

# Tamil Muslims

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Entry tags: Religious Group, Islamic Traditions, Shiite/Shi'a, Sufism, Sunni, Transnational Islam, South Asian Religion, Shi'a Islam

Tamil Muslims are a community in southern India who practice Islam. Although a very diverse group, they share some common religious, cultural, and linguistic affinities. They are primarily located in Tamil Nadu, India, with populations spread across India, Sri Lanka, South East Asia, Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), and the United States. Muslims in Tamil Nadu are not a monolithic community; they speak multiple languages (mainly Tamil, Urdu, Telugu, and Bohri Gujarati), and have diverse histories and practices. This entry primarily focuses on Tamil-speaking Muslims in India. Islam has a long and distinctive history in the Tamil region, at least since ninth century through centuries-old Arab trade, and largely separate from the more familiar narratives of Muslim conquest in north India. The circulation of religious practices and the maintenance of oceanic connections is an important aspect of both Tamil Muslim history as well as the present. The Tamil region has had historical connections with the Bay of Bengal littoral through the circulation of Muslims and their textual practices—between Tamil-speaking South India (Ma'bar) and Southeast Asia (Nusantara)—since at least the fifteenth century. Coastal trading towns in Tamil Nadu became well-known for their religious spaces and institutions—mosques, dargahs (tomb-shrines of Muslim saints), and madrassas (Islamic religious schools). It was not just the southern coastal belt but also northern Tamil Nadu where notable Islamic seminaries were established. The inland city of Madurai was briefly ruled by the Madurai Sultanates in the fourteenth century, while the Urdu-speaking Arcot Nawabs have also had a presence in the region since the seventeenth century. A simplified sociological and caste-like classification of Tamil-speaking Muslims exists, namely the distinction between Maraikkayar (elite, coastal Sunni Muslims who were originally seafaring merchants), Lebbai (religious scholars but from a lower social-economic strata), and Rowther (descendants of former Muslim cavalymen who traded in horses). However, scholars such as Torsten Tschacher have cautioned against the homogenizing imperative and orientalist presuppositions of such sociological distinctions. Although this terminology continues to be used by Muslims today, the diverse ways in which people self-identity with one “sub-group” or the other cannot stand in for a classificatory schema. Today, Tamil Nadu is home to various Muslim shrines (dargahs), important pilgrimage centers, historical mosques built in the Dravidian style of architecture, and Islamic seminaries. Tamil Muslim cuisine is distinctive, with influences from Arab, Malay, Sri Lankan, and Southeast Asia regions.



Date Range: 20 CE - 21 CE

Region: Tamil South India

Region tags: India, Tamilakam, South India

The Tamil ethnolinguistic homeland (Tamilakam) in the peninsular southeast region of modern-day India, classified as part of Madras Presidency during British colonial rule

## Status of Participants:

✓ Religious Specialists    ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

## Sources

### Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Bayly, Susan. 1989. *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Source 2: Mines, Mattison. 1975. "Islamisation and Muslim Ethnicity in South India." *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 10(3): 404-18.
- Source 3: Tschacher, Torsten. 2014. "The Challenges of Diversity: 'Casting' Muslim Communities in South India." In *Being Muslim in South Asia: Diversity and Daily Life*, edited by Robin Jeffrey and Ronojoy Sen, 64-86. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

- Source 1: J.P.B. More. 2004. *Muslim Identity, Print Culture, and the Dravidian Factor in Tamil Nadu*. India: Orient Blackswan.
- Source 2: McGilvray, Dennis B. 2008. *Crucible of conflict: Tamil and Muslim society on the east coast of Sri Lanka*. Durham: Duke University Press
- Source 3: Tschacher, Torsten. 2018. Nagore Dargah. In: Kassam, Z.R., Greenberg, Y.K., Bagli, J. (eds) *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*. *Encyclopedia of Indian Religions*. Springer, Dordrecht.
- Source 1: Uwise, M.M. *Muslim Contribution to Tamil Literature*. Madras: Fifth International Islamic Tamil Literary Conference, 1990.
- Source 2: Tschacher, Torsten. *Race, Religion, and the 'Indian Muslim' Predicament in Singapore*. Routledge, 2017.
- Source 3: S, Anwar. "2014. 'Tamil Muslims and the Dravidian Movement: Alliance and Contradictions.' In *Frontiers of Embedded Muslim Communities in India*, Edited by Vinod K. Jairath. London: Routledge India,," n.d.

