in AH 670, is believed as the earliest main education centre in Malabar but whole Kerala state. By AH 785, Zaynudhīn Ramaḍān Shāliyyati began *Dars* system at mosques of Calicut Kuttichira and Munambat, which was developed with more scientific method and new syllabus after his demise in AH 830 by Qāḍi Fakhrudīn Abu baker (d; AH 895)<sup>26</sup>. Later, there were two prominent types of renovated syllabus since the past days in Kerala, namely syllabus of *Nizāmiyya* and *Fakhriyya*.<sup>27</sup>

The famous *Nizāmiyya* system of India was set up by Shaykh Mulla Nizāmuddīn from Faranki Mahal at present Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, which was applied in different institutions after some additions and revisions. It was comprised of logic, philosophy and other cognitive studies as well as traditional texts of necessity. Getting Muslim rulers' overwhelming support, scholars entertained high social status positions as judges, governors and counsellors. This system was also followed by Bāqiyāt al-Ṣalihāt at Vellore established by Shah 'Abdu al-Wahāb Ḥazrat in 1857 and *Nizāmiyya* institution of South India under Hyderabad Naizām Usmān Ali Khān in 1867, as well Darul Ulūm Dayooband founded in 1867 by Shaykh Muhammad Qāsim Nānūtawī and Darul Uloom Nadwat al-Ulama Lucnow of both Shaykh Ashraf 'Ali Nānūtawī and Khalīl Aḥmad Sahāranpūri in 1892. In the case of Malabar, Jami'a Nūriyya Aarabiyya at Faizabad under Samasta Kerala Jam'iyyat al 'Ulama at Malppuam since 1963 was the first systematic religious institution for religious higher education, which also applied the *Nizāmiyya* syllabus with some changes.<sup>28</sup>

The later *Fakhriyya* Syllabus mainly belongs to the scholars who acquired knowledge from the Arab teachers mainly from Mecca and Medina. Alongside *Palli Dars* of Ponnani pioneered by *Makdhum* scholars having an Arabic background in education, which served as the leading cause of religious renaissance throughout the province, there emerged many same systems and appeared popular. It became well known as Mecca of Kerala due to its influence among Kerala Muslims. Qāḍi Fakhrudīn Abu baker (D; AH 895) put forward his teaching method adopting from Ponnani system. *al-Silsilat al Fakhriyya* syllabus, which is attributed to his name- mainly included traditional knowledge, fiqh, taṣawuf, philosophy, theology and Arabic language in detail.<sup>29</sup>

It went on same state until Chālilakt Kunh Aḥmad Hāji (AH 1283-1338), -the first Keralite graduate of Vellore Baqiyāt al- Swaliḥat- renovated it with cognitive sciences like physics, mathematics, engineering and philosophy which was really converging between reformations of the both syllabi of *Nizāmiyya* and *Fakhri*.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Zaynudhīn Mandalamkunne, "Maqdoomumarude Vidyabyasa Yatnangal: Ulladakkavum Falangalum" *Mattoli Souvenir, Dar al-Swalah Islamic Academy*, Vol. 1, (2014), p. 63.

<sup>27</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Moyin Hudawi Malayamma, "Muslim India Vidyabysam: Chila Vaividyalangal", *Mattoli Souvenir, Daruswalah Islamic Academy*, p. 56

<sup>29</sup>Al-Fyḍi, *Harkat al-Tadrīs Fī Masājidi Malybār*, p.108.

<sup>30</sup>Ck Muhammad Abdu al Raḥman al-fyḍi, *Harkat al-Tadrīs Fī Masājidi Malybār*, p.108.



There is no solid evidence of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* as exactly begun included in *Dars* syllabus. It should be concluded that *Dars* system had been started in Kerala before authorship of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. It was included neither in *Fakhiriyya* of Imam Fakhruddīn nor Nizamiyya syllabus. The advent of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* to *Dars* syllabus could be found through these assumptions. Firstly, when Makhūm-II and the author of famous *Faṭḥ al-Mu'īn* (AH-938-1028), who led reform in the religious education of Kerala starting from his *Ponnani Dars*, he did travel to Al-Azhar University in Egypt in the sake of learning. He was a student of Imam al-Suyūṭī, the author of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.<sup>31</sup> He may have popularized it in Malabar because of his impression towards this.

The second possibility is that it may be included in the renewed syllabus of Chālilakt Kunchammad Hāji, because his reform was mainly adopting from the curriculum of his alma mater Vellore Baqiyat al-Swaliḥat.<sup>32</sup> He also introduced this framework at Vazhakkad Darul Uloom Arabic College which was established by Koyappathodi family in 1908.

In addition to a lot of well-known or modern commentaries of Qur'ān, the reason why *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was inevitable in *Dars* syllabus should be its simplicity and fame of its authors. It was taught in Kerala from early periods in *Palli dars*. The modern *Darses* and Islamic colleges with new syllabus and systems also teach it with high importance.

