

ISLAM IN
WEST AFRICA

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By

J. SPENCER TRIMINGHAM



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Preface

THIS book, which continues my studies of Islam in Africa, is primarily a phenomenological study of the religious life of West African Muslims. My special aim has been to try to assess what has been the result of the impact of Islam, the way it influences African society, and, conversely, the way the African community moulds the Islam it receives. It is concerned with what is, not what ought to be; with the living beliefs and practices of particular peoples, not with the ideal of Islamic thought and practice. At the same time it embraces more than the actual study of Islam in West Africa since it is concerned with the way Africans have assimilated it, the degree to which it fulfils their religious aspirations, and, where these cannot find expression in Islam, in what directions they are fulfilled.

Though a study of this nature, concerned with the interaction of cultures, is necessarily based on the past, the historical background has not been included since the writer has completed a study of the history of Islam in West Africa. A summary would only duplicate the material and prove inadequate since not all the conclusions accord with commonly accepted ideas of West African Islamic history and could not be clarified in a few lines.

The material upon which this study is primarily based was collected during a year's survey undertaken in 1952 and sponsored by the Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Missionary Society. In addition, it takes into account secondhand information based on the work of others. Such a tour embracing such a vast area, inhabited by so many and contrasting peoples, has severe limitations. I do not claim an exactness of knowledge and insight into the religion of the many peoples the area embraces. That could only have been acquired by close study of one group over a similar period. But to study one community would have been to defeat the aim I had in view. At the same time the material collected was so copious that it actually proved an embarrassment and the exigencies of publication have necessitated my being severely selective.

There are many elements in the treasury of my experience which have not found expression in this book. But the form in which the survey was conceived, carried out, and ultimately embodied in a book was unsuitable for a vertical as contrasted with a horizontal survey. I do not think the material could have been collected without such

planning, but other questions arose whilst in Africa and whilst writing it which, given the plan and the framework, could not be pursued. At the same time it must be pointed out that these deeper studies cannot be done except on a firm foundation of historical and empirical research. With that as a background the way is open for a more imaginative approach to the religious survey, that of intuitive understanding and deeper insight. This, however, is not the place to elaborate an approach to religious survey which has not been attempted.

I wish to record my thanks to the two societies which made my tour possible and to the University of Glasgow for providing me with the opportunity to work on the material collected. I must also express an especial debt of gratitude to the Africans with whom I worked, for without their help whatever I have been able to do, however imperfectly, would have been impossible. The second chapter was delivered at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, in November 1956 as the James Long Lectures.

J. S. T.

University of Glasgow

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MAP

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.É.F.	Afrique Équatoriale Française.
<i>Afr. Fr. R.C.</i>	<i>Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique Française: Renseignements Coloniaux.</i>
A.O.F.	Afrique Occidentale Française.
Barth, <i>Travels</i>	H. Barth, <i>Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa</i> (1849-55), 5 vols., 1857.
<i>Bull. Com. Ét. A.O.F.</i>	<i>Bulletin du Comité d'Études historiques et scientifiques de l'Afrique Occidentale Française.</i>
<i>Bull. I.F.A.N.</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire.</i>
<i>D. Isl.</i>	<i>Der Islam.</i>
Delafosse, <i>H.S.N.</i>	M. Delafosse, <i>Haut-Sénégal et Niger</i> , 3 vols., Paris, 1912.
<i>J.R.A.I.</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.</i>
<i>J. Soc. Afr.</i>	<i>Journal de la Société des Africanistes.</i>
Marty, <i>Guinée</i>	P. Marty, <i>L'Islam en Guinée: Fouta-Diallon</i> , Paris, 1921.
Marty, <i>Soudan</i>	P. Marty, <i>Études sur l'Islam et les Tribus du Soudan</i> , 4 vols., Paris, 1920.
<i>N. Afr.</i>	<i>Notes Africaines</i> , Dakar.
<i>R.M.M.</i>	<i>Revue du Monde Musulman.</i>
Palmer, <i>Sud. Mem.</i>	H. R. Palmer, <i>Sudanese Memoirs</i> , 3 vols., Lagos, 1928.

Geographical and Social Setting

I. THE LAND

THE deep influence which geography exercises upon man is as evident in West Africa, where there are no outstanding physical characteristics and where climate dominates, as in a country of extreme contrasts like Ethiopia. Its central characteristic is the vast savanna bounded by desert or semi-desert steppe in the north and rain forests in the south. In contrast with these boundary regions it offers a type of environment which lends itself to migrations, culture contact, and the formation of new social and political groupings. It is not, therefore, by chance that this savanna is the main historical region of West Africa and its peoples the most influenced by Islam.

The Arabs called the country south of the Sahara *Bilād as-Sūdān*, 'Land of the Blacks', in opposition to *Bilād al-Bīḍān*, 'Land of the Whites', that is, North Africa and the Sahara. In normal usage it is restricted to a wide band south of the Sahara stretching across Africa from the Atlantic in the west to the Abyssinian plateaux in the east, and from the Sahara in the north to the equatorial forest. East Africa, although also a land of blacks, was known as 'Land of the Zanj'. The Sudan is divided into three main regions: western Sudan, whose waters drain either into the coastal rivers or into the Niger; central Sudan, which is orientated partly towards the Niger and Benue and partly towards the Chad; and eastern Sudan, which belongs to the basin of the Nile. This study is restricted to western and central Sudan.

West Africa is essentially a climatic region, for no physical barriers separate it from the Sahara in the north and equatorial regions in the south. Zones of climate and vegetation depend upon the intensity of the rain and length of the rainy season. During winter months the hot, dry north-easterly wind known as the *harmattan* blows. This then recedes towards the north and its opposite, the south-west monsoon, a warm, humid wind coming from the ocean, appears. In coastal regions the rainy season begins in April and continues to mid-July, then the rains gradually decrease, to be followed in October by another short rainy season. Sudanese regions have only two seasons, a wet and a dry. In this climatic whole parallelism is the dominant trait. A series of

bands, differentiated by gradations of rainfall and types of vegetation, mark stages of transition from Sahara to humid forest. The gradualness of transition makes the stages difficult to define, but four main climatic zones are sufficiently clear.

The south Saharan Zone has the usual features of a desert zone: rare localized rain and a ground temperature much hotter than that of the air by day and much colder at night. The Sahilian Zone (Arabic *sāhil*, 'shore', i.e. 'borderland') is distinguished from the Sahara by having a regular but short rainy season which provides pasture for camels and goats, but is insufficient for cultivation without irrigation. On the Mauritanian and Senegal coasts is a different climatic region known as the Sub-Canarian. The Sudanese Zone, which occupies the greater part of West Africa, is marked by two maxima and two minima of temperature, and especially by the regular alternation of a rainy and dry season. Between the south Sudanese climate and the dense forest stretches a band of transition belonging to the Guinean Zone but more attenuated and covered with savanna. In the Guinean Zone (also called Liberio-Dahomean) temperatures are more equal than in the Sudanese Zone and the humidity excessive. It has one season of rain from April to November with a lull in August–September. Precipitation may reach two metres or even three. Geographers apply the term 'Guinean' to all that is 'equatorial' in West Africa (two seasons of rain or one long rainy season) and 'Sudanese' to what is 'tropical' (one rainy and one dry season).

Vegetable life depends largely upon climate, and botanical zoning coincides approximately with climatical zoning. Variations are due to the nature of the soil and the relief of the country which influence temperature and rains and consequently vegetable life. The following botanical zones are distinguished.

The south Saharan Zone is less desolate than that of the Algerian Sahara. It consists of vast stretches of steppe, covered here and there with a xerophyte vegetation. The soil is not in itself sterile, and where it rains the pasture enables camels and sheep to be bred. It possesses a few oasis regions, of which those of the west (*Ḥawḍ*) and centre (*Azawād*) are poor, but those of the east (*Air* and *Bilma*) have palm groves and cultivation. It is essentially a zone of white nomads, with black cultivators predominating in the oases.

The Sahilian Zone, which forms a band of transition between the Sahara and Sudan, is a region of grassy plains interspersed with thornbush and acacia where the steppe changes to savanna and bush country. The grass is short but provides good pasturage for the horses and humped

cattle of the semi-nomads, whilst agriculture (millet and ground-nuts) enables a sedentary black population, numerically superior to the white or mixed pastorals, to support life. The Sub-Canarian climate zone, which borders the Atlantic, gives rise to a peculiar botanic zone distinguishable from the Sahilian of the same latitude by greater humidity.

The Sudanese Zone provides the most characteristic scenery of West Africa. Its aspect of perennial gramineous plants and trees with caducous leaves changes according to the season. In the dry season the trees shed their leaves and the grass becomes harsh and yellow or disappears altogether. Towards the end of this season, after the bush has been fired, leaving scorched tree-trunks sticking out of the ground, it looks its worst. But then, even before the rains begin, the trees begin to put forth leaves and, with the onset of the rains, grass grows with exceeding rapidity and the country breathes once more.

Although the regularity of the rains give these vast savanna lands a remarkable unity they are not of uniform monotony. The herbaceous savanna, where the rains are sufficiently prolonged and temperatures not too high, is characterized by exceedingly high grasses, especially in humid depressions, though the constancy of the *harmattan* hinders tree development. On the other hand, in forest grassland clumps of great trees stand out of the expanse of grass; in typical bush country grasses mingle with shrubs to form impenetrable thickets; whilst on the laterite plateaux are found open forests characterized by stunted and gnarled trees. From the human point of view the Sudanese Zone is a land of agriculture, where basic food crops of millet, maize, and yam, and export crops such as ground-nuts, cotton, tobacco, and indigo, can be grown. At the same time it is a land where sheep, goats, and cattle find abundant herbage.

These different types of savanna continue up to the edge of the dense forest, through the more humid Guinean Zone. This is still savanna, but more vigorous than that of the Sudanese Zone, with high grass and clumps of trees which here and there form true forests. A new feature is the 'forest galleries', bands of dense forest fringing the courses of the streams. Agriculture changes little in character, but manioc, yam, and banana tend to predominate over millet and maize as basic food crops. Without any noticeable transition this wooded savanna changes into the Forest Zone. This is not continuous. It occupies the southern parts of French Guinée, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory Coast, and Ghana,¹

¹ The ancient south-saharan state is distinguished in this book as Gāna from Ghana, the former Gold Coast.

and has blocks in Togo, Dahomey, and south Nigeria which link with the equatorial forest of the Congo basin.

In all regions situated north of 17° parallel the valleys are normally dry, only exceptionally filled with water for a few hours, but from the Gulf of Guinea up to 6° lat. N. the rivers are full all the year. In the savanna region between these two extremes only a few rivers have water the whole year round. These are marked by a great increase in volume during the rainy season and in country without relief often cover large tracts of country. The greatest rivers, the Senegal and Niger, which never dry up, are very complex. They are drawn towards the Sahara by the general slope of the land and thus bring to arid country water which has fallen in rainy regions. The Senegal at first heads north-east, then describes a great bend to the north-west before falling into the sea. The Niger has the same significance for the Sudan that the Nile has for Egypt, and its course traverses the most diverse gradations of climate and vegetation. Born in Sierra Leone it flows through forest country in its lower course, then through savanna and steppe, and at the apex of its great bend makes an incursion into the Sahara where its valley forms an oasis in an utterly barren land. Below Timbuktu the river concentrates into one stream, then turns south to fall eventually into the Gulf of Guinea. From the east the Niger receives the waters of one major tributary, the Benue, which has provided another way of migration.

2. MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

A similar parallel zoning is found in the distribution of types of life. In the Saharan and Sahilian steppes, in the mountainous zone of Futa Jalon, and in arid parts of the steppe, the breeding of camels, sheep, goats, and cattle provides the chief means for collective life. Pastoralists, conditioned by the need for water and herbage, are forced to migrate during the rains but remain close to points of water during the dry season. Their herds are their capital upon which they encroach as little as possible. They enable them to practise caravan traffic; milk is a basic element in their diet, and their fleeces and skins an indispensable part of their material life. Their dwellings reflect the need to move easily. The Moors and certain Tuareg have tents of wool or camel hair, the majority of the Tuareg have hemispherical huts of skins and mats, and the Fulbe beehive huts of plaited straw.

Whilst the pastoral life is the natural life of the whites, sedentary agriculture is that of the blacks and is characteristic of the vast savanna.

Every aspect of traditional life is bound up with agriculture, but that has not excluded the adoption of new culture, especially since the Portuguese landed on the west coast. Animal breeding is also characteristic of the northern Sudan, but since this involves transhumance they are cared for by Fulbe. The Negro is tied to his village with its fenced family compounds and nearby plantations where work is collective. The relationship of the Negro cultivator to the land, however, contrasts with that of the Egyptian and European peasant. The Negro's subsistence is derived from a shifting cultivation worked by the family as a unit. In contrast to the peasant on irrigated lands he changes his plot every year. He burns the bush, scratches the soil, and after harvest moves on to work another plot. Consequently his roots in the land are light and land rights have not been individualized. His bonds are to his family, not a plot of earth.

Four main types of agriculture are found according to zoning: that dependent upon artificial irrigation (Saharan oases, Senegal and Niger banks) which, even in the Sahara, is an occupation of blacks; rainy-season agriculture with animal breeding, the last being dependent upon the penetration of Fulbe pastoralists; rainy-season agriculture without cattle, characteristic of the Sudanese savanna and humid steppe; and permanent agriculture with hoe and dibble, practised in the forest region.

Since the culture areas correspond roughly with the ecological areas there is a basic relationship between material culture and environment. Thus leatherwork is characteristic of the northern Sudan where cattle are plentiful, camel-hair weaving of the Sahara, and wood-carving of the Guinean Zone. Similarly, architectural types can be equated with the botanical zones. Like the dwellings of nomads those of cultivators are closely related to the nature of the country and type of material available, but they are permanent constructions. In the Sahil and northern Sudan, where it rains during only three or four months of the year, houses are constructed of earth and mud bricks; in the savanna, where good wood is rare, they are built of thorny wood and gramineous plants; and in the forest region wood, bark, and leaves are used. The most widespread type of house in the zone between the Sahil and forest is the cylindrical hut with clay walls and a conical roof of straw supported by stays of wood, bamboo, or raffia. In the forest regions, owing to the heavy rains and type of material available, houses are rectangular, having gabled, double-pitched roofs made of bark and leaves. Within each zone the *genius loci* moulds the style and individualizes the structures.

Sudanese civilizations, being essentially agricultural, are based on

villages. Their siting depends on the type of country. In the past the great valleys, being the routes of invasion currents, were not thickly populated. Weak tribes took refuge in less accessible parts such as mountains and swamps. Along the great rivers the inhabitants are mainly fishers. In the Sudan villages are compact rather than dispersed, except among people like the Fulbe dependent upon animal breeding and the Mossi with a strong system of public security. In the past the forest peoples, being gatherers and hunters, lived in scattered family settlements. But most Sudanese villages are compact, divided into family compounds by narrow winding streets; some are open, others enclosed by a wall or fence, others fortified with a palisade and ditch. In the northern Sudan the mud walls enclosed a true town with markets, industries, and even gardens and fields which enabled them to support a long siege.

3. RELIGION AND SOCIETY

An outline of the relationship of African religion and society is a necessary prelude to the subsequent study of the effect of Islam. So bound up are they that neither can be understood in isolation, for religion animates and regulates every aspect of life.

¶ Africans believe in a Supreme Being who created the whole cosmos. It is regarded, though not necessarily worshipped, as creator and ultimate source of all life, but in contrast to the created worlds of spirits It is impersonal, unknowable, and communion with It is impossible. The Creator is the generator of spirit force which, after animating the various forms of creation, returns to the Creator. The world is created in harmony. The forms of creation, temporary receptacles of divine force, radiate it, and the interaction of radiations may disturb the harmony of the divine cosmos. The purpose of the all-embracing ritual of village life is to maintain or restore the harmony. This basic conception of power pervading the universe, possessed by ancestors, men, animals, and things, makes the world a sphere of dynamic relationship between forces. Religion is primarily ritual, the action of man to maintain power in equilibrium and preserve the harmony of this dynamic cosmos.

Ritual action has a double aspect, the cult of ancestral spirits and the cult of the spirit forces of nature. Man never dies because life force is eternal. Death is caused through disruption of the harmony of forces, but the dead remain integrally associated with their earthly family. The basic cell of life is the family. The harmonizer and restorer is the head

of the family. He is the priest of the family cults and earthly steward of the family estates; in other words, he is the trustee to the ancestors for the welfare of the family and its heritage.

Besides the spirits of ancestors men have to reckon with the spirits of all that is living. Hence derive beliefs and ritual surrounding fecundity and the cyclic resurrection of vegetation. The cycle of labour, from the first clearing of the land to the final reaping, cannot be undertaken without contact with all the forces involved. Attunement to and control of forces involves techniques, hence the need for specialists who possess knowledge and power to deal with them; hence rites and divinatory practices.

The Negro world then is a world of spirit forces: of the dead, living, and nature, among which the living form but a small minority. These forces cannot be classified into categories of good and evil, for power is essentially impersonal and neutral. If harmony is maintained all is well, but if broken calamity falls on individual and community. The individual is welded through birth and initiation into a holy community, tied to a sacred rhythm of ritual whose function is to maintain the equilibrium of spirit forces. The consequences of this view of life have been profound. A complex social structure has been formed with attendant restraints and disciplines, and, as a corollary, the diminution of personal initiative and responsibility. Religion and society are one. Each group functions as a religious community.

Such is the basic pattern of African religious society, the foundation upon which complex structures were based. But every possible stage of transition is found from simple family and agrarian animism to the organized polytheistic systems of south Guinean peoples. Generally beyond the family, with its ancestor cult, is a specialized group devoted to the cult of a god and its subordinates. This may consist of a group of families (maximal lineages or clan groups) or groups embracing local age-ranges. Each is a religious as well as a social association, having its rites intended to bind and perpetuate the community, and membership involves initiation at esoteric bush schools. Initiation and communion with the spirits of the group mark the paradox of recognition of the individual and at the same time his depersonalization and subjection to the collective will of the group. High initiates ensure that members are faithful to the spirit world and guide the ritual life of the earthly group. Such spiritual families or secret societies or mystery cults, repositories of the myths which explain man and his world, are characteristic of most spheres of West African society.

* These basic elements form the substratum of the hereditary, local, and ethnic religions which govern people's understanding of life, but in practice religion is lineal or local, influenced by the natural environment, the people's peculiar bents and psychological patterns, the integration of outside radiations, and migrational and historical circumstances. In their natural form wider social organizations were extensions of the primary cell, the extended family, in which each clan had its defined place in the organization in the same way as each individual had his or her defined place in the family unit. Superimposed political structures did not disturb this basic organization.

Characteristic of Sudan societies are social hierarchization and developed political organization, all closely bound up with religion. Government is in the hands of an aristocracy sustained by an imperial family cult upon the observance of which the welfare of the state devolves. Agriculture is accorded an honoured place except where the ruling class retains a legacy of nomadism. Crafts such as weaving, dyeing, and smithery are the functions of a caste or a corporation. Slavery, unknown to the basic structure, plays an important role, especially its extension in the serf system, a natural development from the basic conceptions of Negro society.

The village, with its chief assisted by a council of kin-group heads, forms the basic administrative unit. The chief is under a regional head who in turn is under a provincial governor responsible to the king. Two forms of royal authority existed which frequently coalesced. Under the stable climatic conditions which prevail in the Sudan the priest, as rain-maker and controller of spirit forces, merged into the sacred king. In the other, kingship had a foreign origin and the founder-king, although an intruder, appears in the mythology of the clan as a saviour. Historical events led to this structure being imposed upon the foundation described first. Conversely, historical events could eliminate the superstructure without destroying the foundation, for these governments did not fully reflect African political conceptions and could be replaced or break up without upsetting society.

It will be obvious from the foregoing sketch that religions like Islam and Christianity, which evolved under the influence of Semitic and Greek cultures, could only substitute their view of life for a religious inheritance so harmonized to the psychology and mode of life of Africans under conditions of great change. Negro societies absorbed radiations from Mediterranean, Berber, Chadian, or Nilotic civilizations naturally, for only traits which accorded with their mentality

could gain acceptance. After North Africa had been won over to Islam the Negro world was first invaded by a civilization based on historical revelation and monotheism. African religions are not historical religions, their beliefs and rituals are founded upon a timeless mythology, but with Islam time entered the African world. The way in which Africans dealt with this is the subject of this book.

A brief reference may be made to the invasion of another civilization. Since the partition of Africa, dating from the eighties of the last century, Africa has been swept into the stream of world activity. This sudden impact of Western civilization has created difficult problems. Decay and disruption threaten ethnic religions as never before. The degrees of this decay vary according to the strength of the forces which are uprooting tribal life and the forces of resistance within the social structure. But the indigenous religions, being primarily local and ethnic, appear to have no future in their organized forms, and the religious future of the African lies between Christianity and Islam, on the one hand, and secularism on the other. The most vital feature of the African's inheritance is his sense of community, and in this situation Christianity and Islam are the two forces that can reintegrate social life on a new basis. Whilst our special concern is with Islam we cannot consider it in the present situation without also taking account of the dynamic forces of Christianity and secularism. The African Muslim's reaction to the secular civilization of the West, quite different from that of the pagan, will be the subject of the last chapter. Yet at the same time the African's own heritage is of vital significance. We see village communities with a new pattern of communal life superimposed upon the old, one in which independence and personal responsibility are struggling with the basic conception of African community life. But the new communal life maintains strong ties with the old. Traditional ideas, institutions, and, above all, psychological attitudes, are preserved; and, to an extent that is difficult to realize under conditions of great change, the new community still draws nourishment from its ancient roots. Yet the new forces are revolutionary, tradition is no longer the prime factor governing life, and new forms of African civilization are being forged because the very government of life is being changed.

4. THE PRINCIPAL MUSLIM PEOPLES

Since geographical and historical factors have led to the Saharan and north Sudan belts being most widely islamized, the following

classification of peoples who will be frequently referred to is according to climatic belts. Within the belts the arrangement is by linguistic groups rather than by any theories as to their origins.

(a) *Peoples of the southern Sahara*

The southern Sahara is included in the area of survey because it is impossible to consider the influence of Islam among the peoples of the Sudan without taking into account those of the Sahara. Negroes form an important element in the population of the Sahara for its agricultural economy is dependent upon them, but since they are embraced within the social organization of Moors, Tuareg, and Teda, speak their languages, and culturally belong to the Saharan rather than to the Negro world, they are not treated separately.

(i) *Moors*. The inhabitants of western Sahara are known under the vague term of Moors.¹ They are often referred to as *Bīdān*, 'Whites', in opposition to *Sūdān*, 'Blacks'. They are not a homogeneous people, though almost all now speak the Ḥassāniyya dialect of Arabic, but consist of Berbers, Arabs, and Blacks, with a predominance of Berbers, given coherence by social relationship and language. From the thirteenth century groups of Ma'qil (Ḥassān) Arabs irrupted into southern Morocco and moved progressively southwards, reaching the Senegal at the beginning of the fifteenth century. They gained political control over the western Berbers who were gradually arabized. Like all Saharans the Moors are stratified in a number of social groups² of which the *ziwāyā* or clerical clans are most important from the Islamic point of view.

(ii) *Tuareg*³ speak a common language (Tamāhaqq) belonging to the Berber family and have preserved a Libyco-Berber alphabet (Tifnagh). They divide into two groupings: unchanged camel nomads living in the mountains of central Sahara (with whom we are not concerned) and Nigerian nomads inhabiting the desert north of the Niger buckle and the Gurma region within it. Through living in a different environment and in contact with Negroes, the Nigerians have changed in physical characteristics, mode of life, and custom. Certain tribes occupy

¹ Under this designation are included: in southern Mauritania, Arab suzerain tribes (Trarza and Brakna) and their vassal Berber tribes and clients (*Zanāta* and *Ḥarrāṭīn*); in the Hawd the *Awlād Delīm*, *Rigaibāt*, *Mashqūf*, *Tālib Mukhtār*, *Girganke*, and the *Shurafā* of *Tishit*, *Walāta*, and *Nema*; north of the Niger buckle and in *Azawād* are some 30,000, including the *Kunta* and the *Berabish*.

