

Patterns of Affliction among Mappila Muslims of Malappuram, Kerala

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Abstract : Each and every community has its own way of understanding on health and illness; it varies from culture to culture. According to the Mappila Muslims of Malappuram, the state of pain, distress, and misery is understood as an affliction to their health. They believe that most of the afflictions are due to the Jinn/ Shaitanic Possession. So they prefer religious healers than the other systems of medicine for their treatments. Thangals are the endogamous community in Kerala, of Yemeni heritage who claim direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed's family. Because of their sacrosanct status, many Thangals works as religious healers in Northern Kerala. Using the case of one Thangal healer as the illustration of the many religious healers in Kerala who engage in the healing practices, it is intended, in this paper to illustrate the patterns of afflictions among Mappila Muslims of Malappuram. Based on the analysis of this Thangal's healing practice in the local context of Northern Kerala, the researcher further discusses the modes of treatment which they are providing to care seekers.

Keywords : affliction, religious healing, faith, Mappila Muslims, Jinn/Shaitanic possession

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