### Online sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1 URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/research-on-tamil-muslims/article19125378.ece>
- Source 2 URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/saviour-angel-of-mariners/article26456811.ece>
- Source 2 Description: On Nagore Dargah, a major pilgrimage site
- Source 3 URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/syncretic-tradition-at-nagore-dargah/article22104294.ece>
- Source 3 Description: Syncretic tradition at Nagore dargah
- Source 1 URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEoU4YbKp8M&t=25s>
- Source 1 Description: documentary film on Tamil Muslim identity
- Source 2 URL: [https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-024-1267-3\\_1926](https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-024-1267-3_1926)
- Source 2 Description: Nagore Dargah
- Source 3 URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/arabu-tamil-one-of-the-many-hybrid-languages-that-are-dying-out-in-india/article27235670.ece>

– Source 3 Description: Arwi language

Specific to this answer:

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Relevant online primary textual corpora (original languages and/or translations):

– Source 1 URL: <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/H/bo23682046.html>

– Source 1 Description: "The Hour Past Midnight" - A novel by Salma, translated by Lakshmi Holmström

– Source 2 URL: <https://www.tiltedaxispress.com/women-dreaming>

– Source 2 Description: "Women Dreaming" - A novel by Salma, translated by Meena Kandasamy

– Source 3 URL: <https://indiaclub.com/products/9676-the-reclining-chair>

– Source 3 Description: "The Reclining Chair" - A novel by Thoppil Mohammed Meeran, translated by M. Vijayalakshmi

Notes: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23345652>

## General Variables

### Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: Tamil Muslims have for centuries lived alongside and interacted with other faith communities such as Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, and Christians, among others. There is everyday contact with people of other faiths in private and public life, as well as with people belonging to different Muslim sects.

Specific to this answer:

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Is the cultural contact competitive:

– No

Notes: Tamil Muslims predominantly live in co-existence with other cultures and faith communities, especially due to a shared ethos of being Tamil and speaking the same language as others in the region.

Specific to this answer:

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Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Yes

Notes: Typically Tamil Muslims are accommodating of other faith communities and have for centuries lived alongside people of different faiths, ethnicity, race, and language affinity.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

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↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– Yes

Notes: It is neutral in most cases, except some rare instances of conflict.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

Notes: There is very little violent conflict between Tamil Muslims and other groups in the region except for some occasions of religious violence where Muslims are targeted:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997\\_Coimbatore\\_riots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_Coimbatore_riots)

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

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↳ Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– No

Notes: Tamil Muslims are not in violent conflict with any group but Muslims are increasingly persecuted in India due to the rise of Hindu nationalism and majoritarianism.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

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Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Assigned at birth (membership is default for this society):

– Yes

Notes: One is a Muslim if born into a Muslim household or to parents who are Muslim. Through the course of one's life, they may choose to adhere/not adhere to Islamic virtues and practices, or convert to a different religion.

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Assigned by personal choice:

– Yes

Notes: One may convert to Islam by accepting/reciting the Shahada, which is an oath accepting the oneness of Allah.

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↳ Assigned by class:

– No

Notes: Class is not a factor in who is/becomes a Muslim, although like in any society, class is a sociological reality that determines social and interpersonal relations between people of the same or different faith.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Assigned at a specific age:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Assigned by gender:

– No

Notes: One can belong to any gender and be Muslim/follow Islam, although individuals who identify as queer or trans face ostracization, and have difficulty gaining acceptance as Muslims from their families and broader society.

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Assigned by participation in a particular ritual:

– Yes

Notes: All Muslims recite the Shahada in their daily prayers. New converts, especially, must recite the Shahada--a verse that translates as "There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God"--to become Muslim. The Shahada declares belief in the oneness (tawhid) of God and the acceptance of Muhammad as God's messenger. However, there are those who identify as Muslim but may not practice Islam or partake in regular prayers.

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↳ Assigned by some other factor:

– No

Specific to this answer:

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Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– Yes

Notes: "Da'wah" or the act of inviting people to Islam is common. However, coercing someone to embrace the faith is not permitted in Islam.

Specific to this answer:

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Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is proselytizing mandated for religious professionals:

– Yes

Notes: Yes and no, depending on a variety of factors. Some sects and groups such as Salafis are known to be more invested in Da'wah as an Islamic duty. Da'wah has, however, historically been important since the time of Prophet Muhammad.

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Is proselytizing mandated for all adherents:

– No

Notes: Although some Muslims believe it is their duty to proselytize. This notion varies from adherent to adherent.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Is missionary work mandated for religious professionals:

– No

Notes: Except for specific missionary groups such as the Tablighi Jamaat. For more see: <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2010/09/15/muslim-networks-and-movements-in-western-europe-tablighi-jamaat/> and <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/faith-and-social-movements/BF2B44A23D7883BB364302B21AD50D42> and <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0250.xml>

Specific to this answer:

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Is missionary work mandated for all adherents:

– No

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Is proselytization coercive:

– No

Notes: According to Islam, proselytization should never be coercive.