² On their social organization see pp. 135-6.

³ Tuareg is the designation employed by Arabs (*Tawāriq*, sing. *Tarqī*), who probably extended the name of a tribe of the *Ṣanhāja* (*Targa*) to the whole of the *mulaththamīn*, 'muffled people'.

temporary villages of huts and have become so dark that they can hardly be distinguished from Songhay and Hausa. They are loosely grouped in federations of tribes under a chief (*amenokāl*) who exercises nominal authority. A system of classes (*aserkam*) divides the tribes into nobles (*imoshar*), pastoralist vassals (*imghad*), clerical clans (*inislimen*), Negro serfs (*iklān*), and an artisan caste. The Tuareg are monogamous, women hold an important position in society, and descent, except among the Ullimmeden and other southern tribes, is matrilineal.

Islam took many centuries to gain their allegiance and even today it has little influenced social life. The way of life of clerical clans (*inislimen*) is similar to that of other Tuareg except that they do not bear arms. This pacifism does not derive from their religious character but from their status as social inferiors who pay dues for their protection.

(iii) *Teda-Daza* or *Tubu*¹ inhabit a vast area of the eastern Sahara from the Libyan desert in the east to Haggar in the west, and from Fezzan in the north to the Chad region in the south. Naturally, in view of the nature of their land, they are not numerous (about 100,000). Their main groups live in the mountainous ranges of Tibesti, Borku, part of Ennedi, the Kawar group of oases, and northern parts of Kanem and Waday. They are a dark-skinned, lean people of short or medium height, with regular and fine features, thin lips, straight nose, and smooth hair. They speak a Sudanese language allied to that of the Kanuri and have cultural affinities with the Tuareg, but are distinct from both. Those of the west are pastoral nomads; eastern tribes have cultivation and tend date-palm groves, and caravan traffic is an important source of income. Authority is vested in a council of notables. The *derde* of Tibesti and chiefs of other tribes nominate war-leaders but otherwise have little authority. The majority of Teda are monogamous and women are independent and respected. The adoption of Islam has not upset their traditional way of life.

(b) *Peoples of the northern Sudan*

(i) The *Fulbe*² are a class society embracing the most diverse groups whose only common factor is language. They divide themselves into

¹ *Tūbū* (*Təvo*) is the Kanemi term, the people of Tū or Tibesti. Those of the north call themselves *Tēda*. The southern call all *Dāza*, a term the northerners apply to those of Kanem. Shuwa Arabs and Wadayans call them *Qura'ān*, *Awlād Sulaimān Karada*, and Tuareg *Ikarada*.

² Many names are employed to designate the Fulbe. The French call them *Peuls* or *Peuhls* from the Wolof pronunciation of *Pulb*, singular of their own name *Fulhe* or *Pulhe*. They are called *Fulāni* by Hausa (sing. *Ba-Felanche*) and Moors, and *Felāta* by Kanuri, Teda, and in eastern Sudan. Tuareg say *A-Fulī* (pl. *I-Fulān*, *I-Fellān*), Mande *Fūla* or *Fila*, and Mossi *Silmise* (sing. *Silmiga*).

red (*wodēbe*) and black (*balēbe*). The characteristic Fulbe are the non-Negro nomadic herdsmen.¹ These immigrants seem to have allied themselves with south Saharan Negro nomads (*Laube*) and adopted their language.² Small groups live in regions no one else wants, like the poor savanna of Ferlo (Senegal), but the majority live among Negro cultivators to whom they either pay some form of tribute or have a mutual agreement whereby they graze cattle on fallow land and exchange milk and butter for grain. The nomads live for their cattle which they only sell to satisfy tax demands. They occupy camps of shelter-type beehive huts and herd their cattle into stockades. Islam has had little cultural and religious effect and Negro-Fulbe regard them as pagans even when they profess Islam.

The black element of sedentary agriculturalists is by far the largest and they are the strongest Muslims in West Africa. The first stage of transition is semi-nomadism. When they become herdsmen to Negroes they loose their freedom of movement, change many customs, and become bilingual. Others acquire serf-cultivators and live in permanent settlements. The process of religious change is seen in the Gambia where the upper class remain pagan, whilst their Pulār-speaking serfs are becoming Muslim. The decisive change comes when they mix with Negroes and adopt Islamic customs. Although poor they have a strong feeling of racial pride and to this Islam adds religious superiority. The day comes when a Negro Pulo cleric proclaims a *jihād*. They rise, overwhelm the pagans, and found a state. This happened in Futas Toro, Bondu and Jalon, Masina, Hausaland, and Adamawa. As a result of this reversal of fortune the leaders of the *jihād* become an aristocracy, and the conquered Negroes fall into various social strata. Settled Fulbe become negroid and acquire new social attitudes and economic values centred on agriculture, though continuing to manifest ethno-religious pride. This third stage marks the completion of the transition to an Islamic Sudan society.

(ii) The *Senegalese group* includes the Wolof (660,000), Tokolor (300,000), Serer (270,000), and Jola (135,000). The Wolof and Tokolor are entirely Muslim, but Serer and Jola are adopting Christianity. All are cultivators of millet and producers of ground-nuts. The Serer ruling class (by material filiation), which is of foreign origin, and

¹ In northern Nigeria nomads (called *Firian Kiriabe* or *Bororo'en* (sing. *Wororbe*), and by the Hausa by the berberized form *Abore*) number 450,000 out of a total Fulbe population of over 3,000,000.

² The language, a member of the family which includes Serer-Sin, Wolof, and Tokolor, is called Pulār in Senegal. Fulfulde in Masina and Nigeria, and Pulpule in Futa Jalon.

the warrior class have become Muslim, but the masses (native nobility, free peasants, and various caste and servile people) remain pagan, though Christianity is spreading. The Wolof, the most 'evolved' people of French West Africa, are defined by cultural and social rather than racial characteristics. They once formed a group of five kingdoms, Salum, Kajor, Baol, Walo, and Jolof, covering a large area between the Senegal and Gambia. Although the first penetration of Islam goes back to the fifteenth century the religion did not gain the masses until the nineteenth century when the process of conversion was so rapid that it was completed by its end.

The Tokolor¹ may be distinguished from Fulbe in view of the role they played in the history of Islam. They are a group of mixed Negro stock modified by absorption of Fulbe and, to a lesser extent, Moors, and by a thorough islamization, for their ruling class was converted in the eleventh century. Their main concentration is in Senegalese Futa where they inhabit both banks of the river from Dagana to half-way between Matam and Bakel, but colonies have been formed in the Kayes region (Upper Senegal), Nyoro in the Sahil, Segu on the Niger, eastern Masina, Dingiray east of Futa Jalon, and elsewhere.

(iii) *Northern Mande*. The term Mande is primarily linguistic. The chief divisions of the northern (Mande-Tan group) are Mandinka, Bambara, Dyula, Soninke, Khasonke, and Bozo.

The Soninke² (450,000) are differentiated from other Mande since, through living in the Sahil and formerly in the Sahara itself, they are

¹ The term Tokolor (or Tokoror) is used by Wolof for those Negroes with whom they are in contact who speak the same language as the Fulbe. Arab geographers adopted the word under the form *Takrūr* from which they formed the ethnic *Takrūrī* (pl. *Takārīr*), a word which came to designate any west Sudan Negro. They have no name for themselves, for they are not so much a people as a hierarchized class society. When pressed they call themselves *Hal-pulāren*, 'Pular-speakers', or *Fūtankōbē* (sing. *Fūtankē*) from their centre in Senegalese Futa.

² The terminology applied to the various groups is confusing. Their own name is *Sōniŋkē*. Moors call them *Aswanik*, and Wolof *Sere-kule* (hence *Sarakole*), 'red man'. The general term in the Niger buckle is *Marka*, which often refers to Mande-speakers who claim a Soninke origin. Those living on the Dya (west Masina), a Soninke dispersion-point, take their name of *Dyakanke* from the locality, and their colonies on the upper Gambia and in Futa Jalon are so called. The *Tubakai*, a colony in the west of Futa Jalon, take their name from the village of Tuba. At Jennie they are called *Nono* from the name of the first immigrant clan. The few groups which still exist in the Sahara are known as *Azēr*. Fulbe, Hausa, and Songhay call them *Wangārbē*, *Wangārāwa*, and *Wankorē* respectively, but these terms are by extension applied to any Mande. The Dyawara of Kingi, though speaking Soninke, are on historical grounds a separate people, and their colonies in Gidimaka, Kayes, Bafulabe, and elsewhere have adopted the language of those among whom they live. Pagan Mandinka in Upper Guinea use the word 'Soninke' as equivalent to 'cleric', which shows the role they played in those parts as representatives of Islam.

interpenetrated by Berber and Fulbe. They are agriculturalists attached to the soil, yet also great travellers and outrival Dyula as traders in west Sudan. As the basic population of the south Saharan kingdom of Gāna they were islamized at an early date and have played a considerable role in the islamization of the Sudan. Islam has deeply influenced their social life, but, like Saharans, the ruling classes and agriculturalists tend to leave practice to clerical clans.

Mandinka,¹ Bambara,² and Dyula speak the same language and have the same type of social organization and cultural characteristics but are differentiated by reason of habitat, history, and, in a vague way, by religion, Bambara being regarded as pagan, Mandinka as semi-Muslim, and Dyula as wholly Muslim. For centuries the Mandinka were the dominant people of the region between the Niger and the Atlantic but, though the rulers of Māli and traders adopted Islam, the cultivators remained faithful to ancestral cults. During the last 150 years Islam has been spreading and is professed by over 50 per cent. Though in touch with Islam for centuries only about 20 per cent. of the Bambara have adopted it. The Mande dispersion within the Niger bend and Voltaic region is known as Dyula.³ Essentially northern Sudanese in social organization and material culture they have formed agricultural colonies around their trading centres in south Sudanese and forest zones. Unlike Soninke traders they have had little Islamic influence upon pagan communities such as Senufo and Kulango among whom they live, yet, through the nature of their occupation and new habitat, Islam is deeply implanted as a social characteristic, and they figure prominently in this survey.

Other northern Mande are the Bozo, Somono, and Khasonke. Bozo (30,000) fishers and agriculturalists occupy the Niger and Bani banks between Segu and Dioila and Niafunke. Islam has been spreading since

¹ They call themselves *Mani-ŋka* or *Mandi-ŋka*. The English tend to use the form *Mandingo* (the Western singular form *Mandinko*) and the French *Malinke* (west Guinea, *Malinke*). They number about a million and a quarter, and are divided into groups taking their name from their locality.

² They call themselves *Bāmana* (sing. *Bāmanan̄ka*). Europeans have adopted the Muslim term *Bāmbara* (*ban*, 'to refuse', *bāra* suffix of agent, cf. *seli-bāra*, 'prayer' or Muslim), interpreting it as 'rejector' of Islam instead of rejector of the uterine filiation. Many Bambara, on becoming Muslim, tend to call themselves Dyula. The region they now occupy borders on that of Moorish tribes in the north, with Masina to the east, and Mandinka in the west and south. The majority (850,000) live in French Sudan. Colonies are found in Masina, on the banks of the Bani and Bafing, in French Guinée and Senegal.

³ *Dyula* means 'trader' in Soninke, Mandinka, and Banmana, and it is difficult to decide whether the Dyula derived their name from this or their name became equivalent to 'trader' in other dialects.

the fourteenth century and all have been Muslim since the nineteenth. They should be distinguished from neighbouring castes of fishers, Sorko of Songhay origin, Subalbe of Fulbe origin, and Somono. The last-named became Muslim *en masse* about 1860 and are now propagandists of Islam on the right bank of the Niger. Islam has been spreading among the Khasonke (Khasongolu, 50,000) of the Kayes, Bafulabe, and Nyoro regions for a long time, but still claims less than half.

(iv) *Northern Voltaics*. For the student of Islam the feature which distinguishes Voltaic peoples (Gur language group) is their insusceptibility to Islam. Although the northern groups have been in contact with Muslims for centuries, Islam has made no significant inroads. Among the Voltaics the Mossi stand out by reason of their complex social and political structure. The term Mossi (correctly *Mosi*, sing. *Moya*) belongs to the immigrant warrior class who moulded subject peoples into one political organization. In the sixteenth century they split into two kingdoms of Wagadugu and Wahiguya (Yatenga). Under the chaotic conditions of the nineteenth century they were the only stable states. On either side of their territory rose the Fulbe states of Masina and Gwandu but the *jihād* leaders passed them by. The incorporation of many peoples into the Mossi structure had led to great changes, the most obvious being their adoption of the Mole language. Neighbouring groups, such as Gurunsi, Dogon, Bobo, Lobi, and Bussance, have not been subject to this process. But others, such as the Gurma (140,000) living between the Mossi and the Niger, were at one time tributary to the Mossi and influenced by their higher civilization. Islam is said to have about 90,000 adherents in the *cercle* of Wahiguya, the region of strongest penetration, but of this figure Mossi only number about 20,000, the rest being foreign settlers.

(v) *Songhay-Zerma-Dendi*. The people fringing the middle Niger mark a zone of transition between the Mande world and central Sudan. The Songhay (250,000)¹ live along the Niger bend from Mopti through the lacustrine and Timbuktu region to Gao. The Zerma (80,000) live south of Gao (Niamey, Dosso, and Tila Beri) and south of them are the Dendi (24,000). All speak dialects of an isolated Nigritic language belonging to the Sudanic family. The Songhay show the same ethnic complexity as other Sudanese. They are Negroes, but urban elements in Jenne, Timbuktu, and Gao have absorbed Tuareg and Moors. These form the aristocratic classes. One class, the *Arma*,

¹ The word Songhay (correctly *Sōḡar*) designates not the people but the country. The people are referred to as *Sōḡai Bor'ey* and *Sōḡoyte*, ethnic names of recent formation.

are the descendants of the Andalusian soldiers responsible for the downfall of the Songhay empire. The northern Songhay who have been in continual contact with Saharans are Muslims. The Zerma, who migrated to the middle Niger four centuries ago, were little influenced by Islam until the Fulbe movement began in Nigeria early in the nineteenth century. They and the Dendi have minorities which remain pagan.

(vi) The *Hausa* language, which belongs to the Chado-Hamitic family, gives linguistic unity to a large part of Northern Nigeria. Hausa-speakers number 5,480,000 in British territory and over half a million in French Niger Colony. Although the generic *Hausāwa* (sing. *Ba-Haushe*) is employed they have no name for themselves¹ and employ regional terms. The Hausa are industrious cultivators, skilful artisans in leather and matting work, and enterprising traders found on every Saharan and Sudan trade-route. Although a class religion in the Hausa city-states Islam did not gain a hold upon the cultivators until after the Fulbe conquest (1802-17). When the British took control at the beginning of the present century it was estimated that 50 per cent. of Hausa-speakers were pagan, but so rapidly has Islam spread that today Muslims probably number 75-80 per cent. Large blocks of animists (known collectively as *azna* or *māguzāwa*) still survive between Sokoto and Katsina and in French Niger Territory, but they are coming more and more under Islamic pressure.

(vii) *The Chadian peoples* are composed of diverse elements. In Bornu, Bagirmi, and Waday a large number of Negro peoples have been formed through the intermingling of many groups with Teda, Fulbe, and Arabs. The linguistic confusion, which bears witness to their diverse origins, is extraordinary. Groups given coherence by their geographical habitat and history are the Kanembu, Kanuri, Bagirmians, and Wadayans. All are islamized, although amongst them, especially in the south, many groups of pagans remain.

The Kanembu are sedentary agriculturalists inhabiting Kanem, north-east of the Chad, and a narrow girdle around the western and northern shores of the lake. When the penetration of Islam began in the twelfth century Kanem was the seat of an extensive nomadic chieftaincy. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the dynasty was compelled to move to Bornu where they intermingled with the So to form the Kanuri, today the dominant people of Bornu. The Kanuri

¹ The term *Ausa* applied to the left bank of the Niger was attached to this linguistic group, the eastern region becoming 'the eastern people'. Similarly the Hausa have no general term for the Songhay whom they refer to as *Tammadāwa*, 'westerners'.

(called Beri-Beri by the Hausa) number 1,297,000 in Nigeria (752,680 in Bornu Province) and others live in French Niger and Chad territories. In the strict sense the word Kanuri belongs to the ruling class but it is now a linguistic term applied to all who speak the language. The political development of Bornu and its islamization led to the breakdown of tribal divisions, the diffusion of the language, and the fusion of many peoples.

The peoples of Bagirmi, if their traditions and linguistic affinities are to be accepted, have a common origin. The ruling clans derive from Kenga who conquered the region at the beginning of the seventeenth century and became Muslims. The populations of the Chad Islands (Yedima, called Buduma by the Kanuri, and Kuri) have become Muslim during the last seventy years. South of the Chad in the swampy region of the Shari live Kotoko, Musgu, Mandara, and others, all of whom are influenced by Islam.

The Wadayans proper are derived from Maba and their language has become the *lingua franca* of the region. The principal tribes are the Kodoy or Abu Senun, Awlad Jemma, Malanga, Mandaba, and Mandala. Other groups related to the Maba have been converted to a form of Islam: Karanga, Kashmere, Marfa, Kajanga, Ali, Moyo, and Kajage. Also Muslim are Zaghāwa cattle-breeders now largely sedentary, Baele or Bedayat (called Anna by Teda and Tarawiya by Arabs), Maṣālīt, and Dājo in Dar Sila. Islam extends little south of lat. 11°, apart from Arab and trading groups.

(viii) *Arabs of the Central Sudan.* Arab influence was strong in western Sahara where the Berbers were arabized, but the Tuareg and Teda of the centre were unaffected. In Sudanese regions it was strongest in Nilotic Sudan and from there Arab tribes penetrated into Waday, Bagirmi, and Bornu. The term Shuwa is applied by the people of Bornu¹ to these tribes. They fall into two groups: *abbāla*, camel nomads, and *baqqāra*, cattle nomads. Those who settled in regions suitable for camels were unaffected in their mode of life, but those who gravitated southwards to country where the camel cannot live adopted cattle-rearing from the Negroes. The *baqqāra* have been modified by miscegenation with Negroes and change in mode of life, though the Arab element is clearly recognizable. Most inhabit fixed villages during the rainy season where cultivation is done by Negro serfs and clients.

¹ The word *Shuwa* is not used by the Arabs who retain their tribal names. The suggested derivation from Arabic *shāwīya* (*shāt*, 'ewe'), as meaning by extension 'pastor', seems unlikely. In Bornu they number 98,900 (1952 Census).

The Awlād Sulaimān are distinct from Shuwa. Migrating from Fezzan after 1842 they installed themselves on the borders of Kanem, roaming from Air to Abeshe and from Borku to Ennedi. They live like northern Arabs and speak their dialect. Another type of Arab are Ja'aliyyīn from the Nile who form a merchant class (*jallāba*). The Tunjur are probably a Hamitic people from the Nile region who adopted Arabic and trekked westwards. Most now live in Kanem (30,000) and others are found in Bornu, Waday, and Darfur.

(c) *Peoples of the southern Sudan*

The south Sudanese zone, where the *harmattan* reigns supremely, is a kind of no-man's-land situated between the Sudanese and Guinean regions. The neo-Sudanese civilization has not deeply affected the paleo-nigrific peoples of this belt and consequently Islam, which only began to penetrate during the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, has had little influence.

Linguistically the belt may be divided into a western zone where Mande prevails, a Voltaic zone in the centre, and a Nigerian zone in the east.

The upper Guineans (Kisi, Loma, Kpelle, Manon in French Guinée; Mende and Temne in Sierra Leone) do not properly belong to the Southern Sudan, but it is convenient to include them here. They inhabit sub-tropical savanna which has no severe dry season.¹ Western Guinea, which has felt the influence of neo-Sudanese civilization, is the area of strong Islamic penetration. The mountainous region of Futa Jalon stands out, not merely from the climatic but also from the Islamic view-point, for the primary factor leading to the diffusion of Islam throughout western Guinea was the formation of a Fulbe theocratic state in these highlands.

Most peoples of the wide estuaries of the coastal region remain pagan, but they are interpenetrated by Muslims. Two in particular, the Nalu (7,000) and Susu (320,000 in Guinée and 50,000 in Sierra Leone) whose original homeland was Futa Jalon, are almost wholly Muslim. Half the Yalunka (Jalonke) of Sierra Leone, a branch of the Susu, remain pagan. Others of the Mande linguistic group, to which the Susu belong, have acquired a Mandinka ruling class and among such Islam has penetrated (40 per cent. of the Mende and all the Vai in Sierra

¹ Western Guinea has four climatic and vegetation zones: (a) Lower Guinea, the alluvial coastal plain, (b) Middle Guinea, the mountainous regions of Futa Jalon, (c) Upper Guinea which has a Sudanese orientation, and (d) Forest Guinea orientated towards the sea.

Leone and Liberia). Others of the Mande Fu group are little influenced (Loko, Kpelle or Gerze, Loma, and Busa). Whilst the Temne (500,000) are 50 per cent. Muslim, others belonging to the same linguistic group are little influenced. The extent and degree of Islamic penetration is unequal. Thus the Balante of Portuguese Guinea are animists except for the Mané group who are Muslim. The Tenda, a federation of three unrelated peoples occupying the north-western flank of Futa Jalon, have remained pagan except the Boeni section who were formerly serfs of Fulbe and adopted their language, customs, and religion. Islam has penetrated in varying degrees Mande peoples who are differentiated for regional or historical reasons: Manyanka (Ko-Mende) dispersed between the Vai and Toma in Liberia, Kon-yanka of Beyla, Dyomande in Mau country around Tuba, Sidyanka in Futa Jalon; and Wasulunka, Toronge, and Futanke in French Guinée.

The mass of Voltaic peoples of this south-Sudanese belt have resisted Islam. In the Ivory Coast there are large blocks of Dyula (100,000) but the majority of the indigenous peoples remain pagan; among the Kulango (40,000), for example, only 1,000 Muslims are found. Penetration of neo-Sudanese influences in the Northern Territories of Ghana and Togo led to the formation of states: Dagomba, Mamprusi, Gonja, and Wala. Islam has gained a hold over the Dagomba ruling classes, it has penetrated some Mamprusi groups, claims all the Wala (26,000), and has influenced Dagati and Lobe. Towns, such as Bobo Dioulasso (Haute Volta) and Bonduku (Ivory Coast), since they are Dyula trading centres, are Muslim. Similarly in the Northern Territories of Ghana where the proportion of Muslims is only about 5 per cent. the chief Islamic centres are the towns of Bawki (Mamprusi), Yendi, Tamale (Dagomba), Salaga (Gonja), Wa (Wala), and Kete Krachi.

The peoples who stretch through the northern regions of Togo, Dahomey, the middle belt of Nigeria, and the Cameroons need not be enumerated. They are predominantly pagan, though everywhere there is some penetration of Islam in the Sudanese mode which does not preclude the practice of pagan rites. Muslims are mainly immigrants such as Hausa traders. In many parts Muslim domination has led to the political ascendancy of Islam, but there has been no mass adoption of the religion. The belt is split by an Islamic current which runs along the west bank of the Niger to the coast. The Nupe and northern Yoruba belong to the belt. Ilorin region became a Fulbe emirate and 60 per cent. of the Yoruba in the northern region are said to be

Muslim. The Nupe as an example of a people in transition from ethnic religion to Islam have an important place in this study. They live in the country situated north and south of that section of the Niger which flows through Niger Province. They number about 350,000 and are an amalgam of many groups of different ethnic and cultural traditions linked together by a common language. The Nupe came within the sphere of the Fulbe revolution at the beginning of the nineteenth century and today two-thirds are Muslim. Other Nupe-speakers (Gbari 155,000 and Igbira 147,000) remain animists though many Muslims are found among them.