### 2.1.1 *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Syllabus of *Palli Dars*

*Dars* system has a decisive position in academics of Muslims of the region. It has best role in the spreading of Islamic awareness among entire Kerala Muslims. *Dars* syllabus comprises seven years with three stages; first and second stages covers three years each and the final stage covers the remaining one year. Firstly, the basics of Arabic language and secondly, with special concern to *fiqh* and *taṣawuf*. It is taught completely in the last two or three years of *Mutawal*.

Nowadays, *Dars* syllabus is mainly in three phases. It is categorized as the basics of Arabic language in first level and *fiqh* in second. Whereas, *Tasawuf* and philosophy are taught completely in last two or three years of *Mutawal*. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is taught in three years from second year of *Mutawal*. The portions are arranged in the following format; *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* in third semester, *Sūrah al-Baqara* and *Sūrah al-Māida* in fourth semester, *Sūrah al-Māida* to *Sūrah Ra'd* in fifth semester, from *Sūrah al-Ra'd* to *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* in sixth semester, *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* to *Sūrah al-Sajdah* in seventh semester and from *Sūrah al-Sajdah* to *Sūrah al-Nās* in eighth semester. Thus, it is completed in six semesters.<sup>33</sup>

### 2.2 *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Modern Institutions

The soul religious education in Kerala was in *Palli Dars* until the 1980's. The centralized religious culture was common in most of the mosques. The main centres of religious learning were Ponnani, Tanur and Chaliyam. But by the last of 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Dars*

<sup>31</sup> Hussain Randathani, *Maqduumum Ponnaniyum*, (Poonkavanam books, calicut, 2010), p.349.

<sup>32</sup> Sadiq Faisy Tanoor, "Guru Parambara: Velitcham virunnetiya Vayi" *Souvenir, SYS 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary*, vol. 1, (2012), p.25.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Fyḍī, *Harkat al-Tadrīs FT Masājidi Malybār*, p.108.

system paved the way to new reformed ideal *Dars* and modern institutions with drastic changes both in academics and infrastructure<sup>34</sup>. Here it is analyzed the position and method of teaching *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in four famous institutions of the region.

### 2.2.1 Junior Colleges of Jāmia Nooriyya ‘Arabiyya

Jamia Nooriyya Arabiyya Pattikkād introduced Jāmia co-ordination of the junior colleges followed by its golden jubilee celebrations of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There are two types of colleges under the co-ordination as A and B. The part A colleges admit one who passed SSLC and provides them seven years of education alongside degrees of university and Jamia Muthawal. While the part B colleges enroll one who passed 7<sup>th</sup> class and provides eight years of training which enables him to secure a simultaneous degree of a state university and *Jāmia Mutawal*. Currently, the Jamia co-ordination has grown significantly to 30 branches under its academic mastering.

The complete study of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is done by three years. It will start in 5<sup>th</sup> year. The syllabus is as; from *Sūrah al-Fatiḥa* to *Sūrah al-An‘ām* in 5<sup>th</sup> year, from *Sūrah al-An‘ām* to *Sūrah al-Nūr* in 6<sup>th</sup> year and from *Sūrah al-Nūr* to *Sūrah al-Nās* in 7<sup>th</sup> year.

### 2.2.2 Co-ordination of Islamic Colleges (CIC)

Markazu Tarbiyah al-Islamiyya was founded by K.K. Abbubakar Hazrat in 1984 at Valānjeri in Malappuram district under Supervision of *Samasta Kerala Jam‘iyyat al Ulama* district committee. It was upgraded under Co-ordination of Islamic Colleges (C.I.C) as Wāfi course offering simultaneous degrees both in Islamic and material subjects. There are more than thirty institutions inside Kerala affiliated to CIC.<sup>35</sup>

In this syllabus, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is completely taught within four years of *Aaliya*, i.e degree. It suggests *Sūrah Fatiḥah* and *Sūrah al-Baqara*, *Sūrah Ālu ‘Imrān* and *Sūrah al-Māidah* partially, from the rest to half of *Sūrah Tawbah*, from the remaining of *Sūrah Tawbah* to *Sūrah al-Isrā’*, *Sūrah al-Kahf* to *Sūrah al-Nūr*, *Sūrah Furqān* to *Sūrah Yāsīn*, *Sūrah al-Ṣāffāt* to *Sūrah al-Tūr*, and *Sūrah Najm* to *Sūrah Nās* respectively in eight semesters of degree course.

### 2.2.3 Darul Huda Islamic University

Darul Huda Islamic University is a self-deemed institution founded in 1986 in Malappuram district aiming at the merging of both worldly and religious education. It gives importance to its academic quality and educational programs with the visionary of global Islamic propagation. The twelve-year unique course provided by DHU is divided into four levels: a five-year secondary, two-year senior secondary, three-year Degree and two-year PG. There are more than 25 affiliated colleges under Darul Huda co-ordination committee and six off-campus across different states of India.