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Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religion have official political support

– No

Notes: While they do not have official political support, Tamil Muslims have been active in politics, predominantly supporters of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), a political party founded on the ideals of social justice, self-respect, and equality. A unique nexus between a political, ethnolinguistic, and religious identity was consolidated in the early twentieth century by the Dravidian movement, a subnational campaign that stressed the Tamil language and culture as the glue that held people together regardless of their religion or caste. The Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam (TMMK) was formed in 1995. Its breakaway organization, the Tamil Nadu Thowheed Jamaath (TNTJ), emerged in 2004. Neither are political parties but refer to themselves as mass-based social organizations. Over the years they have had increasing political clout in Tamil Nadu.

Specific to this answer:

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Region: Indian Ocean

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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Region: Indian Ocean



Are apostates prosecuted or punished:

– No

Notes: Not in Tamil Nadu, although they may face social ostracization from within their community.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Estimated population, numeric: 4500000

Notes: Tamil Muslims in India are approximately 6 per cent of Tamil Nadu's population (according to the 2011 census).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

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Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

– Estimated population, percentage of sample region: 6

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

– Small religious group (seen as being part of a related larger religious group)

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:



– Yes

Notes: There is no single leader. Religious leaders such as Aalims (religious scholar), Imams (religious leader who leads prayer), and Qazis (Islamic judge) are important figures in the community.

↳ Is there a hierarchy among these leaders:

– Yes

↳ A council or group of leaders for the religious group that oversees all other leaders in the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Are leaders believed to possess supernatural powers or qualities:

– No

Notes: Unless they are identified as a saint, Sufi or Pir in their lifetime.

↳ Are leaders considered fallible:

– Yes

↳ Charges of fallibility made by a leader's own followers:

– Yes

↳ Charges of fallibility made by other leaders in the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Charges of fallibility made by a political ruler:

– Yes

↳ Are close followers or disciples of a religious leader required to obediently and unquestionably accept the leader's pronouncements on all matters:

– No

Notes: Religious leaders have authority, but their pronouncements are not unquestionable.

## Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also “oral scriptures” (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– Yes

Notes: Like Muslims across the world, Tamil Muslims primarily follow the Quran, which is believed to be the direct word of God. Muslims also use hadiths (Prophetic sayings that were codified in the decades and centuries after the Prophet's death) as guidance, although the authenticity of some hadiths over others has always been contested.

Specific to this answer:

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Are they written:

– Yes

Notes: The sacred texts of Islam--the Quran and Hadiths--are written. Hadiths are prophetic sayings that were codified in the decades and centuries after the Prophet's death.

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Are they oral:

– Yes

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Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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Revealed by a high god:

– Yes

Notes: The Quran is believed to be the revelation from God. Muslims believe that the Quran was orally revealed by God to the final prophet, Muhammad, through the archangel Gabriel.

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Revealed by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: The Quran is believed to be the revelation from God. Muslims believe that the Quran was orally revealed by God to the final prophet, Muhammad, through the archangel Gabriel.

Reference: Lawrence, Bruce B.. The Koran in English. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press., 2017.

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Inspired by high god:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Inspired by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: Muslims believe that the Quran was orally revealed by God to the final prophet, Muhammad, through the archangel Gabriel.

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↳ Originated from divine or semi-divine human beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Originated from non-divine human being:

– No

Specific to this answer:

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Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Are the scriptures alterable:

– No

Notes: The holy Quran cannot be altered, although the verses have been interpreted differently through the centuries since it was revealed and written.

↳ Are there formal institutions (i.e. institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders) for interpreting the scriptures:

– Yes

↳ Can interpretation also take place outside these institutions:

– Yes

Notes: Individual Muslims can also partake in interpretation of the Quran, although many people turn to religious scholars.

↳ Interpretation is only allowed by officially sanctioned figures:

– No

Notes: Individual Muslims can also partake in interpretation of the Quran, although many people turn to religious scholars for guidance.

↳ Is there a select group of people trained in transmitting the scriptures:

– Yes

Notes: Religious scholars are trained in interpreting and imparting the knowledge of the Quran to others.

↳ Is there a codified canon of scriptures:

– Yes

Notes: The Quran and the Hadiths

## Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: Many mosques in Tamil Nadu are built in the distinctive Dravidian or Dravidian-Islamic style of architecture. See: <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/mosques-in-dravidian-islamic-style-about-the-islamic-architecture-in-tamil-nadu/article20696593.ece>

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↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: This information is not readily available, nor is there enough data to make inferences.