The Bauchi and Adamawa plateaux stand out as special regions, not merely on account of their physical features but because they are the homeland of ethnic groups with special characteristics. They are regions where live many small pagan tribes upon many of whom the Fulbe imposed themselves during the early part of the nineteenth century but amongst whom Islam has not made serious inroads. For instance, in the Jos Division of the Bauchi plateau 100,000 of the 132,500 inhabitants are indigenous pagans. Where Islamic penetration is strong it is due to special historical factors. Pagan peoples are not limited to the plateau region but inhabit all the low-lying country around it (Jamaa, Shendan, and the southern divisions). Southern Zaria Province is mainly pagan. The Tiv, the largest people (766,000) in the middle belt who live south of the Benue and escaped Fulbe pressure, remain pagan with strong Christian penetration.

In Adamawa at the beginning of the Fulbe revolution all the inhabitants, including Fulbe nomads who had discovered the land to be especially suitable for their cattle, were pagan, and though a Muslim Fulbe dynasty was founded and was kept in existence by the British, the majority of the tribes (except for former slaves) remain unaffected by Islam.¹

The Guinean Zone is a region of higher civilization stretching from the Ton of the Ivory Coast to Benin in Nigeria. Islam has made significant penetration only into the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria who are therefore the only people of the zone to come into this survey.

¹ Islam has penetrated into the northern part of French Cameroons. Apart from the peoples who belong to the north Sudan who are wholly Muslim (Shuwa Arabs 25,000, Kotoko 20,000, Bornuans 5,000, and Hausa 4,000), or who are partially islamized (the Fulbe (260,000), Mandara (12,000), and Mbum (5,000)), tribes of Sudanese origin who are partially and superficially islamized are the Bamum (52,000), Tikar (13,000), Vute or Ba-Bute (13,000), and Baya (35,000), and there has been some penetration into the Fali (Mongo, 28,000).

The Process of Religious Change

I. CULTURES IN CONTACT

STUDENTS of culture contact in Africa tend to confine their attention to the relationship of Western culture with animist communities, shown graphically in this form:

ANIMIST	animist- WESTERN
western- ANIMIST	WESTERN

But this scheme expresses only partially the interaction of cultures in West Africa since it ignores that of Islam which for centuries has been conditioning many African societies. The student of culture contact is therefore faced with a much more complicated situation for he has to take account of three cultural fields in dynamic relationship:

Animist social, political, economic, and religious culture;¹

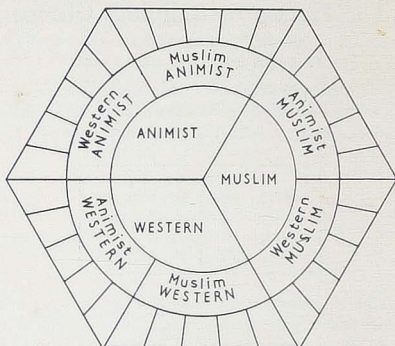
Islamic social-religious culture in the form in which it impinges upon the African;

Western culture in the form in which it affects the African.

Having thus given Islamic culture its place in the situation we find that the resultants of contact are extremely intricate. The animist, Islamic, and Western are 'parent' cultures, ideal types, none of which is found in a pure uncontaminated form. What then are the possible dynamic interactions between them? This may be expressed graphically (see figure overleaf).

¹ The term 'animism' must serve to designate the total system of belief and practice of West African peoples. Animist culture as compared with the universalist culture of Islam seems particularist since it expresses itself in diversified local cultures, yet it may be regarded as a cultural whole since it expresses a unique attitude to life. The thousands of different expressions within this whole are referred to as ethnic or local religions. Similarly the word 'pagan' is as imprecise as 'animist', since in origin it means 'country people' and can be applied to the religion of the majority of Muslim and Christian cultivators, but both terms are loosely employed here for those attached to ethnic religions.

This scheme gives a unified picture of the interrelationships of the three 'parent' cultures which qualify, modify, and condition each other. They have arranged themselves into three pairs and, although it may



not be strictly correct, it helps to think of each as alternately positive and negative to the other, each in a condition of determinism and freedom. The following are a few selections of the results of contact:

1. $a > M$. ANIMIST conditioning MUSLIM

The animistic Muslim. Reversion from Islam to animism.

Animistic elements in Islam: dynamism, spiritism, cultism, magico-religious practices; ceremonies associated with Islamic institutions of circumcision, marriage, and death.

Local custom holding its own against the encroachment of Islamic law.

2. $m > A$. MUSLIM conditioning ANIMIST

Animist reaction to Islamic influence.

Pagan myth and ritual reflecting Islamic myth and ritual.

The process and psychology of conversion to Islam.

The stages from the islamized animist to the Negro Muslim.

The resultant animist-Islamic culture complex.

3. $a > W$. ANIMIST conditioning WESTERN

The African convert to Western religion, the animistic Christian,

animist practices in African Christianity. African separatist sects.

The conditioning of the Western government official, missionary, and trader working in animist areas: *le type du colonial*, social and economic attitude of a ruling minority, European cantonments, influence of African labour upon economic planning, methods of work, recruiting (agriculture, mines, home life).

Application of customary law in courts. The school in the bush.

4. w > A. WESTERN conditioning ANIMIST

Breakdown and decay of African religions. Pathological forms of African religion. Psychology of conversion to Christianity and of westernization. The christianized African and the Western-influenced animist. African Christian sectarianism.

Effect of the secularization of political, economic, social, and religious theory. Money economy degrading the bride-price system. Western-type school. Application of Western legal ideas and procedure in tribal courts. The African official, teacher, mechanic, mine worker. Nationalist movements.

5. m > W. MUSLIM conditioning WESTERN

The conditioning of the Western government official in Muslim areas.

The conditioning of government policy: official recognition of Islam, application of Islamic law, religious neutrality policy involving freedom for Islamic and prohibition of Christian propaganda. Maintenance of the *status quo* in the Fulani feudal system in Northern Nigeria.

6. w > M. WESTERN conditioning MUSLIM

Resistance and reaction to secular civilization.

Economic and social revolution caused by the abolition of slavery.

Effect of Western economy and education. Growth of a Muslim *évolué* class. The Western-influenced Muslim: official, teacher, and mechanic.

Application to Muslims of Western law and legal procedure.

Problems which the French and Portuguese policy of assimilation imposes upon Muslims. Political change and nationalist movements.

This sixfold scheme, based on three ideal cultures, does not account fully for any of the examples, and if we want to arrive at the

contemporaneous we have to work out the interactions of these six which gives another thirty squares, shown graphically upon the outer rim of the hexagonal form. The examples given above can then be placed in their full setting. However, we need not complicate matters unduly by working them out, and the following examples will suffice:

- m W > a M. Western governments' recognition of Islamic law (No. 5) converting the nominal Muslim (No. 1) into an orthodox Muslim.
- a M > w A. The effect of Islam upon the westernized animist. Yoruba influenced by Western ideas adopting Islam as a religion, not as a civilization.
- w A > a M. Western rule providing the conditions whereby the animistic Muslim reverts to animism.

The sixfold cycle represents the main fields of interaction that have to be taken into account. The special concern of this book is with the first and last pairs.

2. FACTORS OF RESISTANCE AND ACCEPTANCE

The spread of Islam and resulting distribution of Muslim communities is due to many factors, historical, geographical, and psychological. On the broadest canvas there were two main historical waves of advance. The first was its slow spread from the eleventh to the seventeenth centuries through the agency of traders and clerics (the Berber impulse of the Murābiṭīn in the eleventh century and the work of the first *askiya* of Songhay were of minor importance). The feature of this period is its adoption as a class religion—the imperial cult in the Sudan states and the religion of the trading and clerical classes. The second impulse came with the Negro-Fulbe movements of the nineteenth century which led to the formation of Islamic theocratic states, and was followed by a period of consolidation, especially under the conditions provided by the European occupation.

Since Islam came from the north and the Islamic states of both periods were based in the northern Sudan its peoples were gradually islamized. Geographical factors hindered its southerly progress and account in part for the survival of animist groups in the north. Climatological zoning is latitudinal and change of climate often halted invading peoples. In the south Sudan poor communications and dispersion of population in small communities hindered contact. The forests of the Guinean zone imposed an insuperable barrier to steppe-nurtured peoples. The incidence of yellow fever, malaria, and sleeping sickness,

famine and tsetse-fly zones rendered many regions impenetrable. Highlands in the midst of the steppe, like Hombori, Bauchi, and Mandara, and swamps such as fringe the great lakes of the Niger and Chad served as retreats for animist groups.

But more must be taken into consideration than historical and geographical factors. The psychological aspects are equally important. Acceptance or resistance to Islam is determined by innate factors as well as by the circumstances of pressure. Resistance is inherent in integrated animist societies.

The reactions of the different economic categories may be outlined before we proceed to examine these elements in more detail. Islam spreads easily among townspeople. It is a civilization and cannot establish itself solidly without a strong foundation of urban life. Towns in which commerce, industry, and learning concentrate are important meeting-places of contact influences and people engaged in these occupations become Muslim. Islam, therefore, makes immediate appeal to the urban mind, individualistic and wide-visioned, yet limited by the interests of market and workshop. Islam also appeals to the nomad mind. It has no hierarchic priestly system, its method of worship is simple and free, and it makes no far-reaching demands for change of outlook and mode of life. In other words it is a layman's religion. Islamic culture among nomads is, in general, Islam in its most primitive form. Fulbe, Tuareg, and Teda nomads have remained true in essentials to their traditional culture, but west-Sahara arabized Berbers, finding in Islam a compensation for their decline in status, have allowed it to effect great changes in social institutions. Islam appeals to trading peoples on both these grounds, for trade in Africa is a kind of nomadism and yet is bound up with urban culture. On the other hand, its appeal to the rural mind whose centripetal outlook turns essentially upon the tending of life, crops, livestock, and children, is correspondingly weak. The farmer's religion harmonizes exactly with the interests of his daily life. Islam has no natural substitute for this integrated structure and is only adopted voluntarily after a religious vacuum has been created. Although every Hausa trader accepted Islam, agriculturist Hausa resisted its encroachment over their lives even after their rulers adopted the outward apparatus of an Islamic state. 'Uthmān dan Fodio's justifications for the *jihād* in Hausaland were genuine enough, yet even after its success pagan rites were openly practised, whilst today, after a more thorough islamization, they are perpetuated in the *bōri*, and many communities remain pagan.

Islam has not always had the opportunity of following external conquest with the apparatus for deepening the broken surface. Songhay of the middle Niger who became Muslim during the askiya régime discarded their veneer after its collapse, only to be re-islamized during the movement emanating from the *jihād* of 'Uthmān dan Fodio. The Bambara, as they descended the valley of the Niger and occupied the regions of Segu and Karta, came under strong Islamic influence from Soninke. They incorporated Islamic elements into their religion, but did not become Muslims until the Tokolor conquest. Immediately the French occupation freed them from the Tokolor yoke they threw off their Islam and their religious 'associations' gained new vigour. Similarly Shehu Ḥamadu of Masina forced those Dogon who lived on the plain to accept Islam, but this evaporated after the occupation. He did, however, obtain lasting results among groups where the ground had been prepared by the work of Soninke agents.¹ Return to the land in an animist environment has even led to long islamized people adopting the local cults.²

The extent of effective Islamic penetration must not be overestimated. Even in the north many peoples (Serer and Jola in Senegal and Bambara and Dogon in the Sudan) have been little influenced. The Khasonke riverains of the Upper Senegal indicate how long it takes Islam to influence people in touch with it for centuries. Only conquest enabled Islam to gain a foothold. When the French took over these territories large numbers who had been forced to pay it nominal allegiance reverted, but an inroad had been made and some, such as the Dyalo (Sero) branch whose chief, Mori-ba, made his submission to al-ḥajj 'Umar in 1855, remained Muslim. The advance of Islam since the

¹ Mass conversions were not necessarily ephemeral when other factors were involved as is shown in the case of the Somono. These are a group of fishers on the Niger of mixed origins (Bambara, Bozo, and Soninke), formerly subject to the Bambara of Segu and speaking their language. In 1860, when al-ḥajj 'Umar, after taking the Soninke town of Sansanding, was menacing Segu, Ḥamadu III, ruler of Masina, sent a contingent of troops along the right bank of the Niger with the object of recapturing Sansanding. The army was delayed at Koni and the soldiers of Masina employed themselves proselytizing among the Somono with such success that they burnt their 'idols' and embraced Islam *en masse* (see M. Delafosse, *H.S.N.* ii. 294-5). In the Somono we have a group of mixed origins, subject to Bambara chiefs, who were sufficiently acclimatized to Islamic influences to be ready to reject their old religious safeguards and find in Islam a means towards unity and self-assertion.

² M. Delafosse gives an example of the regression of long-islamized Soninke groups to animism in consequence of their loss of slave labour and return to the land (*R.M.M.* xi (1910), 39-40). P. Marty (*Études sur l'Islam en Côte d'Ivoire*, 1922, pp. 150, 456) gives instances of Mande and Fulbe in the Ivory Coast, Fulbe and Bambara in the Sudan (*Soudan*, ii. 160-1), and of freed slaves (*Guinée*, p. 449) who 'buried the Qur'ān'.

French occupation has been largely follow-up. To judge by what he sees along the trade-routes the traveller may conclude that West Africans are mainly Muslim, but if he gets off the high road into the villages of the bush his impressions will be greatly modified. The dispersion of traders has led to the formation of settlements all over animist regions, but they remain distinctive foreign elements. This is especially true of a vast region comprising the Haute Volta, Ivory Coast, and Ghana. All the Voltaic peoples resisted Islam. Some conditions for Islamic penetration were present with regard to the Mossi, their situation in the Sudanese zone and the presence of Muslim minorities engaged in specialized activities, Dyula traders, Hausa shopkeepers, and Fulbe herders. But the most important factors were absent. Their strong feudal system provided peace and prosperity and impressed habits of order and hard work, whilst immigrant Muslim communities were under the control of a minister of state. The historic fact that they were never conquered by the armies of Māli and Songhay, nor by nineteenth-century Muslim adventurers, and their control of their Fulbe pastoralists was such that no local cleric like those of Masina, the Futas, and Gobir was able, by taking advantage of internal troubles, to set up a theocratic state. ✓

Peoples with less-developed political systems, such as the single-celled paleo-nigrific communities who live along the belt 10° lat. N., have been equally resistant. Until the present century southern forest peoples lay outside the range of Islamic radiation. The religious systems of the Yoruba, Dahomean, and Gold Coast regions contrast with the simpler religions of the Sudanese. Only special conditions, such as the conquest of northern Yoruba and the decay of their religion, opened the way to Islam. On the other hand, Islam made no inroads among the Ibo of south-eastern Nigeria for the conditions necessary for its diffusion and assimilation were absent. They were out of the Fulbe range for the climate was unsuitable to invaders. There were no towns and no ruling classes to realize the advantages of Islam.

* The real factors of resistance are those institutions, like family and mystery cults, which govern community life. Elements of animist culture, if viewed in isolation, would not appear to offer great obstacles. The ancestor cult could be accommodated in the early stages of transition since belief in immortality is integral to Islam and the family attitude it supports accords with Islamic psychology. Similarly exogamy is not in direct opposition to Islamic law, though Islam tends to favour in-marriage. The real obstacle to conversion is the integration ✕

of religion with every aspect of life, and Islam seeks to change the basis of authority.

When we proceed to consider all the factors involved we shall see that group conversion is normally but the highlight of a long process of historical change. Not only does Islam cast a long shadow before it, but also in order to be accepted in a free situation the ground has to be prepared. The decisive point generally results from a combination of external pressure and internal breakdown of religious authority. Historical and psychological factors aiding the spread of Islam will be considered next. ✓

✧ *Objective Factors.* The main historical factors leading to the spread of Islam have been trading relations or economic proselytization, religious imperialism, and the opening-up of Africa by Western powers.

(a) *Trading Relations.* Islam was first introduced into West Africa by traders. Their activities in purveying Islam along with their goods have continued ever since. Muslims, being members of a supra-tribal society with widespread links, tend to get the trade of a region into their hands. Soninke, Dyula, and Hausa have been important Islamic trading peoples, but their influence, being dependent upon other factors, has been unequal. Rarely have they obtained political power. An exception is the Dyula community of Kong who held a monopoly of the weaving industry as well as commerce and used their economic power to obtain political control and even embark on conquests. In modern times the economic-religious movement of the Murids in Senegal has been a powerful proselytizing force. Through the settlement of traders elements of Islamic civilization become absorbed into the folkways of local culture. Islam is a necessary passport for animist traders working in Muslim areas. They become Muslims less from conviction than as a matter of course, just as they adopt their de-nationalizing dress.

✧ (b) *Religious Imperialism.* Islam in power is secularized theocracy and this always leads to forms of religious imperialism (not necessarily by force) and the application of the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*. This factor became powerful with the formation of theocratic states during the last century, the principal period when Muslims forcibly converted animists. Such conversions were shallow, but when succeeded by an organized and stable government the conquered animists gradually adopted the imposed religion. The conquests of Askiya Muḥammad of Songhay, whose effect on the spread of Islam was ephemeral, may be contrasted with those of Shehu Ḥamadu which led to the permanent conversion of the peoples of Mašina. In consequence of the

European conquest the *jihād* proper has had its day and although examples can be given of indirect pressure being put on pagans by Islamic chiefs in Northern Nigeria and fanatical outbursts in Bambara country against Komo and Nama shrines, these are exceptional. In Ivory Coast and Dahomey, for instance, the clergy are concerned primarily about their own communities and make no protest against the idolatry around them because the ethnic religions are in a sense the established religions. The Dyula have scarcely influenced the pagan communities of Senufo and Kulango among whom they have been settled for 300 years, largely because political power, except in Kong and Odiénne, remained in the hands of pagans.

Conquest brings a great increase in the number of slaves. This has been more of an aid than a hindrance to the spread of Islam. It might not appear to be in the slave-raider's interests to narrow his field by fostering conversions, but the Fulani of North Nigeria regarded conquered territory, whether the inhabitants were Muslims or pagans, as a reservoir of slaves. Slave-raiding broke up village religion and dispersed tribal groups, and the slaves, when settled in villages to cultivate for their masters, accepted Islam as an integrative factor.¹ What conquest could accomplish in only a limited way was carried through in consequence of the

(c) *Opening-up of Africa* by European powers and the policy adopted by colonial governments. New facilities for communication, security along trade-routes and growth of towns gave traders a formerly unheard-of radius of activity. In towns the detribalized and those temporarily isolated from their religious milieu, feeling the need to link themselves with another social group or to regroup, found their common denominator in Islam. Under the system of indirect rule adopted in Nigeria the rulers and their subordinates in the native administration, from district chiefs to doorkeepers, did not hide their contempt for pagans. Sons of local chiefs sent to native authority schools adopted Islam in order to be with the majority and escape the feeling of being despised.

But the most important effect is the way the impact of Western civilization has weakened the foundations of the local religions, set in motion a social revolution, and thus prepared the way for the adoption of a universalist religion. This leads on to the

¹ In Futa Jalon are 300,000 descendants of slaves out of a population of 750,000, in Lip-tako (Dori), 55,000 out of 80,000, and in Adamawa the Fulbe, numbering only from 50,000 to 100,000, claimed a quarter of a million serfs.

Subjective Factors which derive primarily from Islam as a civilization.

(a) *Religious and Social Reintegration.* When communal life was broken through conquest, forcible removals, and slave-raiding, or today is imperilled or disintegrating under new conditions and demands for which the local religious foundation is inadequate, individuals, families, and even ethnic groups, feel the need for a religion which will help to reintegrate their social structure. That Islam has proved such a factor of integration is shown throughout all that follows.

(b) *Accommodation and Syncretism.* The way Islam adapts itself to animist peoples and the psychological process of its assimilation will be studied later. This process is simplified by the fact that African Islam is characterized by a series of gradations. Thus the form in which the animist first encounters Islam is little removed from animism so far as the psychological aspects of conversion are concerned. Islam, therefore, does not at first appear to demand a violent break with the past and has many points of contact. It is true that it possesses a body of legal regulations affecting every sphere of life which might be expected to conflict with local custom, yet an examination of social forms shows that many Islamic elements fall within the framework of African customary law and far less points of conflict arise than with Christianity. The most obvious sphere is that of marriage. The traditional marriage system, especially the key institutions of polygamy and bride-price, have proved serious obstacles to the adoption of Christianity. Islam, on the contrary, has not experienced this difficulty since these institutions are part of its marriage system. Conformity to regulations which conflict with customary law is not insisted upon since the clerical mediators of the law are Africans. Islam also makes precise and reasonable ethical demands and such elements as its taboos fall naturally within the sphere of African mentality.

(c) *Cultural Prestige.* Through its system of intellectual and material culture Islam opens new horizons. It is the religion of the Book and from that stems the superiority Muslims display when confronted with pagans. Desire for knowledge and pride in the acquisition of letters has been an important factor in the past, but today this desire is mainly directed into other channels.

But we must not think of movement into Islam as primarily a social and cultural phenomenon. Not merely does the religious factor operate in the wider context of these contact influences, but it exercises a definite attraction.

(d) *Religious Values.* Christianity has never been able to escape from the dilemma as to whether it is justified in employing material as well as spiritual means for its extension. Islam has never experienced this dilemma. But it has not resolved it by relegating the spiritual to what seems a secondary place. Religion is the vital cohesive element in the Islamic system and, however obscured it may seem, it is in fact omnipresent.

The religious factor gains ground primarily through ritual and customary observances, for it is these rather than difference of belief which first strike people in contact with another religion. Islam's obvious signs are the prayer ritual, the Ramādān fast, death ceremonial, and taboos. Its animistic ideas are important, yet Islamic animism is not local and limited like the old, but a universal animism, and the animistic Muslim can take his place in a universal society. The laicization of religious functions adds to its appeal. Clerics form a new class but they are not members of a priestly caste, the profession is open to anyone with the training and gifts. Similarly Islam laicizes the magic it recognizes as part of the religious structure. The cleric is at one and the same time teacher-guide and medicine-man.

Islam has powerful religious assets which, if combined with other forces, exercise a strong influence. It has the utter certainty of being the true faith, and it is this which impresses more than the idea of the one God. Islam offers a heaven of a recognizable, because material, bliss; and the confident assurance the Muslim displays of attaining Paradise exercises a clear attraction. Life's problems are settled because Islam has its answer to those both of this world and the next. If the cost of affirming the unity of God, which means the cost of breaking with former safeguards, is not too great a new world lies wide open. Islam bases its apostolate upon its spiritual authority, the efficacy of its religious practices, and the longing men feel for a religion of certainty. This apostolate is not necessarily exercised consciously, but none the less it works surely within the context of all the other factors.