<sup>34</sup> Adnan Hudawi, “Unnada Vidyabyasam, Ashyangalum Adayalandalum” *Darul Huda Islamic University 25<sup>th</sup> Annivesary Souvanir*, Vol. 4, (2013), p. 136.

<sup>35</sup> Shareef Pinganur, “Mada Stapanagal Vidyayde Vilakkumadangal”, *Samasta 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Souvenir*, p.872.

Darul Huda syllabus consists selected portions from *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in senior secondary section and follow the rest from other *tafsīr* books. In the first year, Tafsir of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, *Sūrah Yāsīn*, *Sūrah Luqmān*, *Sūrah al-Mulk*, *Sūrah al-Sajada*, *Sūrah al-Raḥmān*, *Sūrah al-Wāq'a*, *Sūrah al-Jumu'a*, *Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn* is completed. In the second year *Sūrah al-A'rāf*, *Sūrah Yūnus*, *Sūrah al-Hūd*, *Sūrah al-Maryam*, *Sūrah Ṭāha*, *Sūrah al-Naml*, *Sūrah Ibrāhīm* is taught as well as *Sūrah al-Kahf* is included in *tafsīr* coursework of secondary final year along with one other special module.

#### 2.2.4 Jamiathul Hind al-Islamiyya

Jamiathul Hind al-Islamiyya was established in 2005 under the direction of Sunni Vidhyabyasa Board, which has its headquarters in Calicut. Aiming for the advancement of Muslim higher education, the institution has framed an individual syllabus and functions as an open university. The syllabus of al-Jamia proposes inculcation of the moral side of modern educational psychology in their students as a hard balance in spiritual and material affairs. Now more than fifty institutions inside and outside Kerala are affiliated to Jamia.<sup>36</sup>

In the syllabi of Jamiathul Hind, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* is studied by three years from the second year of *Mutawal*. In its third semester, *Sūrah al-Fatiḥa* and *Juz'u Amma*, in fourth *Sūrah al-Baqara* and *Sūrah al-Māida*, in fifth semester *Sūrah al-Māida* rest to *Sūrah al-Ra'd*, in sixth semester *Sūrah al-Ra'd* to *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn*, in seventh semester *Sūrah al-Mu'minūn* to *Sūrah al-Sajada*, in eighth semester from *Sūrah al-Sajdah* to *Sūrah al-Naba'*. Thus, it is learnt completely in six semesters.

#### Conclusion

*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* the great Tafsīr work jointly written by Imam al-Maḥalli and his student Imam al-Suyūṭī, is unique with its interpretation style of Qur'ān. Generally, it is acknowledged as one of the most accessible works of Qur'ānic exegeses because of its understandability and simplicity. As a classical text, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* has collected enough scholarly attraction. *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* gained more consideration from *Shāfi'ī* and *Ash'arī* scholars followed to both authors' jurisprudential and theological school of views.

Regarding the historical analysis of its impacts on Malabar Muslims of south India, it is found that the book had provoked and influenced in different ways. The impacts accompanied by its easy arrangement of the Qur'ānic meanings led an overt consequence on religious atmosphere of the region. Simultaneously, it played vital role in popularizing Qur'ānic exegesis for Malabar in both oral and written traditions. A couple of translations and other Arabic explanations showcase its effects in the academic scenarios.

Mayin Kutty Elaya of Arakkal family was the flag bearer of the *tafsīr* literature here, whereas he mainly depended on *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and thus named his Arabic-Malayalam book as *Tarjumah Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. A lot of works related with *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* published henceforth like *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*; a Malayalam translation and commentary of T.K. 'Abdulla Moulawi Mattool, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn ma'a Shurūh wa Ta'liqāt* of Isma'īl al-Nellikuti al

<sup>36</sup>Jamiathul Hind Al Islamiyya, <http://jamiathulhind.com/english/index.php?pid=14>, acceded on 27-05-2019.

Malaybāri, *Taysīr al-Jalālain ala Tafsīr al-Jalālain Jalālainof* ‘Abdu Rahman Bava Bin Muhammad Al Malaybāri, *‘Ala Hāmishi al Tafāsīr Ta’līqātun ‘Alā Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* of Sayyid Shihābuddīn Imbichi Koya Thangal and *Tanwīr al ‘Aynayn Sharah Tafsīr al-Jalālain* of Anwar ‘Abdullah bin Abd al Rahman al Faḍfari respectively.

On the other hand, the popular discussions and public programs especially in Sunni theological issues relating this book, mainly shed light on the fact of its reliability among these non-Arabic speaking Muslims. The little credible historical explanation shows that *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was included in the syllabus of the *Dars* most possibly from Ponnani *Dars* by al-Makhūm II, the student of al-Suyūṭī. Precisely it has gained further a pivotal position in Islamic curriculums since *Dars* syllabus until present institutions.

The well-known *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* of al-Maḥalli and al-Suyūṭī with all its importance and wide effects all over the world has such clear results among Muslims of Malabar region. But it is quite unfortunate that no dependable researches or studies have yet explored and evaluated this background and its peculiarities. Academic and historic revisits are much appraised in this context.

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