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

– I don't know

Notes: Although there have been a few studies of mosques in the region, the exact size of such mosques are not known.

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: There is no research available on the height on these monuments.

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– Field doesn't know

↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

Notes: Religious architecture is diverse and varies. Mosques are built in many different styles, depending on the builder, resources available, the aesthetic preferences of a community, and the historical period in which it was constructed.

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Tombs:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Cemeteries:

– Yes

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↳ Temples:

– No

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↳ Altars:

– No

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↳ Devotional markers:

– Yes

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↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:

– Yes

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↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes [specify]: Decorated chariot which is part of the annual "urs" or "kanduri" in many Dargahs in Tamil Nadu. These chariots are painstakingly decorated, and taken through the streets of the town to commemorate the death anniversary of the saint interred in the shrine.

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Is iconography present:

– No

Notes: The pillars, motifs, and overall style of Dravidian-Islamic mosques in coastal Tamil Nadu are

deeply embedded in Tamil Dravida building traditions but are also distinct from Hindu and Jain temples as mosque pillars do not have figural carvings in keeping with Islamic norms. For example, one of the shared features of pillars found in both mosques and temples is the *puspapotika*, which are flower bud carvings extending out from the capital, characteristic of sixteenth century Dravida architecture (and later periods). But sculptures of Hindu gods and mythical creatures that are ubiquitous in south Indian temples are absent in a mosque.

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Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

– Yes

Notes: Tamil Nadu has numerous Muslim saint-shrines known as Dargahs (an Urdu word meaning "court" that is used across South Asia for Muslim shrines). The most famous is the Nagore Dargah, of 16th century saint Shahul Hamid: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagore\\_Dargah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagore_Dargah) There are many other lesser-known, but important Muslim shrines.



Are sacred site oriented to environmental features:

"Environmental features" refers to features in the landscape, mountains, rivers, cardinal directions etc...

– Yes

Notes: Since Muslim shrines are tombs of saints and martyrs, it is assumed that the head of the deceased saint/martyr faces Mecca.

Are pilgrimages present:

– Yes

Notes: The Nagore Dargah, of the 16th century saint Shahul Hamid, is the largest Muslim shrine complex in south India and the most visited, drawing millions of pilgrims each year. A migrant and sojourner himself, Shahul Hamid was born in present-day Uttar Pradesh in north India, and traveled across the Indian subcontinent, visiting Mecca, Medina, and Lahore before settling down in south India. Another large shrine, the Erwadi Dargah in Ramnad district, is infamous for a tragedy that took place in 2001 that brought it much public attention and scrutiny. Various other shrines, such as Muthupetai Dargah in Thiruvavur district, or the Goripalayam Dargah in Madurai, are smaller but well-known to pilgrims in south India. The Thuckalay Peer Mohammed Dargah in Kanyakumari, located at the border of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, is named after a prominent mystic, who, according to some oral accounts, wrote a staggering 18,000 songs in praise of the divine. While in recent years he has been called a Sufi, mystics such as Thuckalay Peer Mohammed were more commonly known as Cittars or Siddhars, referring to the age-old Tamil Siddha tradition that has roots in different religious and tantric yogic traditions. Many such figures wrote devotional praise poetry, some specifically about the Islamic faith, but others in a more general vein about divinity. Their poetry and verses, published and distributed by dargah committees, are often sung during the *kandoori*. There are numerous other shrines that are known only to locals or a small network of pilgrims.



How strict is pilgrimage:

– Optional (common)

Notes: Pilgrimage to saint-shrines are optional, though one is considered to be blessed to undertake such journeys. The pilgrimage to Mecca is mandatory, at least once in the lifetime of each Muslim if they are physically and financially able.

## Beliefs

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### Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer “no” only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: For example, saints can appear in dreams, and folklore suggests that jinns (supernatural beings) can possess humans.

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Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

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Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

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Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: There are vivid descriptions of the spatial aspects of Heaven and Hell. Historian Nerina Rustomji argues that material objects and the “spatial dimensions” of al-janna (heaven or the Garden) and al-nar (hell or the Fire) are what connect this world and the afterworld. According to some verses in the Quran, the objects in the afterworld resemble luxury commodities that we are already familiar with on earth as well as beautiful things from the natural world: brocade carpets, jewel-encrusted thrones, beautiful trees and delicious pomegranates



(Rustomji 2009, 45-50).