Contact Agents. The important thing about the agents of Islam is that they are Negroes spreading Negro Islam. The *Biḍān* (Whites) have not played the great role some have assigned to them. They are too proud, showing only too plainly that they despise the *Sūdān* (Blacks), to be good propagandists.¹ The effective representatives of Islam are

¹ P. Marty (*Soudan*, iv. 193) mentions as exceptional a white Tawātī trader settled at San-sanding in the eighteenth century, whose tomb is honoured because he 'took part in all the prayers of the mosque of his quarter alongside the blacks, which is very unusual for a white Muslim'.

traders and clergy, whose functions are often combined in the same person. The role of traders has already been treated. Like the trader the cleric forms part of animist society. Like the griot or praise-singer he has a position in the chief's entourage as well as in village life. Al-Bakrī reports that Muslims held positions at the court of the pagan king of Gāna. By recognizing the cleric the chief seeks to increase and harness on his people's behalf all resources of cosmic power. Although, like the griot, the cleric is regarded as a social inferior there is this difference, he does not belong to an endogamous caste, but to a class whose members can obtain wives from local society. Tradition and history are full of accounts of how the son of a cleric by the daughter of a pagan chief succeeded his maternal grandfather and raised Islam to the status of the imperial cult. When Muslim overrule is established the cleric in each pagan village establishes a routine of Islamic calendar observance. These clerks consolidated the gains of secular rulers, stabilized the Islam of neophytes, and inculcated the routine of Islamic social practice. Through these agents intermediary communities are formed. Wherever the mediator takes up his residence, though but temporarily or periodically, he marries a local woman and a Muslim family is created within the animist community. The family acquire land for subsistence cultivation and through the mother the children grow up as members of the local group and yet through their father are linked with the wider world.

Muslim chiefs, officials, policemen, soldiers, and servants to Europeans may also act as agents of Islam. The initiative of chiefs as agents has often been stressed but needs analysing more carefully. Provided Islam is 'in the air', only when a chief belongs to a different ethnic group from that of his subjects will he consider joining Islam in order to reinforce his authority, but he does not expect his subjects to follow his example. The settlement of an alien Muslim group amongst animists, leading to the formation of an *imperium in imperio*, has sometimes made it difficult for a chief to maintain his authority unless he adopted Islam. But examples may also be cited of chiefs who joined Islam only at the last ditch after the majority of the subjects had been influenced. If Islam is not 'in the air' ruling classes wearing a cloak of Islam when they imposed themselves on pagan communities may shed it altogether, as, for example the Mbanya kings of the Gonja in Ghana. Chiefs as agents tend to cancel themselves out. It is not so much that they are important as agents as that the chiefship system provides conditions which aid the penetration of Islam. Only rulers of theocratic

states attempted to propagate Islam among their subjects. Islam, with its concept of the equality of believers and the right of the clerics to criticize secular rulers, is a potentially anarchic factor. Chiefs may adopt the religion as a link with higher civilization, but they do not necessarily wish to be imitated by their subjects. Thus the chiefs of Māli, Songhay, and Bornu did little to encourage their subjects to adopt Islam. At the same time, when Islam becomes the imperial cult it inevitably exerts a wide influence. Muḥammad Belo wrote: 'It is well known that the government of a country follows that of its chief. If the chief is a Muslim then the country is *dār al-Islām*, if a pagan then it is a pagan country.'¹ In this he is right. If the chief is a Muslim then the country is regarded as *dār al-Islām* although his subjects remain pagan, for Islam receives recognition as the state cult.

Over-simplification and a piecemeal approach must be avoided in assessing the causes of religious change. The impact of Islam is far more complicated than any listing of historical and psychological factors make apparent. In a given situation we are faced with the interaction of objective and subjective forces; also, as has been indicated, religious change is not merely a question of stimulus but of response. When studying a particular community we have to consider all these influences: the intensity and duration of contact and consequent habituation to Islamic elements, and psychological factors such as inherent forces of resistance and the losses sustained or advantages gained from acceptance.

3. THE PROCESS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE

The difference between Islam as a developed civilization with a body of religious doctrine and the African religio-social systems with which it is in contact is so profound that the psychological shock of conversion would seem as great as with Christianity. It is not so in practice. The reason is that African Islam in contact with animists is characterized by a series of gradations which act as insulators passing Islamic radiation on, diminuendo, to animist societies. Thus the form in which Islam first makes its impact upon the animist seems little removed from animism. This gives Islam the advantage of rarely finding itself in direct contact with animists in a form whose cultural level is too high to render mutual understanding possible. Consequently the psychological shock involved in change of religion is reduced to the minimum. Islam does no violent uprooting but offers immediate value

¹ M. Belo, *Infāq al-Maisūr*, London, 1951, p. 184.

without displacing the old. Further, the agents of Islamic radiation are people who, whilst possessing a supra-tribal outlook and higher cultural background than the animist, are African, who live happily in the village and take to themselves local wives.

Three main stages in the assimilation of Islamic culture are discerned in animist societies subject to Islamic radiation. Discussion of these will help to distinguish apparent changes from real in any particular community. The first stage is preparatory, the infiltration of elements of Islamic culture into animist life. The second is the conversion, characterized more by the break with the old order than the adoption of the new. The third is the gradual process by which Islam changes the life of the community.

The first stage, the preparatory conditioning of people for the acceptance of Islam, is characterized by the breaking down of barriers and the adoption of aspects of the religious and material culture of Muslims. Such elements are the wearing of Islamic amulets, ornaments, and dress, and the acquisition of food and household habits. These elements are not in themselves specifically Islamic, though they are factors which distinguish Muslims from pagans. At the same time, the adoption of a new material trait does not necessarily involve the assimilation of its inner significance. Thus Songhay and Hausa chiefs have adopted the Tuareg muffler, but not the mouth-taboo with which it is associated.¹ Islamic elements also enter into the religious mythology and practices of animist cultures, for they can absorb a good deal without change in inner direction. Through Mandinka the name for God has been applied by forest peoples in western Guinea to their creator-god,² but it remains an impersonal spirit who plays no role in communal life, and is not offered prayer or sacrifice.

The pagan Bambara illustrate the way Islamic elements can be assimilated without upsetting the religious system. In addition to the vague belief in Ngala they have adopted the Islamic calendar, the festivals of fast-breaking and the great feast being celebrated as the chief feasts of the ancestors. The orientation of the grave follows Muslim custom. Islamic religious terms and expressions are in daily use. *Ṣadaqa* is employed for offerings to gods, differentiated in the sense of 'alms' from their own terms; whilst the expression *bisimilay* (*bismillāhi*) is

¹ An association noted by Ibn Ḥawqal who travelled among them in A.D. 960: 'They claim that the mouth is shameful and must be concealed like the pudenda because what goes out from it is more tainted than what goes out of the latter' (*Ibn Ḥawqal*, ed. J. H. Kramers, i. 102).

² Kpelle (Gerzé) and Kono *yala*, Manon *wala*, Gbanda *ngala*, Toma (or Loma) *gala*, and Kisi *hala*.

used in sacramental invocations and magical incantations. The meaning is not known, it is a phrase of power.¹ Islamic myths, such as the seven heavens and Adam and Eve, have entered their mythology, and a legend attributes the Komo society to its acquisition by Mūsā, *mansa* of Māli, when on pilgrimage to Mecca in A.D. 1324.

At this stage neither religious nor social life is affected. At most they may be called pagans with a veneer of Islam. Many dislike saying they are pagans, especially schoolboys and others brought into touch with a wider life beyond the tribe. Out of 343 children in a Methodist school in Bunumbu circuit of Mendeland only one would admit having a pagan father (or uncle or guardian), whilst 211 said their fathers were Muslim and 131 Christian. So the old religion is weakened through the shame of being despised. All that can be said of people at this stage is they are significant in the negative sense that they are not hostile to Islam. Young men go to towns, plantations, and mines to earn money to marry and are influenced by Islam. On their return they settle down to cultivation with all that means of the farm religious cycle. When traders come to the village they say they are Muslims and perhaps pray with them. The elders tolerate all this provided it is not characterized by separation from communal ritual. Villages acquire praying-places for the convenience of traders. In Temne villages prayer-enclosures (*an bese*) delineated by logs or stones may be seen immediately adjacent to an ancestor house (*a-boro masar*) in which are stones representing the ancestors. These villagers who call themselves *a-More* (Muslims) use both, they 'make *salli*' on the one and offerings to their ancestors' spirits on the other.

The chief elements of Islamic religious culture which are assimilated are not those belonging to its inner genius but its animistic elements. Their assimilation is facilitated by the animist's consciousness of impersonal power working through persons and things. He is ready to make use of any available magical technique. Consequently the Islamic magician finds him credulous of his alleged powers and ready to buy his charms and amulets. So the characteristic Mende 'medicine' (*to halei*) is associated with texts written on wooden slates and suspended in various ways in houses and on farms. The word *jinn* is employed by everyone in contact with Muslims for spirits of all kinds and it is

¹ Similarly Mende have acquired a vocabulary which merely reflects Islam and has little influence upon their religious ideas as is evident from their practice. Such words are *Aijene* (heaven) and *ʿahannama* (hell), the idea of a Day of Judgement, *seli* (to pray), *jumbui* (Ar. *dhanb*, sin).

significant that pagan Yoruba say *anjonu*, reflecting an earlier adoption, whilst Muslim Yoruba say *alijano*.

There is as yet no break with the old religion, but a stage is reached which is characterized by the assimilation of significant elements of Islam, the consequent parallel existence of two religions in the community, and a weakening of the local religious structure, until a point of crisis is reached. This is the dividing line when the old religious authority is consciously rejected. But we must make it clear that we can rarely talk of an individual and never of a community being converted to Islam in the sense of any sudden reorientation of life around a new centre. There is a long process during which this reorientation is being effected. So far this assimilation has had little to do with Islam as a higher religion, but mainly with Islamic animistic and cultural elements. Nor does the adoption of specific religious elements involve any radical revolution in religious belief because they have not undermined faith in customary religious safeguards. Cult communal rites continue to follow the traditional pattern, though signs of weakening are evident since the attitude of the group to them is no longer uniform, whilst some rites and ceremonies are mutilated or neglected.¹ If the significance of the first germinal stage is the negative one that the people are not hostile to Islam, the significance of the second is that they are Muslims in the sense that they are favourable to it. Although there is no definite point in this process of change where one can state 'Here animism ends and Islam begins', there is a point where one can say of an individual, 'This man is a Muslim, not a pagan'. He is an animistic Muslim undoubtedly, but a change has taken place in his inner consciousness whereby he has crossed a boundary-line and is on the threshold of a new world.

A similar boundary-line is also evident in family or village life which marks the end of the rule of the old order, and this is far more significant than individual changes. Change of religion is as fully a social as an individual matter. The two aspects are interwoven. A pagan who goes to work in town may find it expedient to become a Muslim, but on his return home he assumes his natural place in village life. He is not a rebel against his society. Adoption of Islam by individuals

¹ As has been pointed out objective pressures may weaken spiritual authority. So important are religions like the Komo that anything which weakens the relationship of the community with the supernatural powers these rituals embody, leaves the way open for the adoption of Islam. These cults also follow cycles of flowering, arrest, decline, and revival, and during a period of decline a community may be susceptible to pressure to adopt Islam as a new safeguard and integrative factor.

is significant merely as a factor aiding the conditioning of village mentality in its favour. But when a whole family or village becomes Muslim this is not the result of the cumulation of such individuals as the culmination point of an Islamic movement within it, deriving from the interaction of many influences, a movement which leads the village to make the decision to give up inherited safeguards and to base life around a new centre. What really marks the change is shown by the answer to the question, 'Who or what governs life?' There comes a point when the ritual pattern is disrupted, a point in family life when ancestral conciliation no longer rules, a point in village life when the chief spirit around whom worship was concentrated is rejected for the formerly unworshipped sky-god whose name becomes a synonym for Allah as alone worthy of worship, whilst former gods become subject or evil spirits; a point symbolized by the neglect or destruction of images, masks (*persona*), *boli*, and other material supports of spirit.

Chiefs often find it politically expedient to be accepted as Muslims, but make no fundamental change. They are still pagans who have adopted outward aspects of Islam, but they have not passed the boundary line. The clergy, however, are getting a hold and the one thing to which they are opposed is communal idol worship over which they have no control. The point comes when the chief gets rid of his 'idols'. Europeans in south-west Nigeria exhibit beautifully carved figurines which the then Alāfin of Oyo, supreme head of the Yoruba, who had recently made this break, had dispersed. This is especially significant when chiefs are divine (the Alāfin is the incarnation of Shango, god of lightning and smallpox) whose divinity was transferred to their effigies. Islam seeks to eliminate the forms of former worship and the clergy do not compromise once their position at the chief's court is no longer that of an additional soothsayer and magician but recognized representatives of the supreme God.

Holas, in his study of the function of the mask among the Kono of French Upper Guinea, shows how profound a role it plays in the religious, social, and political life of people uninfluenced by Islam:

Le Masque, c'est le *code moral* personnifié. Le Masque, c'est l'agent permanent, chargé de sauvegarder le coutumier non écrit. Il est le *Grand Initiateur*, qui fait de l'embryon humain une unité sociale valide; il la guide à travers les vicissitudes de la vie, la protège, et la punit au besoin.¹

It is obvious why the mask must lose its authority when people step

¹ B. Holas, *Les Masques Kono*, Paris, 1952, p. 147.

over the dividing-line. Islam seeks to be the ruling factor in life and although the mask may continue to operate in islamized societies it has lost its former socio-religious function, and may even degenerate into a form of clowning. More commonly the material symbols of the dying cult are not destroyed but simply neglected. Ancestor houses gradually disintegrate under wind and rain and are not renewed, whilst masks are sold to visiting anthropologists.

Missionaries in the interior of the Gambia stated that a neighbouring Fula village 'became Muslim overnight'. It was not so simple as that. Mandinka and Fula clergy came from French territory to receive courses of injections at the mission dispensary and remained for weeks at a time propagating Islam in the neighbourhood. The process took years before the villagers decided to embrace Islam as a community. Behind this the work of the previous two centuries, whereby 90 per cent. of the people of Gambia became Muslim, should not be forgotten; so that at last the Fula abandoned their defences, made the decisive break, and joined the dominant religious stream. This point, therefore, marks conversion, a real break with the things of the past and a beginning of the process of becoming an Islamic community.

Hausa Māguzāwa villages provide examples of all stages of change. First the process by which aspects of Islamic social practice are assimilated without displacing traditional rites (*tsāfi*). Their ancestral cult has already disappeared independently of Islamic influence, and their most important communal rites are offerings to spirits by family head, village chief, or a priest (*sarikin arna*). But the local cleric becomes more involved in family affairs. He is associated with the naming and marriage ceremonies and funeral rites. Through his mediation the family seek God's blessing and yet maintain traditional rites upon which their religious outlook is still concentrated. But a point is reached when the community makes a definite break with *tsāfi*. Allah is recognized (perhaps through a communal calamity) as a righteous and stern deity who cannot tolerate other gods than He. The great mourning feasts, associated with beer drinking and libations on graves, are discontinued. Adoption of the Islamic lunar calendar has already led to changes in the ritual cycle of the agricultural year and the family rites change to Islamic fertility rites. Communal worship of spirits is not abandoned, but becomes confined to a mediating group of initiates (*'yan bōri*), which means a change in the whole conception of relationship with spirits. Individual offerings, it is true, go on everywhere and *bōkāyē* (medicine men) as well as *'yan bōri* offer sacrifices to conciliate spirits

causing illness, but the significant thing is that the communal cults are broken and can never again rule village life.

Hausa say of a Ba-māguje who has made the break: *kwanche māguzanche* 'he has discarded paganism'. *Kwanche* is used for discarding old clothes to put on new. The outward changes are the most important. Islam reaches the soul through these. The inner change is a long process about which no one is consciously concerned. *Māguje* (pl. *māguzāwa*) is derived from Arabic *majūs* (Qur'ān xxii. 17) and *māguzanche* means 'the way of the *majūs*' or 'heathenism'. Its application was an attempt by the jurists of Northern Nigeria to find a formula by which irreconcilable Hausa pagans in their midst could be admitted among those who are allowed to retain their religion upon payment of *jizya*.¹ The pagans of Gobir and Marāḍi in French territory are not known by this term but by the Hausa word for 'pagan', *arne* (*anne*, *asne*).²

Among the things which *azna* must discard after adopting Islam are the *fatauchi* or bullroarer associated with pagan ceremonial; fertility rites for which there are Islamic substitutes; and the *kōrāna* (or *jīgo* or *gausami*), a short forked stick of *ķirya* wood erected at the doorway of a compound and village gateway, or a sacred tree, at the foot of which fresh milk is poured every Thursday night and sacrifices offered at certain seasons. For the *kōrāna* is substituted a bundle of Islamic charms (*riķi*), other types (*kāfe*) are installed with sacrifice inside the *zauze* (entrance porch). Religious vocabulary changes completely and there is a horror of words associated with pagan worship.³ The dispossession of the old conception of 'sacrifice' for that of *ṣadaqa* is especially significant. Thus Mendē give up the old red rice sacrifice (*mba gboli* made with red palm oil) for the white rice sacrifice (*mba jaa*). 'Red' and beer, associated with pagan sacrifices and libations, come to be abhorred.

The third stage of assimilation, within which are many gradations, marks the definite transition to an islamized society. It is characterized by genuine belief in the efficacy of Islam's religious sanctions, and

¹ See Sahnūn, *Mudawwana*, ed. Cairo, A.H. 1324-5, i. 406.

² The Hausa also say *kwanche kwaraya* for 'he discarded idolatry'. The *kwaraya* (or *shanchi*) is a pagan contest in which the contestants fight with a band of iron having a knife-sharp edge, worn on the right forearm. It is regarded as their national sport, but I do not know what religious significance it possessed in the old life.

³ *Tsāfi*, pagan worship, comes to mean 'fetishism', and so with its derivatives, *ma-tsāfi*, 'fetish worshipper', *ma-tsāfa*, place of worship, *gidan* (*dakin*) *tsāfi*, 'fetish hut', and *gunki*, 'fetish', though this is still employed by the *'yan-bōri* for their rite.

involves actual change in conduct and social custom. In the sphere of religious practice the village prayer rectangle becomes frequented regularly in the evening, and the fast and religious taboos are observed. Children are sent to Qur'ān schools and the religious orders contribute towards providing many with an inner Islamic society. Thus the individual gains a wider outlook, self-assurance and a feeling of belonging to the *umma* of God.

In the sphere of social usage and custom great changes take place. Since Islam is a universal religion with a sacred law its ultimate effect upon tribal culture is a disintegration of specific aspects of the old order (exogamy, widow-inheritance, initiation ceremonies) and the gradual transformation of society. But the process is such that the disintegration and reintegration seem natural. The new culture gives new values without radical displacement of the old, since Islam has been forced to adapt itself to the mentality and mode of life of Africans. In social practice Islamic ceremonial connected with transitional rites is easily adopted, whereas change of elements affecting the actual social structure may take centuries unless accelerated through the influence of Muslim theocratic governments or the recognition of Islamic law by European governments.

4. THE RESULTS OF CONTACT

(a) *Reciprocity in Culture Contact*

Islam has become an African religion. The changes that ensue from the meeting of cultures are dynamic in character. Islam and African cultures have a reciprocal influence. As it spread among Africans Islam was conditioned by their outlook and customs, but Islam in turn changed their outlook and customs. Consequently every Muslim society varies in its understanding and practice of Islam. In adopting it people reject no more of their inheritance than is absolutely necessary. Certain beliefs and practices, it has been shown, have to be rejected because they are incompatible with Islam or too bound up with the old government of life. But people are atavistically resistant to change in psychological attitudes, and their attitude towards nature-spirits and powers of magic may acquire renewed vitality through association or coalescence with their counterparts in Islam, hence the value of its spiritism and magical practices derived from similar elements in the religion of the pagan Arabs, whose incorporation into a universal religion naturally aids its assimilation by animists.

The acceptance of new religious elements involves reinterpretation,

and the interpretation is largely, though not wholly, in terms of the old. The impact of Islam is consequently weakened since acquisitions are assimilated to pre-existing standards, as for example when funeral rites are interpreted as a means of eliminating the dangerous contamination of death, releasing the soul and rendering it harmless to the living. Similarly with the interpretation of the *'idda* of widowhood.

At the same time, it must be emphasized, this process is reciprocal. Old ideas cling to naming and death rites, yet they are transformed when given an Islamic character. The process has to be seen, not in static terms of addition and subtraction, but in dynamic terms of growing more fully into Islam. What Islamic culture assimilated from animist culture is transformed in the process, for it is assimilated, not adopted, into Islam; at the same time Islam is affected by what it assimilates. The result is not fusion but synthesis.

The process of islamization adopts the way of myth and fable. Circumcision and excision are given Islamic legends of institution based on the Abrahamic myth. The custom thus acquires a new supernatural sanction; no longer is it practised because it was the custom of the ancestors, but because God ordained it. Consequently it is transformed into an Islamic purification rite. Similarly New Year festivals fuse with 10th Muharram. In this way the acts of communal life are enveloped in an atmosphere at once Islamic and African.

The adoption of Islam leads in time to a profound reintegration of the cultural life of the people. What must not be forgotten is that throughout this process Islam must remain true to type. Many elements cannot be assimilated, and though the clergy may have to compromise with irreconcilable practices through force of circumstances, they remain illegitimate and await a reformer to mobilize public opinion against them. The given data of Islam, its dogma and rules, its distinctive apprehension and insight into the totality of existence, cannot theoretically be denatured, though understanding and practice may modify the direction. The crisis Islam faces of losing its true identity is averted by the law books in the hands or memories of clerics, and orthodoxy is governed by the degree to which their rules are applied. Islam changes conceptions of life as its practical rules, fortified by legends, gain acceptance. A considerable time-lag elapses before the Islamic conception of life seeps through, but when it does the culture evolves into something new, in harmony with the Islamic ideal, yet truly African. The readjustment of social life to the new ideal proceeds naturally. The Muslim community based, not on blood relationship

but on religion, becomes a reality, with its leaders, norms of conduct, and communal rituals.

When a social unit, family, clan, village, or people, is converted *in corpore*, as for example the whole of the Wolof during the nineteenth century, the structure of society is preserved in an islamized form. Islam has succeeded in doing this better than Christianity. Islam in Africa has developed cultural patterns that are at one and the same time African and Islamic. But the Christian community, especially where formed by converting individuals, comes into being in the midst of the animist community in such a way that it is in conscious opposition to it. Islam reduces the opposition of the community to the minimum through its system of gradations, and its penetration has not led to the formation of the conflict personalities or 'marginal men' characteristic of Western influence. In this way Islam transmutes itself into African life.

(b) *The Reorientation of Life through Islam*

The way Islam remoulds the life of individual and community is through the acceptance of an inner principle whereby Islamic religious symbols give new context and driving-points to religious life, and through the adoption of patterns of common religious and social practice. Typical of the first is the redirection of petition. A ceremony like the eighth-day naming is retained, but pagan prayers are changed into Muslim prayers and the ceremony acquires a new orientation. When people pray *for* the dead instead of *to* the dead they are Muslims, however many pagan ceremonies they still retain.

The unifying features provided by Islam which all acquire are:

1. The recognition of Islamic law in theory, and in practice through the acceptance of the clergy as guides of conduct. With them is associated the Qur'ān school as an essential feature of village life.
2. The 'pillars' as evidence of following the Muslim way: confession of faith (the stress being on 'confession'), ritual prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, with pilgrimage as an ideal goal.
3. The observance of common taboos and common calendar rites.
4. Incorporation of a minimum Islamic element into the transitional rites at naming, circumcision, marriage, and death.
5. Acceptance of the efficacy of Islamic supernatural powers: the ability of the cleric to bring power into activity through ritual words and actions.

It is a remarkable testimony to the unity of Islamic practice to travel

through the Sudan from the Atlantic coast to the Red Sea and find all Muslim peoples performing the same burial rites. Outward forms and symbols deeply influence inner life and the adoption of Islamic ritual leads eventually to reinterpretation of life by the Islamic values for which those symbols stand.

The adoption of Islamic legal regulations transforms social institutions. Clergy insist as soon as they can upon certain minimum requirements, chiefly connected with family life. Since an institution like the family has its roots in all aspects of life, change from matrilineal to patrilineal family, or from communal to private ownership of property, must affect the basis of social life. Islamic law is often in opposition to customary law and it may be centuries before it assumes predominance.¹ In practice they are reconciled. What clerics require is reverence for the law, although it is ignored. They, therefore, recognize customary law (modified by Islamic law) as basic law just as in the spiritual sphere they acknowledge forms of animistic belief.

