

THE KHOJA MUSCATI OF OMAN AND ZANZIBAR



By Abdulrazak Fazal Updated: August 2020



► [Wikipedia on Muscat - Khoja](#)

What is striking is the Muscat mosque/imambara photo that very much resembles our Zanzibar's Junni imambara. Just as Matrah evidences the settlement of Khojas in Muscat a noticeable feature of our Zanzibar stone town was the predominance of its Khoja settlement in the Malindi/Kiponda vicinity in those days of the nineteenth/twentieth century. We, the late Hassanbhai Ali Mohamed Jaffer ► [Khojapedia on Hassanbhai Ali Mohamed Jaffer](#) and I, had dwelt quite a bit upon the topic of 'Khoja Muscati' that he depicts in one of his books.

In Zanzibar we'd quite a few Khoja Muscatis. Our Junni mosque 'darwan' (Abdulla Darwani) was a Muscati. He'd his brother in law (Gulam's father), also a Muscati. Then there were the brothers Abdulla Muscati (employed by 'Miwani Mkubwa') and Jaffer. One Shaab who was Abulo's (Abdulhusain Ahmed) partner. Our understanding of Khoja Muscati being the descendants of Khoja ancestry from Hyderabad Sindh unlike us of Kutchi/Kathiawad descent.

While we sailed onwards to Zanzibar the Hyderabad Khojas made Muscat their home. Also, we speak Kutchi/Gujarati and they speak 'Sindhi' that is termed 'Khojki' by others (or does Khojki differ from Sindhi?). As rightly pointed by brother Hasnain Walji their 'surnames' with suffix 'ni' (Sajwani, Adwani etc.) are typical of the Sindhis. In Dubai we had one 'Sajwani' who built a mosque. There were also the likes of Yusuf Habib and Musa Habib who were 'Khoja Muscatis'.

Brother Shokat Babu Gulla (Dubai) comments "My grandfather Marhum Haji Ghulla whom you mention in your write up 'Zanzibar Khoja Ithnashris' was a Lawaty.

▶ **'Zanzibar Khoja Ithnashiris'** They were those who had migrated to Muscat from Medina after Imam Mohamed A'Wahab spread Wahabisim and intermarried with Hydrabadis."

On a separate note, in the fifties and sixties when Colonial East Africa flourished, the East Africans were looked upon with respect in India. I recall at the Dewji Jamaal Musafirkhana on Omarkhadi in Bombay the EA Khojas were received with open arms by the care takers and those around there. Come the post seventies phase and they were literally discarded and held in contempt while the 'Khoja Muscatis' as a result of oil glut in the Gulf reigned over the place. This despite securing free accommodation (they being entitled to five-star hotels by the Oman Government) at the Tajmahal and Sheraton, they rented a room in the Musafirkhana depriving the others of a room there. The caretakers cared a damn about the East Africans and others looking greedily upon the Muscatis just as the 'chamchagiri' they did of the East African Khojas in the past. The irony of times!

By Abdulrazak Fazal

Updated: August 2020

Click below for:

- ▶ **Abdulrazak Fazal's Updated Zanzibar Articles**
- ▶ **More Zanzibar articles**
- ▶ **Tributes and more interesting articles**
- ▶ **Abdulrazak Fazal's original website**