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↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world:

– Yes

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↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “above” space:

– No

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined “below” space:

– No

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

– No

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:

– Yes [specify]: Historian Nerina Rustomji argues that material objects and the “spatial dimensions” of al-janna (heaven or the Garden) and al-nar (hell or the Fire) are what connect this world and the afterworld. According to some verses in the Quran, the objects in the afterworld resemble luxury commodities that we are already familiar with on earth as well as beautiful things from the natural world: brocade carpets, jewel-encrusted thrones, beautiful trees and delicious pomegranates (Rustomji 2009, 45-50).

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Reincarnation in this world:

– No

Notes: Muslims generally do not believe in reincarnation.

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Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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Cremation:

– No

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Mummification:

– No

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Interment:

– Yes

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Corpse is flexed (legs are bent or body is crouched):

– No

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↳ Corpse is extended (lying flat on front or back):

– Yes

Notes: The burial of the deceased should take place as soon as possible, after the ritual bathing and shrouding of the body in a white cloth. The preparation of the deceased body for the janaza (Islamic funeral) are gender specific. During burial, the head should face Mecca, the holiest city in Islam.

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↳ Corpse is upright (where body is interred in standing position):

– No

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↳ Corpse is interred some other way:

– No

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↳ Cannibalism:

– No

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↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

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↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

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↳ **Secondary burial:**

– Yes

Notes: Only in some rare instances. For example, a person belonging to the persecuted Ahmadiyya sect was exhumed and re-buried:  
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2009/jun/08/exhumation-annoys-ahmadiyya-sect-55626.html>

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↳ **Re-treatment of corpse:**

– No

Specific to this answer:  
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Region: Indian Ocean

↳ **Other intensive (in terms of time or resources expended) treatment of corpse :**

– Yes [specify]: Only cases of a police investigation.

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

**Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:**

– No

Notes: Muslim burials are only for deceased individuals

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

**Are grave goods present:**

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ As cenotaphs:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Other formal burial type:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: Jinns are supernatural beings in the Islamic tradition made from smokeless fire.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– Yes

Notes: In the Islamic tradition, this supreme high God is Allah.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic:

– No

Notes: God does not have a form and is not anthropomorphic.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god):

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Other feature(s) of supreme high god:

– No

↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme god's knowledge is restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

— No

Notes: God is all-knowing, omniscient.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

— No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted within the sample region:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god's knowledge is unrestricted outside of sample region:

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes



Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):  
– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god knows your basic character (personal essence):  
– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god knows what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):  
– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god has other knowledge of this world:  
– Yes [specify]: because God is all-knowing.

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god has deliberate causal efficacy in the world:  
– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god can reward:  
– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god can punish:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god has indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– No

↳ The supreme high god exhibits positive emotion:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god exhibits negative emotion:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god possesses hunger:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural beings other than the high god:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living:

– No

Notes: The word of God has already been communicated to people through Prophet Muhammad.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– I don't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– Yes

Notes: Some people claim to have been possessed by jinns and felt their presence.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– Yes

Notes: Jinns, for example, are said to have such knowledge.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings knows your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– Yes

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have other knowledge of this world:

– Yes [specify]: God is all knowing and there has knowledge pertaining to all realms of human affairs.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings can reward:

– Yes

Notes: Muslims believe God will reward or punish on judgement day.

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– No

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– No

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– No

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– No

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– No

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– I don't know

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– No

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– I don't know

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– I don't know

## Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Notes: God is all-knowing and omnipresent.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:

Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously "moral" or "ethical" norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.

– Yes

Notes: The Quran specifies how a Muslim must behave in relation to others, whether members of the same group or those belonging to a different faith.

↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:

– Yes

↳ Food:

– Yes

Notes: According to Quran (which is the word of God), consuming pork is forbidden. Muslims abstain from any food or water from dawn to sunset during Ramadan. Fasting is mentioned in the Quran.

↳ Sacred space(s):

– Yes

↳ Sacred object(s):

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:

– Yes

Notes: Murder is condemned by most Muslims and in the Quran, except under exceptional circumstances such as war. One needs to understand the Quran (the direct word of God or Allah) in the socio-historical context and time period in which it was revealed.

↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– Yes

↳ Adultery:

– Yes

Notes: The Quran has specific passages detailing punishment for adultery. This has been interpreted differently by different religious scholars and jurists over time.

↳ Incest:

– Yes

↳ Other sexual practices:

– Yes [specify]: The Quran details permissibility regarding various sexual practices, but these have been interpreted differently by different jurists and individuals.

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes



↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– No

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Notes: According to the Quran and Sunnah, rewards in the afterlife depend on our deeds/actions in the earthly world.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– Yes

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– No

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– No

↳ Done by other entities or through other means [specify]

– No

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– No

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– Yes

↳ Done randomly:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– No

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural punishments in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: Although this varies widely among Muslims.