The new culture which emerges as a result of this process may be compared to an embroidered textile. The basic fabric is the animist culture. Upon this is embroidered the Islamic pattern. In time this pattern is woven into the very texture of the background. The actual structure of the ground is no longer discernible, but it remains firmly rooted and provides the variation between different ethnic cultures. This reintegration is still in process, yet there is a recognizable West African Islamic culture, different from that of North Africa, formed through the interaction of Islamic law and indigenous cultures.

The fact that this process of integration is rarely complete implies spiritual dualism. Religious life rests on a double foundation, the animistic underlayer and the Islamic superstructure. Baba of Karo, a Hausa woman, revealed through her autobiography transmitted by Mary Smith, shows how the Hausa spirit cult has its function parallel to that of Islam when she says: 'The work of *malams* is one thing, the

¹ Pressure from other factors is needed before certain institutions can change. Islamic law has been powerless to supplant the custom of Tuareg maintaining traditional life in central Sahara, whereas the new environment of the Ullimmeden and others who live around the Niger bend provided the conditions for Islam to break the hard core of custom. In Senegal Islam gained the allegiance of ruling and warrior classes of Serer, but not of the masses. However, those of Niumi chieftaincy in Gandul, when fighting against the Tokolor *mahdi*, Ma Ba, thought it expedient to adopt Islam (c. 1860) and their social life has subsequently been changed. They have lost the class system characteristic of Wolof and Serer society and adopted many Islamic civil laws (see F. Lafont, 'Le Gandoul et les Niominkas', *Bull. Com. Ét. A.O.F.*, 1938, p. 414). On the other hand, Islam, greatly as it has influenced the Wolof, has not changed their organization in closed groups.

work of *bori* experts is another, each has his own kind of work and they must not be mixed up. There is the work of *malams*, of *bori*, of magicians, of witches; they are all different but at heart everyone loves the spirits.¹ Old religious attitudes and customs rule in the sphere of village civilization and interwoven with this is the new civilization. But we can never generalize about the extent to which Islam is the supporting foundation of life for it depends upon the stage of integration reached. If we take a particular community, a Hausa or Songhay village, we may find that the main weight of everyday life rests more upon the old religion than the new. On the other hand, if we go to a Tokolor village we may find that Islamic law has had a profounder effect than upon Berbers of North Africa.

Retention of seemingly conflicting loyalties, attitudes, and institutions does not necessarily signify conscious dualism in people's lives. The African Muslim is not torn between two warring forces. In everyday life the two strands of religious inheritance are reconciled, for they are woven together like the warp and weft of different textures into a cloth of complicated pattern. The natural coexistence of old and new is seen in the canalization of clerical functions. Clergy fall into two categories, not of persons since the same person combines both, but of function—that of the clerk and the medicine-man. Islam in West Africa is 'primitive' religion to the extent that the Muslim clerk is at one and the same time representative of sacred law and medicine-man. In other words, religious and magical elements are scarcely differentiated. The foundation of both is belief in the power of the unseen world, and the possibility of establishing contact either by prayers or by forces.

Besides concepts and institutions assimilated by Islam from former cultures and as it were rebaptized into it, are others retained by Muslims from the old background which, even by the incorporation of Islamic elements, cannot be assimilated.² Magic practice, spirit invocation, and possession persist because everybody, clergy included, regard them as efficacious. Hence the persistence, not merely of Islamic clerics practising magic, but of pagan medicine-men and spirit cults, condemned in theory but tolerated in practice. Since these peoples belong to two

¹ M. F. Smith, *Baba of Karo*, 1954, p. 222.

² The spirit cults of the Hausa cannot be regarded as islamized, but *malams* recognize the necessity of giving *ṣadaqa* to the spirits; as Baba says: 'When we moved here to New Giwa the spirits filled the town, the European spirits began to come too. The *malams* advised that it would be right to give these strangers alms so that they should dwell at peace in the town' M. F. Smith, *Baba of Karo*, p. 209).

religious cultures such ineradicable features have to be taken into account in this study.

The effect of Western civilization has also to be taken into account and the way it has affected Islamic societies will be considered in the last chapter. All that need be said at present is that in an integrated Islamic community the old and the new are kept rigidly apart. An illustration of the relative position and influence of animist, Islamic, and Western cultures in relation to indigenous life is provided by the markets of Nigerian towns. In the market of the old walled city of Zaria, for example, little is offered for sale that would not have been there before the British occupation. On the stalls will be found baskets of millet, guinea corn and maize, tomatoes, onions, sugar-cane, pepper, spices, and the leaves of plants used for seasoning. Manufactured goods found there are substitutes for native products, like large bowls whose functions are the same as the calabashes they make themselves which have not been displaced. In the market the interwoven strands of the religious fabric can also be seen. The trader in Qur'āns and Arabic legal texts squats alongside the *dan mai-ganyē*, the trader selling roots, twigs, bones, feathers, and other ingredients for concocting charms. Down a side street a leather merchant will sell us indifferently a case for our Qur'ān or a sachet for our latest charm. Both these strands are in mutual opposition to the modern wares of the *Sābon Garī*, the 'New Town', where we have to go if we wish to buy a printed Hausa book. Thus while Islam and the pagan underlayer have blended the resultant syncretism is in juxtaposition to the new influences from the West.

5. THE MAIN CYCLES OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN WEST AFRICA

Islam has played a major role in shaping the cultures of North Africa, Sahara, western, central, and eastern Sudan. These regions can be differentiated and contrasted because they had been moulded in distinctive ways before Islam appeared on the scene. In West Africa three cycles can be distinguished: sahil, west and central Sudan. The first, the Saharan-Sahilian, characterizes the Moorish tribes in particular. The Tuareg come within it, but not the Teda who belong to the central Sudan cycle. Islamic features are the North African form of saint cult and *ṭarīqas*, whose peculiar psychological attitudes were not transmitted to Negro Islam except to a limited degree. Another characteristic is the formation of clerical clans. This type of Islam has influenced the Sahilian zone, including towns like Timbuktu, and Negro slaves.

Though Islam came to West Africa through Moors and North Africans Negro peoples have given it their own distinctive stamp. In the Sudanese belt it is convenient to refer to three Islamic culture cycles: west, central, and east. The eastern or Nilotic Sudan culture, distinguished by a profound arabization and widespread influence of *ṭariqas*, does not come into this survey and is quite distinct from West African Islam. It has only influenced the regions of Baqirmi and Waday. The difference between the western and central cycles, due to pre-existing factors, is apprehensible by direct contact but difficult to formulate.

The west Sudan cycle is represented by the Tokolor and Soninke, the first Sudanese converted to Islam, who established a distinctive type of Islamic observance. Characteristics appear in the pattern of family festivals (e.g. simultaneous naming, pounding, slaughtering, and shaving at the eighth-day rite), spirit practices, after-life beliefs ('crossing the river'), and special Islamic legends. The Songhay of the middle Niger form a transitional zone having characteristics of both cycles.

The central Sudan cycle, subject to Islamic radiation from the Nile as well as the Maghrib, characterizes the Kanuri and Hausa. Kanembu and Kanuri gave Islamic practice a distinct stamp without being active missionaries, regarding Islam as the cult of the aristocracy and a specialized occupation. The city-state with its elaborate hierarchy and class system contrasts with the village-state organization and occupational caste system of the west. The failure of the attempt to found a theocracy in Hausaland was due to the power of this structure which captured reforming clerics. On the contrary, in the west the reformers did not carry on the previous organization but formed a type of state more closely based on the precepts of Islam.

Other West African culture areas (western Guinea, southern Sudan, Voltaic, and south Guinean) were not influenced by Islam until the nineteenth century. Their Islam is characterized by the type of missionary influence brought to bear on them and the simultaneous penetration of Western civilization.

Influence of Islam upon Ideas of the Supernatural and Human Personality

I. ON BEING A MUSLIM

THE sketch of the process of islamization given in the last chapter shows why such contradictory statements are made regarding the ratio of Muslims to pagans in a particular region or within a certain people and also about the depth of their Islam. For instance, one book states that all Songhay are Muslims, due to the fact that the majority would claim to be so before an administrator, whilst in another book one who had studied the beliefs of the Songhay of the middle Niger writes, 'almost half are not islamized and the rest in general have only a thin transparent Islamic veneer'.¹ It also shows why it is generally impossible to state that a people became Muslim at a particular date or even century. Sometimes it is stated that the Bozo became Muslim in the fifteenth century, whilst others say they changed in the nineteenth century. It depends upon the criteria of the student. An anthropologist studying their social institutions may regard them as pagans for they exhibit the characteristics of an animist society influenced superficially by Islam. Yet the Bozo claim to be Muslims. Islam has been infiltrating into their life for centuries and they are an example of the coexistent parallelism of two religious outlooks. The ideal given by Muḥammad Belo in his *Apologia pro Bello Sancto* cannot be applied:

One cannot judge merely by what is professed. The man who bows down to an idol to gain an hundred thousand dirhems, even though he utters the confession of faith, prays, fasts, accomplishes the pilgrimage and does good works, yet by one act of heathenism destroys a thousand acts of faith.²

The actual criterion adopted by *jihād* leaders, including Muḥammad Belo, is shown in accounts of their conquests. After the skirmish of Kelem-Bin, Muḥammad Belo 'set free those prisoners who could recite the Fātiḥa and perform the ablutions correctly; whilst the remainder, that is to say those who could not correctly accomplish these two

¹ J. Boulnois, *Empire de Gao*, p. 68.

² Muḥammad Belo, *Infāq al-Maisūr*, p. 10.

requirements, were reduced to slavery'.¹ Apostasy was refusal to pay tribute, similar to Abū Bakr's attitude at the *ridda* which followed the death of the Prophet. In *Ta'riḫ Sokoto* we read over and over again that the ruler and people of X 'apostatized'. Many of these had never accepted even the outward forms of Islam, and all the phrase means is that they had revolted against the overlordship of Sokoto. In Nupe 'he has been converted' is *wun dḡba*, literally 'he has submitted', and a 'convert' is *lagba*, 'one who has submitted'. Al-ḥājj 'Umar called those he forced to join Islam *tūburu*, and in all Mande languages *tūbi* (Ar. *tawba* 'repentance') is employed for both 'submission' and 'conversion' (cf. Ar. *aslama*).

The very act of profession means change, for it involves the acceptance of clergy as guides. If in an atmosphere of disintegrating pagan cults there is no function of family or village life from which the cleric is absent and few in which he has not his part to play, then they are Muslims.²

In the studies which follow thoroughly islamized peoples, such as Tokolor, Fulbe of Masina and Futa Jalon, Soninke, Dyula, Songhay, Hausa, and Kanuri, will be drawn upon for illustrations, for only thus can we see what basic changes have taken place and what elements of native religious culture have been retained. At the same time, the religious life of peoples in process of change, like Temne and Mende in Sierra Leone and Nupe in Nigeria, are just as important, for they will show what Islamic elements are first adopted and what elements of animist belief and practice they displace.

2. THE IDEA OF THE SUPERNATURAL

(a) *Theology and Ritual*

Islam is not taught as a system of belief but as a legal way. It is important to realize that whilst Islamic law, including the legal requirements of religion, is handed on by written tradition and is therefore exact, the specifically religious elements of Islam, conceptions about the nature of God and human personality, man's relationship with God, and traditions concerning the Prophet, are handed on primarily through

¹ Al-ḥājj Sa'īd, *Ta'riḫ Sokoto*, in appendix to *Tadhkīrat an-Nisyan*, p. 194 (313).

² It need hardly be pointed out that labels tell little about what a man really believes. Moreover, if one is born into a society that is naturally religious, in the sense that consciousness of the supernatural world pervades life, a vast amount that is attached to the sphere of religion is simply natural secularism. Hence the place materialistic and magical beliefs occupy in religion, since they derive from fear and the desire to exploit the unseen world.

oral tradition. Islamic ideas spread by myth and fable and aphorism. The result is that within the sphere of village life one can find an authority on the minutiae of ritual ablution and prayer, everything in fact dealt with by the *Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zaid, but no one who knows anything about theology. 'Ilm al-kalām, or scholastic theology, is unknown even by the learned in the great teaching centres. The reason is obvious if kalām is seen in its historical context. Kalām arose out of the clash with rationalistic tendencies, the Mu'tazilites, on the one hand, and the Aristotelians, on the other. In other words, the function of kalām is essentially defensive apologetic. Ibn Khaldūn wrote: 'This science provides the means of proving by rational arguments the dogmas of the faith and of refuting the innovators who, in matters of belief, deviate from the doctrine followed by the first Muslims.'¹ But African clergy have never needed apologetics since religion has never been a subject for scepticism. Thus it comes about that the village cleric can tell one practically nothing about God except that He is One, and he will recount weird tales about the life of Muḥammad, the doctrine of the resurrection and after-life. The community seizes upon Islamic myth (which often reflects animistic Arab mythology by association with a Biblical figure) because it performs a role similar to their own mythology in explaining and justifying ritual and social custom.²

The original source in Islamic tradition can generally be divined; but not always, as in the legend of 'the Prophet and the Pig'.³ In addition, old taboos are islamized by being given an Islamic legend of sacralization; thus Mandinka say the *sa-nan* (*Daniellia Oliveri*) must not be cut down because the Prophet was accustomed to pray under its shade. Clergy regard theology as impractical and unrelated to life, but by means of these stories Islamic doctrine is accommodated to their mode of thought and Islamic usages gain the Sudanese soul.

The first pillar of Islamic action, the 'profession' of faith, emphasizes the contrast between belief and unbelief which is something new in the world of ethnic religions. Beliefs about spirits, for example, are not the subject of scepticism. Knowledge of the supernatural world is traditional knowledge. A superstructure of cosmological beliefs and supernatural lore is in fact largely built upon religious behaviour, although such knowledge is not clearly formulated and is known fully

¹ *Muqaddima*, transl. de Slane, iii. 40.

² Most unlikely people relate these legends. A Nupe who knew little about Islam related how, at the battle of Badr, a defeated Meccan leader, on being asked by the Prophet to repeat the *shahāda*, derided it by whistling (cf. Qur'ān, viii. 35). Consequently anyone who whistles will be in danger of the Fire.

³ See below, p. 67.

only by a few initiates. When a new spirit is discovered its nature is deduced from its reaction to the diviner-propitiator (*Mande n'ya-tigi*) and that leads on to the adoption of ritual. Such formulation is therefore related to the traditional mode of life and institutions of the local inhabitants, for it arose out of them and gives cohesion to their experience of the supernatural. But Islam brings a fixed system of belief, not subject to change according to circumstances or locality, formulated by advanced literate peoples, and unrelated to the life of any particular people. Islam introduces an ideological dualism, formerly unknown, between God and devil, good and evil spirits, this world and the next, heaven and hell, and new legalistic categories of prohibited and permitted. It brings an individualistic conception of religious adherence, and sets up tension between 'believers' and 'unbelievers'. These contrasts are acquired through the combination of Islamic practice and oral tradition.

In the process of islamization as in the animist world institutions are adopted before significant change in belief. The Prophet is reported to have said: 'Islam is external, faith is of the heart.'¹ Clergy regard the law books as authoritative for what constitutes a Muslim, and since they are primarily concerned with what one does, not what one believes, ritual action became the standard of differentiation between believer and unbeliever. The Hausa says *kana salla?* or *kai masallachine?* 'Do you perform ritual prayer?' for 'Are you a Muslim?'² Not common belief but common action is the important thing. Ideas orientate themselves around institutions, and thus change the outlook of the family or village unit, and the social unit changes them through the process of synthesizing old and new. Thus people grasp the myths which spread with Islamic institutions, mould them, and even invent them.

The studies of beliefs which follow are therefore incomplete since the ritual action of which they are the theoretical expression is reserved for subsequent chapters. Here it is only necessary to emphasize that although theology and cult are closely related, like myth and ritual in the pre-Islamic stage, performance of the same rites is more significant than common beliefs. This can be illustrated everywhere by the fact that ideas about God and man are tenuous, vague, and associated with elements of pre-existing cosmology. Islam is primarily a distinctive way of performing religious acts, observing specific taboos and social customs.

¹ Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, iii. 134-5. Cf. the clear distinction made between submission and belief in *sūra* xlix. 14.

² Cf. Fulfulde *jūldo*, pl. *jūlbe*, 'Muslim', from *jūlde*, 'to perform ritual prayer'.

(b) The Idea of God

Although no western Sudanese were monotheistic each had a myth of a source of being or demiurge, from which derive myths of how the realm of spirits and mankind came into existence. Mande peoples believe the source of being created twin children (not separate deities, except for cult practices, but complementary principles) from whom sprang all godkind and mankind. Whilst primal deity could not be directly concerned with human affairs the heavenly twin was closely associated with man. Characteristic of Islamic monotheism is the conception of God as illimitable power, excluding all other except spirit beings He has Himself created like angels and *jinn*, and although the polytheism to which Islam is opposed is plurality of gods, not plurality of spirits, acceptance of Islam involves abandoning worship of all beings other than God. If the twin is associated with earth and sky, Allah is always associated with sky, never earth. The earth-god is often simply a *primus inter pares* within a polytheistic complex from which it could not be separated, and therefore could never be associated with Allah. But that equation was possible with the spirit who was not approached by ritual in the old cult.¹ Nupe gave the impression of having had an original dual deity, Sòkó, sky-god, and Gunṇun, earth-god.² Ritual was concentrated on Gunṇun, hence the stress was on the act, Gunṇun ritual, and the personality of Soko was relegated to the liturgical background of other cults. Today belief in Gunṇun has disappeared, but a disintegrated form of Gunṇun ritual persists, whilst Soko has become a synonym for Allah. Similarly Abron (Ivory Coast) in contact with Dyula have identified their sky-god with Allah and relegated their earth-god to a subordinate place. The earth-god is the most important in ritual practice in the old religion, and it is always the name of the god for whom no cult exists which becomes a synonym for Allah. Only in this sense does Islam find a point of contact with the idea of a high-god. A characteristic of Songhay and Hausa is that God has no known name. Hausa *azna* call God *ubañ giji* 'Lord', and Songhay *Iri-koy* or *Yer-koy*, 'our Lord'.³

¹ The process appears to be analogous to that adopted by the Prophet who stressed that worship was due to Allah, high-god of the Meccans, alone. He complains that He is treated no better than lesser gods: "They assign to Allah from the tilth and cattle He has produced a portion, and say: "This is for Allah" (as they assert), "And this is for our associate-gods"" (vi. 137, Bell's translation).

² See Appendix II.

³ Boulnois has suggested that the reason why Songhay have no name for God is because He is conceived as wholly spiritual and has no personality (*byia* or double), or derives from a taboo analogous to that which forbids the pronunciation of a person's name under certain circumstances (J. Boulnois, *L'Empire de Gao*, 1954, p. 81).

Where detailed studies have been made of the cosmology of West Africans, as by Mme Dieterlen of those of the Bambara, it is clear why the conception of Allah does not fit in with previous ideas. The difference of attitude is seen if Mande on two sides of the dividing-line are contrasted. Whilst the Nala of the Bambara is very vague, employed it is true liberally in salutations and exclamations, and often means little more than 'god' (e.g. Nala Pemba), Ala of the Dyula is omnipotent, unique, creator, Lord of all spirits, and sustainer of the law.¹

Although belief in Allah is introduced as a radically new element, to some extent it correlates itself to previous conceptions. Allah is not thought of as personal spirit who invites believers into communion. No dialectic tension is involved in the relationship of God and man, Master and slave, as is set up in the relation between ancestral spirits and earth-bound members of their family. Allah is supreme power, utterly removed from men, but giver of magical powers. To the extent that God is thought of in old animist modes of thought it is obvious that comprehension only goes part way. If He takes the place of pure spirit He is impersonal. Where thought of as *the* God who rewards and punishes, He cannot be approached even by clergy. They are interpreters of His revealed word, not intermediaries. Clergy can tell one nothing about God except a string of attributes.² This is not surprising since it derives from the nature of Islam. Thought about God can only be speculative and that is forbidden. Since He cannot be conceived as an anthropomorphic being, since there can be no symbol of Him, not even mental, nor of His manifestations, and no ritual involving communion, He cannot be conceived at all. But it is not necessary to know anything about God in order to believe in Him. Belief in God shows itself in action, in readiness to perform the rituals and order life as He has ordained. The crucial question in religious change is that whatever was worshipped before, whatever had validity for authorizing sanctions of conduct, must be rejected. Muslims are not consciously adapting old beliefs and there is no question of changing a high-god into Allah at all. The great step is monolatry. This comes as a new departure with the change in the acquired term Allah to acknowledgement that only He shall be worshipped. Then other spirits become

¹ Although, according to L. Tauxier (*Le Noir de Bondoukou*, pp. 251, 266), Dyula invoke the spirit of the sky and the spirit of the earth at the naming ceremony, they have no cult of these spirits.

² Terms for the attributes are both Arabic or formations from their languages; for example, in Hausa *Makaɗaichi*, 'the One', from *ɗaya*, 'one'; *Mahaliɗchi*, 'Creator', *halitta*, 'to create', from Arabic *khalāqa*.

His servants, though they are of greater practical importance in the affairs of man than God.¹

The second half of the *shahāda* is not held in much account in West Africa, except in the new mythology. The Prophet is known under various forms of *nabī*, but synonyms have been formed in most languages such as Messenger (Hausa *ma'aikin Alla*). The Messenger was sent to announce the good news to man, that is, to transmit the Qur'ān, the divine word, and teach men obedience. The cult of the Prophet is not observed apart from a few clerical circles in Masina and Futa Jalon. The *ṭarīqas* make him rather more prominent, but among the *murīds* of Senegal, who have the psychological characteristics of the cult, he is eclipsed by reverence for their founder. Clergy recite poems and the *Dalā'il al-khairāt* in his honour at festivals.

The Book transmitted by the Prophet cannot be dismissed as lightly as the transmitter. Its influence is enormous. It is the basis of life, not through direct study, but through the legal treatises of the Mālikī school. All clergy are imbued with the feeling of the superiority of their Book. For centuries they have been dealing with illiterate peoples and in such an environment the influence of a written book is out of all proportion to the number of those who can read it.

(c) *The Spirit World*

The supernatural world as comprehended by village Muslims is an amalgam of African and Islamic beliefs, but whilst the Islamic elements are universal the African elements vary from village to village. No detail will be attempted since the belief of each people is a study in itself, whilst, in order to see the effect of Islam, it is more important to consider this all-prevailing aspect of life from the point of view of ritual.² Although Islam provides a radically new departure with its

¹ With the idea of God comes that of the devil for whom invariably Islamic terminology is employed (Hausa *Shayḍān*, Mande *Syetāne*) since it is an entirely new conception having nothing in former thought with which to correlate itself. But the devil does not loom large in Muslim thought because of the stress laid upon Allah, leaving no possibility for a dualism of authority, and the words are more commonly used simply for evil spirits.

² See Chap. 5, § 2. The identity of spirit agency and ritual shows itself in the polyvalence of terminology which embraces both concrete and abstract. For example, the Mande word *ntana*, 'taboo' also embraces 'totem', the object of the taboo. Similarly the Nupe word *kúti* has the meaning of spiritual activity and the rite in which that activity is actualized. *Kúti* means an impersonal channel of divine activity and might be translated by 'communication'. The rite is *kúti-gba*, 'doing *kúti*'. The fact that the Nupe have not much mythology may be due to the fact that *kúti* do not have distinct personalities. They are emanations of divinity, and since contact with them is exclusively through ritual, the identification of agent and rite is natural. Similarly with the Mande *la-siri*. *Siri* means 'link', and *la-siri* expresses the fact or possibility of linking up with divinity. It means religion (more particularly the cult of the family-founder and

stress upon the unique God, it does not deny the existence of spiritual agencies for this is affirmed by the Qur'ān, and the question is: What is the relationship between God and spirits whereby the Muslim may know what attitude to adopt towards them?

Islam condemns any form of relationship with the supernatural world that would limit the sovereignty of God. The change brought about by Islam shows itself in ritual. Clergy endeavour to persuade people to cease making offerings to spirits as independent guarantors of sanctions of conduct, and their efforts are directed towards undermining the authority of heads of communal cults. When offerings to ancestors, for example, are discontinued without causing calamity they cease to be thought of as governing their earthly families, and this is a tremendous break in the link between man and the spiritual world.¹ On the other hand, Muslims as much as pagans regard a spirit world as surrealist and propitiation of nature spirits continues among people who have lost ancestral and mystery cults. Former spirits either help God in the government of the world or join the disbelieving *jinn* whom He has created and allows to exist. The good are regarded as intermediaries, executing God's wishes but having a measure of autonomy within the limits He imposes. The relationship between man and the unseen world, therefore, remains an interaction of forces, but the basis has changed from religion to superstitious practice.

Formerly the basic classification was between spirits of the village who were worshipped and those of the bush, to guard against whom magical measures were taken. But following its practice of ideological antithesis Islam splits them into categories of good and bad. In fact, the distinction is between pagan spirits regarded as inimical to man, and Islamic spirits who are neutral. The attitude of the Hausa *iskōki*² depends upon the way they are treated, though Hausa assert in consequence of their adoption of Islam that there are believing and unbelieving spirits, *baḳaḳēn iskōki*, 'black spirits', and *farārēn iskōki*, 'white spirits'.³

the spirit of the soil on which the family was founded, not the ancestral cult, *mā-n'ya-ko*) and also has the concrete sense of religious cult. Divinity can localize and concretize itself in an object and in ritual, or more correctly, in a combination of the two, altar and mask being part of ritual.

¹ Among Serer the line of communication is: (a) *Rog*, supreme God, (b) *Fāgol*, ancestral and nature spirits, (c) *Yal Fāgol*, people in direct personal relationship with a spirit, a quality transmitted by heredity, (d) the ordinary individual. The displacement of the *Yal Fāgol* breaks the whole line of communication.

² Sing. *iska*, lit. 'wind'. They also refer to them as *marau da haki*, 'the wind that ripples the grass'. Songhay also use *hewu*, 'wind', as a synonym for the doubles of possessive *holē*.

³ Similarly in the other languages: Dyula *gyina-berē* (good) and *gyina-dyugu* (bad); Songhay *holē koara* (white) and *holē bi* (black).

Islam brings the word *jinn* as a synonym for spirits in general or de-personalized spirit agencies, without necessarily displacing old terminology. Thus Songhay differentiate between *dyin*, the first inhabitants of the earth who became invisible on the creation of man, and *holē*, created corporeal beings like men but invisible, who play a very important part in human life. Because white *jinn* are admitted, practices connected with them are accepted. The Fulani practice of *surkulle*, casting spells by means of incantation, is justified by claiming that it was revealed by believing *jinn*. Clergy are supposed to enter into relations with these good *jinn* for the purpose of divination and magic.¹

Islam introduces a new category of supernatural beings in angels. They are of little practical importance in religious life because one has no direct dealings with them. The clergy teach that each individual has two personal angels, but among the Hausa at least they have not ousted personal *iska*. In the western cycle some people regard every living thing as having a guardian angel. This may be a transference of the Islamic term to personal tutelary spirits, or an Islamic baptism of the soul every living thing possesses. Angels are employed in Islamic divination lore, as when western clergy address themselves to the angels of the four cardinal points in finding out lucky or unlucky times or days. Mande have adopted the Arabic singular *malāk* (*malāka*, *melege*), but others use the plural (Songhay *almalāhika*: Hausa *malā'ika*, pl. *maklā'iku*), probably because it appears much oftener than the singular in the Qur'ān. Mandinka sometimes call angels *rūhu* (cf. Qur'ān, 70/4, 78/38, 97/4) and Hausa *rauhānī*. Khasonke do not distinguish between *meleke* and *dyina*.² Clergy know the names and functions of the chief angels, and there is general uniformity, because, though spread by oral tradition, there is the fixed body of knowledge in the background.³

¹ One Nupe cleric said all *jinn* (*àlijènuzi*) are unbelieving. Satan is omnipresent and head of all *jinn*. Clergy make use of *jinn* as agents of misfortune in order to get people to desist from sacrificing to spirits. *Jinn* are persons but different from us, invisible to us, though we are visible to them. They do not die, but will die with all living things on the Day of Judgement. He said many clergy consulted *jinn*, though he would never do so himself. He made charms for individuals or houses or farm-plots, and also taught his pupils a protective prayer. Whilst he was talking a man entered the hut who appeared to be afflicted with a nervous disease. After he had gone I inquired what was wrong with the man and was told that one night when approaching his home he saw an *àlijènu* which so frightened him that he became ill and was left permanently afflicted.

² According to Ch. Monteil, *Les Khasonké*, 1915, p. 384.

³ Nupe clerics, for instance, mentioned *Zibililu* (Jibril), messenger of God; Minkayila (Mikā'il) as powerful as Gabriel whose function is to send rain and fructify; Darayilu ('Azrā'il) who carries the departed spirit to God; Walakiri (an-Nakir), a twin angel who tests the faith of

3. THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS DESTINY

Beliefs concerning the nature of man and his destiny after death play a significant role in people's outlook on life. At the present time these beliefs are in a fluid state, even among the long islamized. The animistic strata in which they are embedded is very tenacious and few Islamic conceptions which might take their place have been introduced, with the exception of beliefs concerning the after-life. The personality of man is a sphere to which West African Islam, in spite of the importance of its belief in the survival of human personality, has little to contribute, though Islamic philosophy, which is utterly unknown, has ideas of the soul having much in common with those of West Africans. Eventually these ideas disintegrate, especially among peoples influenced by Western currents, though lingering on in the lore of dreams and witchcraft, and thereby drain the colour out of religious life. Beliefs held by peoples who have been recently influenced by Islam (Nupe in Western Nigeria; Mende, Temne, and Susu in western Guinea) will be outlined first and then those of the more deeply islamized (Mande, Hausa, Songhay, and Tokolor).

Nupe believe that man consists of three principles united in one body or 'form' (*nakà*): *ráyì* (or *láyì*) eternal soul, *èshè* earth-bound soul, and *fifnge* shadow soul. *Ráyì* is translated as 'life' for death occurs when it leaves the body. *Eshè* is personality spirit, closely linked with the body around which it lingers for some time after death and whose form it can take as an apparition.¹ The *fifnge*, which has no connexion with the visible shadow, also called by the same name, travels during sleep and dreams are its actual experiences. A twin has two *ráyis*, one *èshè*, and two *fifnges*.²

the departed (Munkar was not known); Azarasilu (Isrāfil), sounder of the trumpet at the Last Judgement, and Māliki, guardian of the fires of hell.

¹ *Eshè* is also used for a familiar spirit (*bagi nana de 'shè*, 'this man has a familiar'), generally in a bad sense, and is equivalent to the *egà* of a witch (see below, p. 118). Only certain people have this *èshè*. The witch catches the *fifnge*, not the *èshè*.

² Nupe believe animals have three souls: *ráyì*, *nagban*, and *fifnge*. *Ráyì*, as with man, is life which goes to *èku*. *Nagban* is earth soul, but different from man's *èshè*. When a hunter kills an animal or bird he believes that its *nagban* enters his heart (*nagban gábd alo u*, 'the spirit of the lion has entered him'). When he absorbs too much of this spirit power with which animals are charged he begins to rave or is taken ill. To nullify or mitigate the effects hunters are hedged in by taboos and perform special rites. If he shoots ten guinea-fowl he throws two away so that the *nagbans* of the other eight will stay behind. Fishermen do the same after a large catch. Clergy teach that there is nothing to be afraid of from *nagbans* of allowed animals killed in accordance with Islamic rites. This entering of an animal's spirit must not be confused with metamorphosis when the *èshè* of a man and *nagban* of an animal interchange. The *fifnge* of an

An account of what Muslim Nupe believe happens after death shows that Islam has not modified traditional ideas on the personality of man but has influenced those on the after-life. The four elements of man function harmoniously until God calls the *ráyí* when they are dissociated. 'The *ráyí* goes to *èku* (next world) and is afterwards known as *kuchi*, the *èshè* remains around the body,¹ and the *fiŋŋe* goes off into the bush.' Immediately after burial God sends *ráyí* back into the corpse (*ekún*) and twin angels (*Walakiri*) arrive to test his Islam. They open the grave, examine for forty days, and report to God. If the verdict is favourable they return and illuminate the grave, if unfavourable they compress the corpse, and then take the *ráyí* to either the good or bad section of *èku*. The bad section is like a prison where the inmates await sentence; not a place of punishment. The good section is like happy family life on earth. They remain in *èku* until the Day of Judgement, when *ráyí* will return once more to its body until allotted to either *Alijena* (Firdausi), or *Emina* (*Fahannama*). These places of final repose are now uninhabited. On reincarnation, in which all Muslim Nupe and Yoruba believe,³ the *èshè* and *fiŋŋe* join together, but God provides a new *ráyí*. Consequently at the resurrection a large number of *ráyis* will return to the same body, though others said *ráyí* is needed simply to revivify.

Most peoples of western Guinea have a tradition of 'crossing the water-place' (Mende *tewenjamei*). This has been attributed to Islamic ideas, but the *Širāt* is almost completely unknown. Pagan Mende say that when a person dies he goes on a journey for three days carrying a bundle on his head. He reaches a river on the fourth day (third, if a woman) and a ceremony takes place on earth to help him to get across.

animal is like that of a man accounting for its dreams and giving forewarning. In the house where the writer was living in a rather isolated place on the outskirts of Katcha, a dog was very restless and whining throughout the day. That night it was killed by a leopard. Nupe explained that the leopard's *fiŋŋe* had caught the dog's *fiŋŋe* during the day, whence its distress.

¹ A widow is married to her husband's *èshè* until the 115th day after death. A woman's *èshè* may remain linked with her body for a year. It is to the *èshè* and *fiŋŋe* that pagans offer sacrifice whereby the *kuchi* or *exatsuchi* (i.e. departed *ráyí*) is appeased. Many Muslims do the same. Clergy preach against the practice, yet if a dead man's child becomes ill before the fortieth-day sacrifice has been offered they think that the departed man wants him and instruct the family to offer sacrifices to the father's *fiŋŋe*.

² The following expressions are used: *efo kinna*, Day of Resurrection; *efo shiriya* (Ar. *sharī'a* is used in Nupe for 'judgement' only), *efo kiyioma* or *ali-kiyoma*, the Last Day (Ar. *al-Qiyāma*); *efo zunmago*, the Last Day; *efo misun*, the Day of the Brink or Brim.

³ Yoruba hold the same trinity in unity conception of the personality of man: *emi* (= *ráyí*) is the divine element which unites *ara* (body), *okàn* (= *èshè*), and *ojiji* (= *fiŋŋe*). But the simultaneous influence of Islam and the West has led to such confusion that no summary of the material collected can be attempted.

If good he is taken over, but if bad no one on the other side will answer his cry. The good go to *nyanyagole-hu* and the bad to *ngombimeru*, but these words are now falling into disuse and pagans say *Aijene* and *Jahanama*. Inhabitants of both places can visit the living in invisible form. The ideas of islamized Mende are in a fluid state. When a man dies his life (*ndevui*, lit. 'breath') goes. After burial an angel comes and asks his *ngafei* (spirit) three times to whom he belongs. If he answers 'to Muhammad' he will be able to get across the river. All said that before being ferried over debts had to be paid, quarrels settled, and charity given. What has been left undone must be rectified by the earthly family and then the way will be opened for the crossing. If they had lived a bad life a fierce storm will arise and capsize the boat when, some said, the soul is for ever lost, or according to others it is held until all wrongs are righted by the survivors. None mentioned the existence of an intermediate state but of direct transit to heaven or hell. Susu and Temne knew of *lāhira* (in Temne also *ro-kārifi*, 'place of spirits') where the spirit¹ reposes until the Day of Judgement when good and bad will be separated and sent to paradise (*ar-yana*) or hell (*Yahannama*, sometimes *sā'iri*, Arab. *sa'ir*, one of the seven hells). A few mentioned going straight to heaven or hell after the questioning, but since most continue to make sacrifices to the dead, belief in an intermediate state is necessary. Others spoke of going to a place called Abraham after the questioning in order to await the Day.

Mme Dieterlen has described Bambara beliefs.² Each person has two spiritual principles: *ni*, 'soul' and *dya*, 'double', both inherited from the last deceased member of the family. *Ni* is the breath and *dya* the twin of the person and of the opposite sex, the shadow on the ground and the reflection in water. Man has two other principles: *tere* which is disturbed when a taboo is violated and may then become a dangerous force (*nyama*), and *wanzo*, original impurity, which is expelled by the rite of circumcision. Death has the effect of dissociating these elements. The *dya* goes into the water with Faro, whilst the *ni* is incorporated in the altar by the family head. They are reunited in the new-born.

These ideas have been considerably weakened and confused among

¹ Their ideas of the human being were confusing. All said that life (Temne *aygesam*, Mende *ndevui*) went straight to God when recalled. An old Temne said 'If the *aygesam* goes out then there is no more *ɔfəm*' (person). None seemed to have a clear distinction between soul and spirit, though they said everyone is born with a *yina*. This goes off to the dream-world (*ro-morei*) during sleep, and after death remains with the body until the fortieth day when 'the wife cooks food for her husband and after that, his *yina* having departed, she is clean and free to marry again'.

² G. Dieterlen, *La Religion Bambara*, 1951, chap. 3.

Islamized Mandinka. All said that *ni* is the life given by God, not the ancestors. Some said that at birth ancestors sent the *dya* of continuity, but only God can provide *ni*. Some said the *dya* and others the *ni* left the body during sleep and can be caught by the witch.¹ Muslims who maintained ancestral rites said the *ni* went to God and the *dya* remained associated with the altars of the family until reincarnated. Death is caused by *Nala* sending *Darayilu* ('Azrā'il, also called *ni-mina-māsa*, 'chief catcher of souls') who carries the *ni* to Arafo.² The *dya* remains linked with the body until the completion of the ritual sacrifices. Others said it remains until the decomposition of the body, and after that went into water or bush, or joined the *ni*. Most said it had a function to perform on the Day of Resurrection (*Lo-ba*) when it is needed to give form³ to the body. At the Judgement the *ni* is consigned to heaven (*ardjana*) or hell (*dyahanaba*), whilst the *dya* ceases to exist, which presumably means that it returns to undifferentiated spirit.

Hausa believe that all living things have body, *rāy*, and *kurwa*. *Rāy* (translated by the lettered as *rūḥ* though to the majority this word means the archangel Gabriel) is the vital force which animates the body, which Muslims said is the personal spirit which goes to *lāhira*. The *kurwa* is closely connected with the body during life and remains linked with it after death until disintegration. It never dies, but they do not believe like the Nupe that it is reincarnated. The *kurwa* is the double of a person which travels in dreams and plays an essential role in possession (*bōri*) when the 'soul' of an *iska* enters and dominates a human being but without displacing that of the possessed. *Kurwa* then is life-force incarnated in all living things, man, animals, insects, and vegetation.⁴ It may be thought of as a double. It is not the apparition (*fatalwa*) of a dead person, nor is it the shadow (*inuwa*), though it can be caught by a witch from the shadow,⁵ nor is it the soul-substance used by the *bōka* in magic. It can be translated 'earth soul' but has nothing to do with the metaphysical abstraction the word 'soul' evokes. Whilst *rāy* is

¹ *Moŋo n'ya nyini*, 'to seek [to capture] the soul of a person', 'to bewitch'. *A dya tege-le mbè*, 'his vital spirit is severed', i.e. he is at the point of death.

² *Al-A'rāf*, the place between Heaven and Hell; cf. Qur'an vii. 44.

³ The human body is 'form' which is not determined by its chemical composition and is not to be equated with matter. The soul of a man is not contained in his body but in his 'form'.

⁴ *Chiyawan nan tana da kurwa*, 'this grass is full of vitality', *gonakinsu ba su da kurwa bana*, 'their crops are not looking healthy this year', *tun da aka haife shi ba kurwa*, 'he has been ailing ever since he was born'. The expression, *yaron bashi da kurwa*, 'this boy has no *kurwa*', means that he is weak. 'This boy has no *rāy*' would mean that he was dead.

⁵ *Maye ya kama kurwansa*, 'the wizard caught his *kurwa*'; *ba shi da kurwa*, 'his vitality is low', said of someone who is weak, declining, i.e. who is bewitched.

abstract principle which can exist without a body, the *kurwa* has the form of the body it inhabits. It inhabits all of it, not any particular part.

When a person is about to die his *iska*¹ deserts the body and is said to wander about until it finds its way to the city of *Jan Gari*. When God snatches his *rāy* (*Alla ya karɓe ransa*) death ensues. The *kurwa* hangs about the body until burial (or disintegration), when, according to Muslims, it too goes to Allah, or, according to Māguzāwa, to *rijiyan rāy*, 'the well of life'. It does not return and it is not the apparition (*fatalwa*). Anyone who died through a witch catching his *kurwa* will not rise on the day of resurrection (*ran kiyāma*) because body, *rāy*, and *kurwa* cannot be reassociated. The Hausa use *lāhira* (Ar. *al-ākhirā*) for the place of the departed spirits, for the future state in a general sense, and for the intermediate state before the Day of Judgement. Clergy speak of *barzahu* (Ar. 'ālam al-barzakh) as waiting place of departed spirits.

Boulnois has described Songhay beliefs which are similar to those of Hausa.² *Hundi* is the vital force animating the body and has nothing personal about it. The *byia* ('shadow', which Boulnois translates *double*) is the spiritual part of man, his true personality. It is not pure spirit since it has form and is therefore intermediary between spirit and matter. It enters the body of the baby at the seventh-day naming when it becomes a person.

Old ideas have not in any way been displaced among the thoroughly islamized Tokolor. The vital force is *fittāndu* (north-western Fulbe *woñki*, Soninke *yoñki*) and the shadow-soul *mbēlu*. The *fittāndu* (or *woñki*) which goes to the next world is impersonal and is absorbed into deity. The *mbēlu* enters the body on the eighth day after birth, but about its fate there is diversity of belief. Some believe it suffers the fate

¹ The *kurwa* may be contrasted with the personal tutelary spirit (*iska*). The *kurwa* is the inner motive force of a person or thing, its vital principle, whilst the *iska* is a supernatural principle exterior to the being or thing. At birth one is given a personal *iska* of the same sex which remains with one throughout life and also another of the opposite sex which normally leaves after marriage (not to be confused with the two guardian angels—an ill-integrated Islamic introduction). Their duty is to protect against other *iskaki*. An Islamic introduction is the division of persons according to their *iskas* into fire, wind, earth, and water, and only the clergy can divine to which group one belongs. Thus if fire marries water the result is disastrous, but fire can marry wind, earth with water, and like with like. The permanent *iska* must consent to one's marriage, and a betrothed person is watched for signs that it is unhappy. If the fiancé experiences something unusual he will be afraid that their *iskas* are incompatible, that, as he will say (*kafadanmu bai zama daya ba*), 'our shoulders are not one', and the engagement will be broken off.

² See J. Boulnois and Boubou Hama, *Empire de Gao*, pp. 78-89.

of the body and others that it goes either into the sky or wanders about the earth until the resurrection of the body. But all agree that it can leave the body during sleep when it is exposed to seizure by witches (*sukunābe*). Fula of Futa Jalon say that it is the *mbēlu* which goes to Paradise or Hell, but this appears to be the same as *fittāndu* and *woñki* farther north.

The ideas of the nature of man help towards understanding the meaning of God for the African. God cannot be conceived in terms of personality since He is pure Spirit. Spirit is not non-material but the uncreated, or, in positive terms, divine and eternal as contrasted with created. The first of creation is the heavenly twin, complementary masculine and feminine principles. A human being is created when spirit (masculine principle) fertilizes a soul. The Nupe *rāyi* is not a personal soul, but participation of the person (given individuality by his *èshè*) in a world of spirit. Death comes when God takes the spirit into Himself, the consequent dissociation of elements means that the person ceases to exist, though the soul remains until it is refertilized by Spirit when it becomes again a 'person'.

The dissociation, but not disappearance, of these beliefs begins with decay of the organized cults, yet they remain tenacious in folklore. Religious parallelism explains their persistence and they play a great role in ideas concerning divination, possessive spirit cults, and witchcraft. Islam never developed in its adherents understanding of a distinction between soul and spirit which is essential for the African view of the world. The legalistic Islam of African clerics has nothing to contribute on the personality of man.¹

Islamic ideas all acquire relate to the next life. These are examination whether a Muslim or pagan, reckoning-up of good and bad deeds, Day of Judgement, and heaven and hell; all of which were basic in the early teaching of the Prophet. Islam exerts its greatest influence upon belief through after-death ritual and this inevitably makes a great difference. Death comes to be thought of as a break in the continuity of life, whether the soul is thought to be asleep in the grave or in some form of intermediate state before the Day of Resurrection. The continuous

¹ It is interesting to recall that Islamic philosophers have speculated along lines which approach these beliefs. The general belief of Islam is that man has only one soul, but philosophers, noting the two words *nafs* and *rūh* used in the Qur'ān which are derived from the animistic strata of the Arabs, have postulated that there are two. Others write of the Spirit of Watchfulness (*rūh al-yaqdhā*) keeping man awake whilst in the body and causing him to sleep and dream when it goes away, and of the Spirit of Life (*rūh al-hayāt*), giving life to the body, whose departure causes death.

tradition or eternity of the African family is snapped, for the possibility of rewards and punishments, of members being consigned to different quarters of purgatory and eventually to heaven or hell, means that families may be separated.

Apart from these regular elements of Islamic eschatology a further belief concerning the presages of the Day of Judgement, surrounding the name *Mahdī*, remains to be mentioned. This belief, by throwing up men who claimed to be the Mahdī, has left its mark in history. In the revolutionary atmosphere of the nineteenth century, characterized by the formation of theocratic states, devastating wars, and penetration of Western powers, conditions became favourable for such manifestations, but they were limited in scope and effect and did not gain the masses. For the last forty years active manifestations have been almost completely absent, and though the Mahdī idea has by no means died out it is not an important factor in the Islam of West Africa.¹

4. THE EFFECT OF ISLAM UPON IDEAS OF MORALITY

The same parallelism between Islam and the old religion is seen in the sanctions for ethical conduct as in other aspects of religious life. The ethical code of the past was built up through the ages and formed part of the communal heritage. Moral standards were sanctioned by the ancestors and gods who ensured their observance. The moral range was relatively limited, being confined to the groups united by kinship and initiation. Conformity to the code of the group was essential for the well-being of society.

The adoption of Islam implies a radical transference of the values upon which the unity and continuity of the group depend from the old authorities to God. Islam introduces a legal morality of universal application whose sanction in practice is the books of the law. In theory it tolerates no authority other than its law in the government of individual and social life. A legalistic morality is characteristic of the old order and the new and the transition does not appear to offer insuperable difficulties. Legalistic morality, as conduct or duty, is essentially social. The African moral consciousness was formed under the influence of the spirit world. The bond of kinship inspires fear (of incest, for example) for the welfare of the community, and punishment was not primarily directed against the individual but was impersonal. The Islamic moral consciousness is also communal, though its range extends to all who acknowledge its law, but in addition its morality, with

¹ See Appendix III on present-day Mahdī expectations.

its doctrine of reward and punishment, is much more personal. The individual can obtain salvation apart from the group.