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of mild sensory displeasure:

– I don't know

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory displeasure:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as an inferior life form:

– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in an inferior realm:

– No

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– No

Notes: Muslims believe that their deeds in this lifetime will be assessed on judgement day by God.

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

Notes: Muslims believe God will bestow rewards on judgement day.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

↳ Done only by high god:

– Yes

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– No

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– No

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– No

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– Yes

↳ Done randomly:

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– No

## Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is the messiah's whereabouts or time of coming known?

– Yes

↳ Alive, identified:

– No

↳ Coming in this lifetime:

– No

↳ Coming on specified date:

– No

↳ Coming in unspecified time in near future:

– No

↳ Coming in unspecified time in distant future:

– No

↳ Coming has already passed:

– Yes

Notes: In Islam, Jesus was the messiah, and Muhammad is the last prophet.

↳ One in a line of many past and future messiahs:

– No

↳ Is the messiah's purpose known:

– Yes

↳ Messiah is a political figure who restores political rule:

– No

↳ Messiah is a priestly figure who restores religious traditions:

– No

↳ Other purpose:

– Yes [specify]: In the Islamic tradition, and according to some hadiths (prophetic sayings codified in the decades and centuries after Prophet Muhammad's death) the Mahdi is a messianic figure who will appear at the end of times.

## Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: Social norms as per Tamil society and Tamil forms of kinship are present. Some social and kin norms are specific to the Tamil Muslims, but depend on whether they are coastal or inland communities. For example, coastal Tamil Muslims are predominantly matrilineal and marriage is usually endogamous. For more on matrilineal Muslim societies and Islam, see: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14616742.2021.1905260>

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ What is the nature of this distinction:

– Present (but not emphasized)

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Are specifically moral norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are implicitly linked to vague metaphysical concepts:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are explicitly linked to vague metaphysical entities:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked to impersonal cosmic order (e.g. karma):

– Yes

Notes: Specifically moral norms are linked to the afterlife/afterworld.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked in some way to an anthropomorphic being:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are linked explicitly to commands of anthropomorphic being:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Specifically moral norms are have no special connection to metaphysical:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Moral norms apply to:

– Only specialized religious class

– All individuals within society (excepting slaves, aliens)

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Courage (in battle):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Courage (generic):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Mercy / forgiveness / tolerance:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Generosity / charity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Righteousness / moral rectitude:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Familial obedience / filial piety:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Fidelity / loyalty:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Independence / creativity / freedom:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Moderation / frugality:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Forbearance / fortitude / patience:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Assertiveness / decisiveness / confidence / initiative:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Strength (physical):

– I don't know

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Humility / modesty:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Contentment / serenity / equanimity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Joyfulness / enthusiasm / cheerfulness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Optimism / hope:

– I don't know

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Gratitude / thankfulness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Reverence / awe / wonder:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Wisdom / understanding:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Discernment / intelligence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Beauty / attractiveness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Practices

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### Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: Celibacy is only required when specific vows are taken (such as during shrine visitation known as "ziyarat"), or during the holy month of Ramadan.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual

abstinence):

– No

Notes: However, Muslims are required to be fully abstinent from sexual activity during the fasting period of Ramadan. Sex outside marriage is generally frowned upon. Sometimes Islamic justifications are given to dissuade members from extra-marital relations.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– Yes

Notes: Muslims fast from dawn to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. Ramadan is a month of fasting, spiritual reflection, charity, and prayer.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– Yes

Notes: Tamil Muslims (and Muslims more broadly) generally do not consume pork, but it is inaccurate to portray this as a "forgone food opportunity" or "taboo on desired food" since this is a religious sanction that is not viewed in terms of desire.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Notes: Not required.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– Yes

Notes: Among Shi'a Muslims, during the procession of Muharram (a commemoration ritual marking the anniversary of the battle of Karbala), chest beating and flagellations are common.

Reference: Khan, Syed Muhammad . "Https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1645/battle-of-karbala/", n.d..