Collective conversion, whatever the way it comes about, means a change in the psychological outlook of the social group, manifesting itself in readiness to accept new sanctions and changed behaviour. This change cannot be described in simple categories of addition and subtraction. Islam displaces cults of ancestral conciliation and initiatory societies, consequently the sanctions of conduct deriving from the past lose their religious basis. The great change Islam brings lies in its exclusive claim for the supremacy of its system of moral conduct. Kin privileges and taboos, although in only a vague sense do they stand in the way of an Islamic ordering of society and powerful as they remain, are superstitions in the eyes of Islam. Though Islam displaces certain sanctions for which it has substitutes, others connected with social relationship and conventional taboos remain. Yet the attitude towards them may be modified since they no longer have a religious sanction. The important thing is that Islam now provides the sanctions of conduct, the other elements become social custom. Practical ethics, therefore, are coloured by the legal maxims of Islam, but rest upon a double basis: approved local custom and universal Islamic law amalgamated as the ethics of the community.

So far there is little evidence of strain in maintaining two standards. Old and the new are reconciled in everyday life. But in practice a third determinant of conduct makes its appearance—the will of the spirits. Formerly the spirits were an integral part of religion, but after islamization and the decay of cult associations they no longer fulfil a true functional role in community life. Spirit practices are illegitimate, and their influence may be a disturbing factor. The Hausa *iskōki*, for example, influence not merely *bōri* initiates, but all people of the village, and the spirits may indicate a line of conduct which flouts both the ethics of the community and Islam. In practice it is Islam with which they come into conflict, hence it is mainly its upholders who find themselves in difficulty, and clerics and sometimes territorial chiefs are torn by conflict when they recognize the reality of the spirits and are unable to prevent their wives from participating in *bōri* rites from fear of the consequences. Territorial chiefs are confronted with problems when spirits disapprove of new economic measures, or, in Hausaland, because of the close connexion between *bōri* and organized prostitution.

Old mechanical ethics persist within the Islamic framework of life, and genuine Islamic piety combines with gross superstition. Wrong

behaviour is thought to be supernaturally punished. Charms placed on crops work the same way, whether they are Muslim or pagan, in bringing calamity upon the thief. Supernatural forces are neutral in essence; whether the result is good or bad depends upon what you do or avoid doing.

Belief in predestination and resignation to one's lot is characteristic of the religious outlook on life, but too much stress should not be placed on this for predestination in Islam does not preclude the exercise of man's will and it is resignation *after* the event which leads to the ejaculation, 'God has written'. Before the event no one knows what has been decreed, therefore enterprise is not necessarily inhibited. This attitude to life does not in practice find itself in conflict with beliefs in divination or the employment of protective charms.

Actual behaviour in relation to the moral sanctions of Islam could only be discussed in relation to particular peoples, or sections of society, as, for example, the contrast between clergy, traders, and cultivators in one village, but a few generalizations may be made. To the clerics it is by keeping the law that man is saved. There are, therefore, different standards for clerics and people. The learned are absorbed in rigid legalism, content with the practical observance of the law, but the generality are not expected to keep it. What the clerics seek is such consistency of character and conduct as will distinguish a Muslim community. Islamic taboos are accepted without difficulty. Here animistic ideas help Islamic law, for it is a realistic conception to the animist that indulgence in certain kinds of food or actions can call down supernatural wrath. They are also an important element in the achievement of Islamic solidarity and religious self-consciousness. You have only to hear Muslims shouting *Kāfir!* at a child who is urinating while standing instead of squatting to realize that such a taboo forms one of the distinguishing marks between a Muslim and a pagan. These sanctions are the same for all Muslims and constitute a bond between peoples. In this connexion one should note that the Islamic restriction of moral obligations to the *umma* does not differ essentially from the former attitude which restricted them to the kin-group or members of a fraternity. Islam extends hers to all Muslims but not to all men.

Islam brings in the question of values. Its morality is fixed, hence it becomes a question of whether existing ideas and actions conflict with the ideal standard. The problem arises as to how infractions are to be dealt with. Under custom they were punished by the exercise of either ritual, moral, or legal sanctions, or a combination of these. If a man

transgressed the ethics of the family the ancestral spirits punished him. Islam denies this and asserts that it is God who punishes even though a spirit is the instrument. The old morality was bound up with community life and infractions were dangerous to communal well-being. Islamic law is not bound up in this way to the community, and many elements find difficulty in being accepted into the body of approved custom; thus in practice different standards of value are accorded to different parts of the code.

Islam specifies categories of wrong actions. In the eyes of the clerics omission of the prayers may be more sinful than idol worship:

In heaven three men will be wanting. . . . The first is the man who gave half his attention to the worship of idols (*tsāfi*). . . . The second is the man who was a bastard, and had no father; his mother followed a crooked path. The third is a man who excelled them all in evil, he refused to pray five times.¹

In practice the community forms its own attitude. There is universally accepted positive or negative behaviour such as the obligation of alms-giving or the prohibition on eating pig. Then behaviour disapproved by Islam but retained by the people as part of the body of social custom. Although Islamic taboos will generally be observed, any prohibitions or obligations which are opposed by custom will not be accepted. Finally, there is behaviour like prostitution which falls into an indeterminate field which society condemns, but about which it is not prepared to take action. Conflict appears when an Islamic state takes upon itself the duty of order and punishment. In the conflict those instincts which prevent the formation of a new order are called forth. Hence all theocratic states have degenerated and the representatives of Islam have made no attempt to purify the moral law of magical elements.

Idea of the Sacred. A primary idea of religion is the distinction between sacred and profane. The sacred are persons, things, or actions having a special relationship with the supernatural, whilst the profane have no such significance. Everything in any way concerned with religion is regarded as infused to some degree with supernatural power. For the purposes of the comparative study of religion the words *mana* and taboo are now linked with this question of holiness. Holiness is the power (*mana*) attributed to sacred persons, things, or actions that would ordinarily be regarded as natural or profane. The word taboo is used for any prohibition resting on a magical use, anything reserved for a

¹ From a Hausa funeral song in C. H. Robinson, *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, Cambridge, 1896, pp. 10-11.

supernatural being. The one term implies the other. There is no essential relationship between morals and religion in this distinction between sacred and profane, it is simply a question of a man's or a thing's relationship to the supernatural.

Into the world of such ideas of holiness Islam brings something new. The God of Islam is entirely self-contained and beyond all intimate relation with His creation, therefore the idea of holiness has gone in the development of Islam as a higher religion. Islam was ritualized and secularized, sacred and secular are one, subject alike to divine law. This is the teaching brought to Africa, but along with it came the continuance of the old idea in popular Islam. The ordinary Muslim, needing to maintain relationship with the supernatural world, had imbued the term *baraka* with these qualities of a link between God and man. So in theoretical Islam the idea of holiness has completely disappeared, whilst practical Islam has islamized the forces under the term *baraka*. The principle is relationship with the supernatural: the holy man is recognized as one near to God; the formula of the amulet is primarily the word of God, even though magical formulas and symbols irreconcilable with Islam are used. It is surprising that the idea of *baraka* has gained no essential hold upon Negro Islam. It is powerful in the Islam of North Africa, eastern Sudan, and among Moors of the Sahil. Islam was brought to West Africa by people who were saturated in the *baraka* idea, yet the Muslim Negro has not adopted the word for the mysterious forces he recognizes as everywhere present.

Two aspects based on the idea of the holy have therefore to be considered: the introduced Islam conception of legalistic morality, and the persistence of old ideas of the holy. In official Islam the holy has become a negative quality. God is supreme will and power. His authority must not be limited by ethical ideas of His holiness. All that God wills is permitted (*ḥalāl*) and all He does not will is tabooed (*ḥarām*), therefore what is *ḥarām* is no longer the holy. Consequently the Muslim does not need to draw the distinction between good and evil as such, but between what God allows and what He prohibits and this gives a particular cast to moral sanctions. To the Muslim religion means a law which controls and regulates man's whole life. In Islam the 'clean' eclipses the 'holy'. In Islamic ethics, that is the ethics of the divine will, the 'clean' cannot mean the tabooed or forbidden (*ḥarām*) but what God commands, consequently there is no essential difference between ceremonial law and moral law. In practice the distinction has become wider than just the things God allows and those He prohibits though these were

the root ideas. Thus the term *ḥarām* is applied to anything of which the community disapproves.

All this came ready-made to the Sudan and these Arabic terms were introduced into African languages. Mande have made a distinction in pronunciation between the two senses: *harāmi*, 'sacred thing, &c.', and *harāmu*, 'forbidden thing'. To Hausa eating pig or worship in a *matsāfa* (heathen temple) is *ḥarām*; ceremonial purity and what is lawful is *ḥalāl*. The terms are extended outside the strictly Islamic sphere as when a Hausa says of his *kan gidā* (family totem), 'the hyaena is *ḥarām* to me'. Native terms for 'clean' and 'unclean' are applied to the old tabooed things. Thus the animal protector of the clan may become an object of impurity and consequently the legend of origin changes. Hausa use *tsarki*, 'purity', almost exclusively for ceremonial cleanliness; *tsarkake* is 'to perform the ritual ablutions', though sometimes it is used for 'purity (cleanliness) of heart'. Normally the phrase *shi mai-tsarki ni*, 'he is a holy man', means he is a good Muslim, he keeps all the rules.

Temne use their old terms: *ra-sam*, 'holiness, *ma-sam*, 'taboo', *der-ɔ-masam*, 'sacred place', *wop ma-sam*, 'to hold to ceremonial law'. Pig is *ma-sam*, 'sacred', rather than 'unclean'. The story which accounts for this is characteristic of the whole western cycle. When the Prophet during his *hijra* became thirsty a pig guided him to a place where he could find water, and he decreed that henceforth it should never be killed.¹ There is no evidence that these people once regarded the pig as sacred, though it is found as a family totem. The pig is taken to be the totem of Muslims and a myth has been formed to account for the taboo which follows the normal lines of an African totem respected because of the services it once rendered to an ancestor, in this case, not the ancestor of a kin-unit, but the ancestor of the Muslim community. The deeply islamized, however, regard the pig as unclean. Another story explains that pigs are taboo because the Prophet 'Īsā turned children into pigs, hence, in order to avoid the rather remote possibility of cannibalism, their flesh is forbidden. Similarly Temne say that monkeys are *masam* because they were human beings metamorphosed by the Prophet for violating Friday prayer.

¹ This story has spread into the Northern Territories of Ghana but the writer found no trace of it in the central Sudan though Meek gives a parallel; 'The Bagirmi reverence the wart-hog, because a wart-hog once revealed the presence of water to a Bagirmi chieftain and his army who were dying of thirst' (C. K. Meek, *Northern Nigeria*, i. 177). P. Marty gives another story of the Prophet and the pig which circulates in the Sahil of Nyoro; see his *Soudan*, iv. 273-4.

Institutional Islam

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CULT

ALTHOUGH Islam does not have a sacerdotal body it has its clergy. Islamic society is a religious society and leaders of the cult and interpreters and teachers of religious law acquired a role analogous with that of European Middle Age clerks. The terms 'clerk' and 'cleric' are employed throughout this book in order to avoid the associations of the French *marabout*. The clerk is primarily a lettered man, but *marabout* has a special meaning through its North African association with the cult of saints, a cult which is exceptional in Negro Islam. It was natural for the French to carry over North African terminology because *maraboutisme* is most apparent among Moors of western Sahara and Sahil, and they employ the word by extension for any cleric, teacher, or devotee. English usage of *mālam*, Hausa term for cleric derived from Arabic *mu'allim*, 'teacher', is better since it simply means 'lettered man', but today it is applied indiscriminately as equivalent to 'mister' and is unsuitable for use over the whole region for a special class.

The cleric stands apart from the laity but only as a lettered man for the profession is open to any free man (except members of certain caste groups) who has received sufficient training to be recognized. He performs specific religious functions, leads in prayer, teaches the young the rudiments of Islam, performs the first sacrifice at the great feasts, names the new-born, conducts the marriage ceremony, washes the dead, and leads the funeral prayers. No function of village life is complete unless he is present.

Clergy fall into three main groups—those appointed for public worship, teachers, and masters of canon law—though the differentiation is only one of function for a village cleric combines all three. The terms for cleric are loosely applied and rarely indicate his degree of learning. *Alfa* is widely used throughout the west and among Songhay as a general term.¹ Mande peoples use *karamoro* ('literate', Ar. *qarā'a*, 'read' and *mo-ro*, 'man') and *mōri-ba* (lit. 'great Muslim') indiscriminately for

¹ Many suggestions have been made as to the origin of the term: Arabic *al-faqīh*, *khalīfa*, or *mu'allif*; Mandinka *arfan*, *alfan*, *alfa*, 'chief' or 'master'; and even *alif ba*, a literate.

one who is barely literate and one fully trained in Islamic law. Tokolor and settled Fulbe are more discriminating. They call any cleric *modibbo* (Ar. *mu'addib* ?), the next grade is *tyērno* (pl. *sērenhē*, *sērnāhē*), and the highest *fodyo* (= *faqīh*). *Mōdi* is the Soninke term for cleric, but one who has had some training in law is a *fodia*.

The clergy are loosely organized. The chief regional cleric is the *imām* (west *almāmi*, centre *limān*) of the district Friday mosque. In a Muslim area he is appointed by the political chief and in a pagan area by the Muslim community. Each mosque has an *imām* appointed by the community (parish or quarter), who is the chief cleric of the village, and each family has its family cleric. After a death it is the latter who washes the dead, whilst the *imām* conducts the funeral prayers. Once an *imām* has been elected or designated he is there for life. In the Near East an *imām* can be displaced by the *wakīl* or warden of the mosque, but this functionary does not exist in West Africa and once elected it is almost impossible to get rid of an *imām*. When he gets too old to exercise his functions his *nā'ib* officiates for him. In many regions, especially where the Muslim community lives among pagans, the function becomes hereditary in one family, and the *imām* of the Friday mosque becomes the administrative chief of the Muslims, responsible to the political authority. When such a group achieved independence the *imām* became the political chief as in Futas Toro and Jalon.

Among Moors are clerical clans,¹ whose role within the tribal community is that of an hereditary order of clergy. This development was in part a Berber reaction against their inferior status *vis-à-vis* Arab ruling clans, since it gave these sections a special status. Besides Moorish tribes clerical clans are characteristic of Soninke and Tuareg. The latter call them *inislīmēn* (sing. *aneslem*, Islam-ist) and they are distinguished by wearing the muffler (*taghilmūzt*) with a white forehead bandage. Succession to religious offices such as *imām* and *qāḍī* is also hereditary (in some tribes the son succeeds, in others the mother's brother) even though the heir may be totally ignorant of Islamic law.

Little variation is found in the general pattern in Negro society. Hausa use *mālam*, 'master', for any cleric, but if they want to imply a distinction they will employ any suitable adjective: *ḵaramin mālamī*, 'small clerk', *babban mālamī*, 'big clerk', *mālamīn fāda*, 'royal chaplain', and *mālamīn ḵirgi*, 'friar of the cowhide'. The latter will be seen on the roads carrying his undressed goatskin prayer-rug (*būzū*), ablution jug

¹ French *tribus maraboutiques*. Moorish Arabic *zwāya*, sing. *zāwī*. *Mrābiṭ* (pl. *mrābiṭīn*) is a general term for cleric.

(*buta*), bookbag (*gafaka*), and pen-case (*kōrami*, *alkurdu*). In Hausaland in connexion with mosques of towns and villages are districts like English parishes within which the position of the *limān* of the Friday mosque is almost like that of a beneficed clergyman. He receives marriage and burial fees, customary gifts and thankofferings at naming ceremonies, recovery from illness or return from a journey, and presents from each family on festival days. Other clergy are under him and have to obtain his permission before performing marriages and burials.

In Nupeland the clerical class is known as *ènà māñzi* (*māñ*, 'cleric', from Hausa *mālam*). Each district mosque has one of each of the following: *māñko* (lit. 'chief cleric') the chief *imām*, his deputy the *náyémi* (Ar. *nā'ib*), *madiu* (?), and *kitābu* (reciter). These all have functions at the *wázùn* or Friday Qur'ānic interpretations. Towns are divided into wards within which one cleric is recognized as ward-head. Village clerics are under the district *māñko* and pay him a percentage of their fees. In Futa Jalon the parish is called *misidi* and has an *almāmi* at the head. The most important clergy are the *fodié*, legal experts, the local heads of mosques are the *tamsīr* (Ar. *tafsīr* = *mufasssīr*, 'commentator'), then the *serīm*, and the *tabē* charged with teaching.

A characteristic of Islam is its mobility. The mosque is only exceptionally a building. In villages, nomad camps, and town sections it is simply a rectangle marked out with branches, stones, or low mud wall. In towns every local group has its mosque, though they are not easy to find since they are generally a room in a house or courtyard or raised square in the street. In some villages the square has a fence of reeds and a shelter on one side to provide shade. They are often very small and for congregational prayer only the *imām* enters the square and the rest range themselves behind him. Mosques built of mud and cement are found in towns. From the point of view of construction they fall into groups of local and European styles. The characteristic Sudan architecture reaches its highest perfection in the mosque as the largest single building. It is built in mud with sloping walls, projecting pylons, and crowned with pointed merlons. Beside the building is a quadrilateral tower, diminishing upwards to terminate in a point. The roof is held up with broad pillars which leave narrow dark aisles, allowing only sufficient room to spread out a sheepskin. In front is a large courtyard, surrounded by a wall, where the congregation gather for Friday prayer. This style does not extend into Senegal (except parts of Futa Toro) where today the characteristic mosque is a hut of masonry or wooden boards with a roof of corrugated iron. Western Guinea has two main

types, the Fulbe round reed hut, sometimes of great size as at Timbo, and the square, thatched Mandinka type. Besides mosque styles deriving from native techniques European influence has led to a bewildering variety of constructions in which all kinds of modifications and incongruities have been introduced.

Each Friday mosque¹ has its *imām* who leads the Friday prayer and reads the homily standing on a block of wood which takes the place of a pulpit. The muezzin is called *lādan* (Ar. *al-ādhān*, 'the call to prayer') in the centre and often *bilāli* in the west, from Bilāl, the Prophet's negro muezzin.² The muezzin's office is voluntary, even in large towns, but he receives alms at festivals. He generally leads the responses after the *imām* in a loud voice so that those at a distance and the women in the *ḥarīm* enclosure can hear. Among the Mende the megaphonist is called *ālmāmi fangoi*, '*imām* of clear utterance', and the call to prayer is by drumming, big drums being conspicuous objects on verandas of mosques. Only mosques in large towns have minarets and the muezzin calls the prayer from beside the mosque. The office of sacristan is filled by old men and women. They sweep, shake mats, fetch water for ablution, and attend to lamps. They are rewarded for their services by occasional gifts.

In African rites, although there is a cycle of common practice beyond which deviations are not possible, each priest or other master of ceremonies differs in interpretation and procedure. Islam, however, introduces an utter rigidity in its cultic practice. Every detail is laid down for ritual prayer and strict clerics claim that variation renders prayer invalid. In spite of this the average Muslim is content that clergy alone should perform prayer regularly and correctly. Few accomplish the exterior actions without making mistakes and most only observe the Friday prayer. *Ṣallā* and *ṣalāt*, when used without qualifications, normally refer to collective prayer outside the town at the two '*īds*', but they are of course used in their ordinary sense for the five canonical prayers. Ritual prayer is distinguished from informal prayer, e.g. Nupe *jīn sāla*, 'to perform *ṣalāt*', and *ba ādūwa*, 'to pray' (Ar. *ad-du'ā*); Hausa *yi salla*

¹ Friday mosques are everywhere known by a corruption of Arabic *jāmi'* or (*masjid al-jum'a*): Mandinka *dyāma*, Wolof *dyuma*, Soninke *missi-dyuma*. The term for roofed mosque is generally derived from *masjid*: Mande *misiro*, *misidi*; Tuareg *temezsid*; Teda, *moshidi*; but for oratories only Hausa has adopted Arabic *muṣallā* under the form *masallachi* and spread it among neighbours. Other peoples formed 'places of prayer' (Mande *sali bolō*) or 'places of prostration'.

² But a vast number of other terms have been formed: Futa Jalon *salli*, Songhay *almudiyin* (Ar. *al-mu' adhdhin*) and *kati-koy*, 'caller', Dyula *wata-ri-ba'a*, and Hausa *mai-kiran-salla*, 'he who calls to prayer'.

and *yi addu'a*. Mande Dyula use *syeri*, lit. 'prostration' for 'ritual prayer', and a mosque is *syeri-bolō*, 'place of prostration', similar to Arabic *masjid*. The five prayers are divided into two cycles, the first consists of the dawn prayer only and the second comprises the other four. Thus when a cleric says 'I have accomplished the second prayer', he means the third. Prayers are known by corruptions of the Arabic names, for example:

	Nupe	Fulfulde	Nupe	Hausa
ṣalāt aṣ-ṣubḥ	àsuba	julde fadyiri (Ar. al-fajr)	dawn	dawn
ṣalāt aṣ-ṣuḥr	zùrù or azafari	julde sallifana	1.30	2.00-3.00
ṣalāt al-'aṣr	asàri or lāsàri	julde lassara	3.00	4.00-5.00
ṣalāt al-maghrib	mágari or magaruba	julde fitiri ¹	7.00	7.00
ṣalāt al-'ishā'	lishia	julde safako (Ar. shafaq)	8-9.00	8.00-9.00

A feature of West African Islam is the Qur'ān interpretation session known by a corruption of Arabic *wa'z*, 'sermon, exhortation' (Mande *wādyu*). These are given in large mosques every Friday (and every day during Ramaḍān) after the *khuṭba* has been delivered.² Among the Nupe for the *wazuṇ*, the first reciter (*karātunjinchi*) who knows the Qur'ān by heart, recites a passage, then a *mān* known as *wazuṇjinchi*, 'preacher', reads or recites it again and translates roughly into Nupe; and a megaphonist (*goga*, lit. 'interpreter') repeats his translation in a loud voice. Yoruba call the recital *wāsi*. The *alfa* and one or more *ajanāsi* (co-interpreter) read a passage in unison. Then the *alfa* (called *oniwāsi*) translates (interprets) in Yoruba, and the third (*arowāsi* or megaphonist) repeats the translation in a loud voice. The Hausa perform *wa'azi* (or *wa'atsu*) before and after Friday prayer in mosques, public places, or streets. The cleric (*mai-wa'azi*) recites a section and then interprets in Hausa. They say they are forbidden to recite and translate verse by verse. Sudanese Tuareg (e.g. Igellad) meet after Friday prayer for *tiberdyant* when a cleric reads and comments on a passage.

Mosques are little frequented on weekdays except in Ramaḍān, and during the rains prayers are often sandwiched together. Every Friday,

¹ Ar. *fiṣr*, prayer of the breaking of the Ramaḍān fast, the evenings of Ramaḍān, and by extension applied to the sunset prayer.

² Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions the practice at the 'id ceremonial when he was in Māli in A.D. 1352. On the *muṣalla* or praying-place outside the town, 'The ṣalāt and *khuṭba* were performed. Then the *khaṭīb* descended from the block and sitting down before the sultan delivered a long discourse which was interpreted into their own tongue by a man holding a spear. It consisted of exhortation (*wa'z*), admonition, and eulogy of the sultan', ed. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, iv. 410.

however, the mosques are packed for *ṣalāt al-jum'a*. Nomads, who cannot normally fulfil the requirements regarding Friday prayer except in permanent settlements, will come into town if anywhere near. This enthusiasm for Friday prayer is due to the stress placed on this occasion as a symbol of Muslim solidarity and its significance as a state function, whilst the fact that it is based on a direct command in the Qur'ān (lxii. 9) carries weight. In North Nigerian states it is a great ceremonial occasion with processions between the chief's house and the mosque.¹ At the prayer the elaborate hierarchization which characterizes the procession is avoided. In one emirate the leader occupied the *mihrāb*, behind him in the centre of the first row was the *sarki* (chief) who had the *alkāli* and other clerics on his right and the *magāji* and other officials on his left. The chief *imām* and members of the royal family mingled with commoners in the second row.