Reference: Ruffle, Karen. "Wounds of Devotion: Reconceiving Mtam in Shi'i Islam". *History of Religions* 55, no. 2 (2015). <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/683065>.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: Tamil Muslims do not practice adult sacrifice.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Notes: Tamil Muslims are not an indigenous group (as defined by the Indian state) and do not practice child sacrifice. Such practices are illegal under Indian law.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

– No

Notes: However, almsgiving or charity is expected of Muslims if they are able.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– Yes

Notes: Muslims are expected to pray five times a day. Muslim Men in South Asia are expected to attend congregational prayer on Fridays. Muslim women in South Asia typically do not attend Friday prayers or go to mosque, instead praying at home. This is largely due to cultural and not religious reasons. In recent years, Muslim women have been forming congregations for praying in mosques.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Notes: No physical risk-taking is involved, or required by Islam.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Notes: There are various codes pertaining to Islamic ethics that Tamil Muslims participate in. These ethics cannot be generalized and are internally diverse. While some of these ethics are drawn from Islam, other codes of conduct and virtues are drawn from Tamil society's long-standing norms.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

– No

Notes: However, Muslims in India more generally are a marginalized community. They are a numerical minority and persecuted by Hindu nationalist groups and individuals.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– Yes

Notes: Sunni Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Some Shia Muslims pray three times a day. In general, all Muslims are required to partake in daily prayers.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to small-scale rituals.

– Hours: 3

Notes: The interval time between the five daily prayers varies between 2 - 6 hours.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

i.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale "ceremonies" and "festivals."

– Yes

Notes: Yes, but "required" may not be the right term to describe the participation in large scale rituals such as the "urs" or "kandoori" festival (that commemorates the death anniversary of Muslim saints), as many of these rituals are long-standing (having evolved over time) and do not need regular religious sanction. However, there are regular debates about the "permissibility" of particular rituals. Some Muslim groups view shrine-based rituals as un-Islamic (haram).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Indian Ocean



On average, for large-scale rituals how many participants gather in one location:

– Number of participants: 1000

Notes: This varies, depending on the size and importance of the festival. It could be between 1000-1 million. The largest Muslim shrine complex in Tamil Nadu is the Nagore Dargah, drawing millions of visitors (local and international) of different faiths each year.

Reference: Saheb, SAA. "A Festival of Flags: Hindu-Muslim Devotion and the Sacralising of Localism at the Shrine of Nagore-e-sharif in Tamil Nadu." In: Werbner P, Basu H (eds) *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*. London: Routledge, 1998.



Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ What is the average interval of time between performances (in hours):

Performances here refers to large-scale rituals.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The main large-scale ritual/festival is the annual urs (also referred to as the kandoori) that takes place at many shrines across Tamil Nadu (and South Asia more broadly). This takes place once a year and the exact date varies every year as it depends on the lunar calendar.

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks:

Orthodoxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are interpreted in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper interpretation, etc.

– Yes

Notes: Since the 1990s at least, Muslim organizations espousing a reformist agenda (often loosely referred to as Salafi or Wahhabi organizations) have sought to articulate a distinct religious and political voice, such as by establishing separate mosques and cultivating new publics that can rally around their rhetoric. This has led to internal contestations among Tamil Muslims about “correct” Islamic practice and the place of long-standing forms of religiosity that are coded as both Islamic and Tamil. One example are anti-shrine campaigns, but these are not widespread.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks:

Orthopraxy checks are mechanisms used to ensure that rituals are performed in a standardized way, e.g. through the supervisory prominence of a professionalized priesthood or other system of governance, appeal to texts detailing the proper procedure, etc.

– Yes

Notes: For example, rituals performed during major shrine festivals undergo critique and contestation from those in positions of religious or hereditary authority as well the general public. Daily prayers (salaath) are usually taught by parent to the child or by a religious scholar to their student.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Does participation entail synchronic practices:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Is there use of intoxicants:

– No

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Tattoos/scarification:

– Yes

Notes: Among some communities.

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Circumcision:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:  
Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Food taboos:

– Yes

Notes: Pork is forbidden under Islam.

Specific to this answer:  
Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Hair:

– Yes

Notes: Women tend to cover their hair in religious places such as shrines and mosques, and also during religious events in non-sacred sites. The practice of hijab/niqab/burqa varies greatly.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Dress:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Ornaments:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Archaic ritual language:

– No

Notes: The ritual language is usually a combination of Arabic and the local language (Tamil, in this case)

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Other:

– No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes

Notes: This varies depending on the location of the group. Coastal Tamil-speaking Muslims use different kin terminology than inland Muslim groups. For example, in coastal towns, Muslims use the word "kaka" for uncle, "latha" for elder sister. Inland Muslims from Pallapatti use kinship terms borrowed from Hindi (such as "bhabhi" for sister in law) because they are a mobile community who have migrated to different parts of India for work, subsequently bringing back kin terms from those locations.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Fictive kinship terminology universal:

– No

Notes: Fictive kinship terminology varies depending on the region one is located within Tamil Nadu. Coastal Tamil Muslims employ different kin terms than inland Muslims.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Fictive kinship terminology widespread:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

↳ Fictive kinship terminology employed but uncommon:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Society and Institutions

### Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– A state

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

### Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– No

Notes: However, many Muslims (world over) undertake charity work, and this includes providing relief

and resources during natural disasters and other large-scale events that impact both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Famine relief is provided by the central and state governments (keeping in mind that India is like a federal structure).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– No

Notes: However, many Muslims (world over) undertake charity work, and this includes providing relief and resources during natural disasters and other large-scale events that impact both Muslims and non-Muslims. Dargahs (Muslim shrines) are important spaces where food is cooked and served to the needy, often on a daily basis (depending on the donations received).

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Through state sanctioned programs.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– I don't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Through state or private sector programs

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

– No

Notes: Any is eligible to enroll in religious education. In India, gender-segregated Islamic schools known as madrassas are the most traditional and visible places of imparting religious knowledge. In recent decades, more Islamic educational institutions have been established that confer BA and MA degrees in Islamic studies as well offering courses where women can acquire formal Islamic credentials and become religious scholars (Aalima or Muftia). Apart from these formal institutions, there are numerous informal networks of neighborhood Quran and Arabic study circles where women of all ages participate.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Is such education open to both males and females:

– Yes

Notes: Women can attend gender-segregated Islamic schools known as madrassas.

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: Secular education through public and private education

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

- ↳ Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:  
– Yes

## Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

– Yes

Notes: Adherents interact with religious scholars and clergy.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

– Yes

Notes: At the national or state level with government agencies

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– Field doesn't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The Tamil Nadu government provides rations for eligible citizens.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

– Field doesn't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: By the Tamil Nadu state government

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– Yes

Notes: Yes, if someone from the group or a group of individuals fund such infrastructure for their community or town

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: By the state

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:



– Yes

Notes: By the state and national government. Any Indian citizen aged below 60 years is liable to pay income tax if their income exceeds 2.5 lakhs.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: With the Indian Police Service/Forces

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Notes: Muslim communities in India have their own legal systems of adjudicating civil and family law cases under Muslim personal law. For more, see: Suneetha, A. 2012. "Debating the Model Nikahnama: Muslim Women and Marriage Laws." *Economic and Political Weekly* 47(43). Lemons, Katherine. 2019. *Divorcing Traditions: Islamic Marriage Law and the Making of Indian Secularism*. Cornell: Cornell University Press. Schrago, Sophie. 2022. "Reclaiming Religious and Legal Authority: An Ethnography of the Women's Shari'a Courts in India." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (47)2: 499-523. Stephens, Julia. 2019. *Governing Islam: Law, Empire, and Secularism in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Muslims in India regularly interact with the Indian legal system for a range of cases and legal disputes.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– Yes

Notes: As Indian citizens and subjects of the state, Tamil Muslims are subjected to Indian law. In rare cases, this involves execution.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– Field doesn't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– No

Notes: Corporal punishment is not permitted under Indian law.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

– Yes

Notes: India has a complex, hybrid legal system. Dar ul qazas are nonstate Islamic legal institutions that frequently deal with divorce petitions brought forth by Muslim women. They are crucial spaces not only for Muslims seeking redressal, but also for relieving the burden on the state's formal legal system, which by some estimates has the largest backlog of court cases in the world. Dar ul qazas thus perform an important material function, and in some cases, they are even legitimized by state courts.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: India has a complex, hybrid legal system. Muslims interact with Muslim Personal Law as well as civil law.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Any Indian citizen can enroll in the Indian National Army which is an institutionalized military.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Any Indian citizen can enroll in the Indian National Army and theoretically, they are also protected by the same in case of conflict.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Is use of this distinct written language confined to religious professionals:

– No

Notes: Tamil Muslims are typically proficient in Tamil and English, depending on levels of education and socio-economic status. In the 18-19th centuries, many coastal Tamil Muslims (men and women) were proficient in Arabic-Tamil or Arwi, that is, Tamil written in the Arabic script. By the mid-twentieth century, this language was phased out. For more, see: Torsten Tschacher (2018) From script to language: the three identities of 'Arabic-Tamil', *South Asian History and Culture*, 9:1, 16-37, DOI:10.1080/19472498.2017.1411052

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Tamil-speaking Muslims learn Tamil and English in school.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: Tamil and English are taught in schools

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Notes: The Islamic or Hijri Calendar

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The Gregorian Calendar

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

## Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: Tamil Muslims involved in fisheries (coastal) and agriculture (inland) are engaged in food production, although exact numbers are not known.

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Fishing

– Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– I don't know

Specific to this answer:

Date Range: 9 CE - 21 CE

Region: Indian Ocean

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