In western Sudan after the muezzin has finished calling the prayer the *almāmi* enters and sits on the *mumari* (Ar. *minbar*), a wooden block which serves as seat and pulpit. Three muezzins then mount the tower or other calling-place and call the prayer one after the other. When they have finished the *almāmi* mounts the block leaning on a staff, and reads the homily for the day in two sections. Then he descends, recites the call, and leads the rite of two *rak'as*. In western Guinea and elsewhere the *khuṭba* is translated into the local language. In Masina region it is recited in Arabic and each phrase translated by the muezzin or an *alfa* into Songhay, Fulfulde, and Soninke.

In the eastern Sudan the English introduced Friday as a day of rest, but the clergy of Northern Nigeria referred to the legal maxim, 'It is blameworthy to abstain from work on Friday in imitation of Christians and Jews', and resisted its introduction. Government offices therefore take Sunday off and their clerks are released on Friday merely in time to spruce themselves up to attend prayer which anyway is held late in the afternoon.

Women, regarded as being in a constant state of ritual impurity, are not allowed to enter mosques. One cleric said, 'They are ignorant and may be unclean'. The Law merely prescribes as blameworthy their attendance at Friday prayer unless 'they are no more women', that is, when menstruation has ceased. In most parts a separate hut or enclosure

¹ In Northern Nigeria the prayer is held very late between 2 and 3 p.m. (a practice H. Barth noticed in 1851, *Travels*, ii. 486). In Bida it takes place after 4, depending on the time the *etsu* elected to arrive. The clergy know the conditions (cf. al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā*, i. 113-16) but cannot get the rulers to observe them. This practice no doubt derives from that of the Moors who observe the prayer about 3 p.m. when the *zawāl* becomes obvious.

(called *jarirdu* in Futa Jalon) is provided for them where they can hear the megaphonist. Old women are often present at the festival prayers outside the town and among nomads women frequently join in prayers behind the men.

Almsgiving. *Zakāt* formed part of the taxation system of the Islamic states of the Sudan, but under European governments its function as an obligatory state levy has gone and almost everywhere has become confused with *ṣadaqa*, voluntary alms, though a distinction is made in that *zakāt* refers to the voluntary, but socially unavoidable, contribution, levied by the clergy, whilst *ṣadaqa* means 'alms' in a general sense. Payment of *zakāt* at the 'Ashūrā and end of Ramaḍān is regarded as an obligation and when the season approaches the clergy remind their people of the necessity of purifying their sins by offering alms; and it is they who, in default of a regularly constituted Islamic authority, now collect and share out the offerings.¹ Clergy are dependent upon almsgiving, for the institution of *waqf* or *hubus* is unknown in West Africa.²

The word *ṣadaqa* has spread widely and has played a great role in desacralizing the conception of sacrifice. In animist religion sacrifice is an offering to a divinity to please, propitiate, and sustain its energy, and, when consumed by the worshippers, constitutes a form of communion. Acceptance of Islam leads to a complete desacralizing of such ideas, for Islam has no idea of sacrifice in the African sense. Mande call sacrifice to a divinity *sū* or *soro* (if a bloody victim). To this all pagans subject to Islamic radiations have added the idea of *ṣadaqa*. This is an offering made in the name of Allah or the ancestors which is not consumed by the offerers but given to poor, children, and clergy. The idea of almsgiving to those in need which can be offered by anyone thus comes alongside direct offerings to a divinity for its own use which can only be sacrificed by a priest. This usage gains ground until, when they cross

¹ In many parts the amount required from each family is announced at the 'Ashūrā but not collected until the end of Ramaḍān when it is handed over to the *imām* of the *jāmi'* who announces the contributions from the pulpit block and the general lines of distribution which is made after the prayer. In other places the contribution is still given to the chief since he is responsible for the poor and travellers and supports clergy and teachers.

² The Sudanese system of land tenure made the constitution of any *waqf* on landed property impossible, consequently there are no funds from which mosque officials can be paid as in most Islamic countries and they are entirely dependent on fees and alms. The *ta'rikhs* refer to *awqāf* in urban centres in the past. Askiya Muḥammad 'made a gift to the *jāmi'* at Timbuktu, to constitute a *hubus*, of a chest designed to hold sixty copies of the *Qur'ān*'. In Jenne mosques received revenues from property for the support of students, poor, and mosque officials, but today these have all gone, and the institution lingers on only in Timbuktu (cf. P. Marty, *Soudan*, ii. 99, 102-3, 273-4; and for the past, *T. al-Fattāsh*, p. 110/204) where *alhubusi-hu* means house or property left in perpetuity for the use of members of a particular family.

the boundary-line into Islam, *sū* must cease altogether, since, in the eyes of the clergy, it is idolatry, sacrifice to divinities other than God. The word *sū-ni-ke-baga* ('offerer', 'sacrificer') is used by Muslim Mande with the derogatory sense of 'pagan'. The term *soro* is not transferred to the ram sacrifice at a naming or the Great Feast since there is no sense of communion with God. The old ideas do not go quickly. There is a reaction against beer-libations and 'red' offerings,¹ but offerings (*šadaqa*) to ancestors continue for some time. In western Guinea offerings of the staple food during mourning may be regarded as food for the dead, but the actual sacrifice goes to the clerics, whilst the other food, including the animal which is not 'offered', is for feeding the family and visitors. But *šadaqa* among Muslims of the Sahil and Sudan means only 'ceremonial almsgiving'. It may be thought to help the dead, though more especially the living, like any other *kaffāra* (expiatory offering), but it is not regarded as food for ancestors. There are two forms of *šadaqa* in Islamic societies, the common element being that it is given in the name of God and not consumed by the offerers: that offered at the great Islamic festivals and to sanctify family events at naming, circumcision, and death; and that which seeks to attract divine approval and protection upon man and his activities such as *šadaqa* to ask for rain and in connexion with the stages of seed-time and harvest.

2. THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

Adoption of the Islamic calendar is an important factor in breaking the link with animist cults and in the consolidation of Islam. In agrarian communities the cult cycle is closely geared with the solar year, but the Islamic year of twelve lunar months is an artificial imposition. Towns-men and traders are free to adopt a new cycle, but agriculturists maintain two calendars: the lunar year for the Islamic cult and civil life, and the solar year for all that concerns the agricultural year. The Arabic names of the Islamic months are adopted, though most peoples have an alternative version. This is either translated, or descriptive of the events of the Islamic year, or a mixture,² or, as with Mande, the Islamic lunar months are given the names of the solar year months, taking as point of departure the *sunkālo* or hungry period before harvest and the fast

¹ Bambara ritual sacrifices fall into two main groups: *da la sōni*, 'door sacrifice', for the ancestors; and *boli sōni*, 'fetish sacrifice'. The first require 'white' victims, the second 'red' or 'black', and the latter, above all, are regarded by the clergy as incompatible with profession of Islam.

² For example, in Songhay Ramaḍān is *haume*, 'shut mouth', Shawwāl is *ferme*, 'open mouth', Dhū 'l-Qa'da is *hinanjem* (Arab. *haniyya*), Dhū 'l-Ḥijja is *tyibsi*, Arab. *kabsh*.

month of Ramaḍān. Consequently they apply the same name to divisions of the year which are entirely different.¹ The week is a division introduced by Islam, and the names of days are everywhere adaptations of the Arabic names.² Parts of the day have received new terminology associated with Arabic prayer times, and the day is reckoned from one sunset to another; thus Hausa *daren jumma'a* is our Thursday night.

The first event of the Islamic year is the 10th night of Muḥarram (the 'Ashūrā)³ to which African practices connected with the New Year have cohered, although, since it is continually moving round the year, it has been disconnected from the agricultural season. The pious fast for from one to three days and most prepare for it by a short fast, ablutions, and a purge to purify the body. Symbolic rites to ensure prosperity during the new year are universal. When the sun has set everyone eats all he possibly can and poor people are invited to participate, for no one must go empty that night so that a prosperous year may be ensured. Hausa have the custom (*jūya bai*) of providing every member of the household with a fowl or goat's head which each must eat with his back turned to the others. Peoples of Senegal, Guinée, and Sierra Leone cook and eat the dried head and feet of the ram slaughtered at the Tabaski feast (an animist survival—linking the new year to the old and drawing the blessing of the sacrifice into the new year?). Susu (and many others) make an offering (*la kayanye*) at the time of the last prayer

¹ The following are the Mande solar months applied to the Islamic months (for details see Delafosse, *La Langue Mandingue*, i. 287-9):

1. <i>dyōmbende</i> : mustered slaves (December-January)	Muḥarram
2. <i>dōmba ma kono</i> : waiting for the great day	Šafar
3. <i>dōmba</i> : the great day	Rabī' I
4. <i>lā siri folo</i> : commencement of the binding or pregnancy (of the earth)	Rabī' II
5. <i>dyibi ni fana</i> : meal of the bringing-forth	Jumādā I
6. <i>la siri lā ba</i> : end of pregnancy	Jumādā II
7. <i>kā mū dō</i> : day of the lightening of the heavens	Rajab
8. <i>sunkālo mā kono</i> : waiting for the <i>sunkālo</i>	Sha'bān
9. <i>sunkālo</i> : moon of deprivation	Ramaḍān
10. <i>minkālo</i> : moon of drinking	Shawwāl
11. <i>dōnkyi ma kono</i> : waiting for the <i>dōnkyi</i>	Dhū 'l-Qa'da
12. <i>dōnkyi</i> : threshing	Dhū 'l-Ḥijja

² For example in Mandinka: *alādi* (or *lahadi*), *tene*, *talāta*, *araba* (*laraba*), *alāmisa*, *aridyuma*, and *sibiti*.

³ The following are the main terms employed:

- Wolof: *Tamharit*; Tuareg: *Bianu*;
 Fulbe: *ƴombente*; Mandinka: *gyōmbende*;
 Tokolor: *herran* and *harom*; Soninke: *haranē n'tiale* (10th of the moon of Haranē);
 Hausa: *Sallar a-chi-a-koshi* or *chika chiki*, 'festival of full bellies';
 Songhay: *dedowo*, *dedew dyyinger*.

of the year, and on New Year's Day young men and girls immerse themselves in a river seven times. Many believe that on this night God counts all earth-dwellers and designates those who are to die during the year. With the Islamic lustrations is associated a customary ceremony of purification by fire. Songhay, after ablutions, pass and repass over a small fire shouting, '*Yesi hirow*' ('The New Year has entered').¹ After the feast many (Hausa, Nupe, Mandinka, Dyula) have torchlight processions and contests between age-groups.² The explanation a Nupe cleric gave was that Nimrod had decided to put Abraham to death. Abraham threatened him with hell-fire, but Nimrod was not turned from his purpose and he was cast into an immense pyre, but survived without a hair being singed.³ A Mandinka cleric in Sierra Leone carried the custom back to Noah and the flood, saying that the day God evaporated the water and the ark grounded was 10th Muḥarram.

When day comes special prayers are offered in all mosques. In Bida (Nupe) they begin with the ceremony of 'the opening of the book'.⁴ This consists of readings from the 'Book of the Years' (*takāda eyaze*) which gives prophecies for the year. The days of the week are assigned to prophets in this order, Adamu, Mamadu, Yakubu, Nuhu, Ayubu, Musa, Isa, and the year is known after the prophet on whose day it begins. One *mān* reads in Arabic, the *māṅko* (chief *imām*) translates into Hausa or Nupe in a low voice, and the *goga* shouts it out in Nupe. After that the *māṅko* states the amount each one has to pay as *sadaka* (= *zakāt*) each month. Then follows the homily (*hutuba*) and a prayer by the *imām* in Arabic, translated into Nupe, and shouted out by the *goga*. Prayer is made for all departed Muslims from Adam onwards and departed *etsus* of Bida. Then follows prayer for the reigning *etsu* and his people, for rain, deliverance from famine, and so forth. The whole ceremony takes about an hour, after which the *etsu* rides in procession and visits the tombs of his predecessors in the three compounds through which succession to the throne rotates, and at each compound the *māṅko* prays for the dead *etsus*.

¹ P. Marty, *Soudan*, ii. 79; A. Dupuis, *La langue Songoi*, p. 129.

² Nupe, *wōriwō*, 'waving flaming torches', Hausa *jifan wuta*, 'throwing fire', or *worwo* (*wawuwau*). This seems to be falling into disuse among Hausa and the Tuareg of Air, but is celebrated with immense enthusiasm by Nupe, although they claim it was only introduced with Islam. They call Muḥarram *etswa narwut*, 'the month of the torches', or *etswa wōriwō*.

³ Cf. Qur'an, xxi. 68-69. Ch. Monteil (*Contes Soudanais*, 1905, p. 177) relates a similar story for 10th Ramaḍān, which is probably a mistake for 10th Muḥarram, in which Nebuchadnezzar is the tyrant.

⁴ Hausa *būde takarda*. In some Hausa states the ceremony is performed by a special court official (*maga-takarda*) at the entrance to the ruler's compound.

The next festival is the Prophet's birthday¹ on 12th Rabi' al-Awwal (19th in Hausaland). This is little celebrated by the people except in Bornu, but clergy gather in the mosques and hold recitals of the *'Ish-rīniyyāt* of al-Fazāzī, the *Takhmīs* of the same poem by Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Muḥib, and the *Dalā'il al-Khairāt*. In Futa Jalon the *karamokos* keep it as a day of fast and prayer and recite poems in Fulfulde in honour of the Prophet.² Dyula keep it as a festival day when young men parade with arms and war equipment 'to guard the Prophet from his enemies'. The 26th Rajab, 'when the Prophet accompanied by an angel-guide visited the seven heavens and seven hells', is observed by some clerics and is a recognized school holiday. On the 14th Sha'bān prayers are recited for deceased kinsfolk but graves are not visited.

Ramaḍān is preceded by two days of festival (cf. Shrove Tuesday). The fast³ is observed fairly strictly, for African life is so open that it is difficult to conceal the fact that one is not fasting. The daily prayers, neglected throughout most of the year, are more strictly observed. Hausa have a saying (*azumin jemage*) for those who observe the fast but neglect the devotions, which has acquired proverbial significance for half-doing something. Many are assiduous about both because they believe that thereby sins committed during the year are remitted. The 27th day, Lailat al-Qadr, generally confused with the Night of Power, is observed by clergy who say that God spends this night regulating the affairs of the world. Since it is the night the Qur'ān descended, many spend it reading the Qur'ān in relays. In the evening ablutions are performed and incense burned to speed the *jinn* on their way to prison. A Mande feast of the virgins has been attached to this date. In western Guinea children sing for presents, young men and maidens parade the streets, singing and dancing all night.⁴ They carry around 'floats' with representations of animals, boats, and the like. In Hausaland during Ramaḍān the commentary of Jalālāin is read and translated by two

¹ Mandinka and Dyula *dō-mba ma*, 'day of the great dance', *anabi dō*, 'the Prophet's day'; Moorish Arabic *mūlūd*; Masina region *mūlūd dō-mba*; Soninke *modinu n'iale*; Tuareg *gāni*; Kanuri-Teda *gāni* and *lebi lorwel*; Hausa *sallar gānē* or *sallar tākūtaha*; Wolof *gāmu*; Songhay *almudu dyyinger*, *hay dyyinger* (birth festival) or *hay tyidy* (birth night).

² P. Marty, *Islam en Guinée*, p. 336.

³ 'Fast' is generally a corruption of Ar. *ṣawm*: West Mandinka *suŋgo*; Dyula *suŋ*; Hausa *azumi*; Songhay *haume* and *hamme*. Ramaḍān is 'the month (moon) of the fast', in Dyula *suŋgari*; West Mandinka *suŋ-karo*; Mende *sungalui*; Hausa *ɓwatan azumi*; Nupe *etswa azun*; Bozo *moriye suŋ'keu*. But we also get Wolof *kori*; Hausa *ɓwatan kishirwa* (thirst month).

⁴ Temne *mada* (dance of the young) and *ɓwɓupa*; Dyula *kururi* (one sleeps not).

*mālam*s, disposing of two *ḥizbs* each day,¹ and during the last night the whole Qur'ān is recited (called *tukuri*). In the entrance hut of the chief cleric a group of from five to ten read a *ḥizb* in turn until the sixty are completed. People drop in and leave alms in a calabash placed in the centre of the circle. In Nupe land in 1952 it was performed in three places in the large village of Katcha and at twenty in Bida.

The new moon is anxiously awaited for if it is not seen the clerics will insist on another day of fasting. Its appearance is greeted with bursts of firing, beating of drums, and general rejoicing.² About eight o'clock in the morning the festival prayer (*ṣalāt al-ʿīd*, Songhay *sarty-ille*) is held at a special praying-place outside the town (Hausa *masallachi yīdī*) where the men assemble by quarters. The *imām* leads a prayer of two *rakʿas* in a low voice which is shrilled out by another cleric, then mounts the pulpit-block which has been carried from the mosque and recites a two-part *khutba*. In Nupe land this is translated from Arabic into Hausa and then into Nupe, for having studied through the medium of Hausa they seem unable to translate directly. In western Guinea they have an unusual practice at both *ʿīds*. The *almāmi* standing on the block is covered with a white cloth (or a number of cloaks) like a canopy, under which he remains for half an hour reading sermons aloud and interpreting. Temne said he was communing with Muḥammad, Gabriel and the spirits of the dead. When the cloth is removed the people press upon him to rub their hands in his sweat and wipe it over their heads and bodies. Mende said there was power (*kpayā*) in the sweat, and when they rubbed it on themselves they got *ngauwanda* ('grace'). Many return home from the prayer by a different route from the one taken when going. This, they say, is in accordance with a tradition that the Prophet ordered the first believers to perform the prayer outside the mosque in order not to be surprised by the infidels, and to return by different routes in order not to seem too large a group of people. Strict clergy disapprove of the drumming and dancing that goes on throughout the night.

¹ In Hausaland any commentary is known as *Jalālīni*. Recitation of *ḥadīth* was a feature of the religious life of Morocco which penetrated sahilian centres. *Tadhkirat an-Nisyan* (p. 17/26-27) says that in Timbuktu 'the recitation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Bukhārī during Ramaḍān in the *qaṣba* of the pashas was an old custom'.

² This festival (Ar. *al-ʿīd aṣ-ṣaghīr* or *al-fitr*), like the Great Feast, is known as *salla*; particular terms are: Tamahaqq *tisendar*, *amūd* (Air); Tokolor *korka*; Wolof *kori*; Soninke *suṅkaso n'tyale*; Western Mandingo *suṅkaro salī*; Dyula *miṅgare tulu*, 'feast of the moon of drinking'; Fulbe *julde sumaye*; Songhay *ferme dyinger*, '(mouth-) opening festival'; Hausa *karamar salla* or *sallar azumi*; Nupe *sālagi*, 'little feast'; Yoruba *irun awe*, 'prayer of the fast'.

Before the most important feast of the year, *al-'id al-kabīr*¹ on the 12th of Dhū'l-ḥijja, towns are thronged with sheep. They are particular to ensure that the ram fulfils the legal specifications otherwise the benefit may be lost. Hausa say the best animal is a ram with black rings around the eyes,² and when it has not been blessed with these characteristics they anoint its head and feet with henna and put kohl round the eyes. On the festival morning the men process to the 'id plot outside the town for prayer and homily as at the previous festival. When this is finished the drum sounds and they bring a ram to the *imām* who, reciting 'In the name of God, God is great, O God accept this offering', cuts its throat and the drum sounds again.³ Then everyone returns home, slaughters his ram before his house, and distributes it among relatives, clerics, and poor. The bones are carefully buried, but head and feet are kept for the 'Ashūrā. The skin is often tanned and dressed for use as a prayer-rug. North African beliefs regarding the utility of the sacrificial ram on the Last Day have spread throughout the Sudan. Songhay say they support the bridge Širāṭ on their backs, but the majority believe that all the rams turn into a large horse which carries you over the Širāṭ. Unlike other feasts there is little drumming and dancing, and the three days are spent resting and visiting friends.

3. THE TRAINING OF THE CLERIC

The training of the cleric begins in the Qur'ān schools which are still very numerous.⁴ Teaching is not a profession exclusive of other occupations. Teachers are not paid fees, for teaching is regarded as a voluntary pious work,⁵ though they receive gifts from the pupils'

¹ Tuareg *tafazkē* and *aramat*, Ullimmeden Tuareg *afasko*, *tafsko*, 'spring' (πάσχα, Heb. *pesah*), adopted under the form *tabaski* by Soninke, Wolof, western Fulbe, and Mandinka, alongside their own terms for 'the Great Festival': Mandinka *sali-ba*, Hausa *babbar salla*, Nupe *salaké*, Soninke *bano n'tyale*, Khasonke *bana salo*. Corruptions of *daḥiya* also appear: Hausa *sallar layya* or *lāhiya*, Fulfulde *jūlde laiha*, Yoruba *ileya*. Other terms are Songhay *tyibsi* or *tyusi* (*dyinger*) from Arabic *kabīh*, 'ram'; Fulbe (Futa Jalon) *duki* and *jūlde donkiri*, Dyula *dō-ṅgi-ma*, 'day of songs'.

² *rāḡō mai-kwalli* = Ar. *kuhl*, or *tūzālī* = Berber *binzūla*.

³ In the Sudanese states it is always the political chief who gives the order for the first sacrifice.

⁴ In Katsina province of Northern Nigeria where the population numbers a million and a half, which means 150,000 children of school age, there were 4,864 Qur'ān schools with 30,340 pupils in 1950. In addition, there were 2,009 schools with 9,896 pupils of a grade beyond pure recitation. In French Northern Cameroons where Muslims number 260,000 there are only 5,000 children in Qur'ān schools.

⁵ Shaikh Ḥamad of Masina, however, fixed teachers' fees at 500 cowries per *ḥizb* memorized or 30,000 cowries for the whole Qur'ān. If the parents were unable to pay this amount he defrayed it from state funds (Ch. Monteil, *Djénne*, p. 151).

parents at festivals and specified stages of memorization. Most teachers augment their income by cultivating or following a profession. Some are traders for whom teaching has an economic value in assuring them a clientele, others hold a public office as *imām*, judge, or village chief; whilst amulet-making forms an appreciable part of the income of all clergy.

A characteristic of Islamic education is its individualism. Anyone who can recite the Qur'ān and write Arabic characters is qualified. He begins with a class of his own children and neighbours naturally send theirs along. Most schools are one-man affairs, but the master who teaches beyond the stage of mere recitation hands beginners over to older pupils. Women teachers are found mainly among Moors in Senegal and Mauritania. There are two grades of schools, distinguished in Hausa as *makarantar allo*,¹ 'tablet-school', and *makarantar ilmi*,² 'law school'. In the first children are taught to recite the Qur'ān without understanding. The second embraces all further studies. Generally an *ilmi*-school merely teaches details about the performance of *ṣalāt*, prayers for occasional offices like funerals, some exposition of Qur'ānic texts, and perhaps the study of a book of law.

In Futa Jalon four categories of study are distinguished:³ *dyangugol*, reading; *windugol*, writing; *firugol*, exegesis, explanation of the Qur'ān in Fulfulde; *fennu* (Ar. *fann*), higher studies. *Dyangugol* is divided into three parts, *alifba*, the alphabet; *sigi*, pronunciation and spelling; *finedi-tugol* or *rindingol*, joining of letters, sounds, and words; and reading. Writing is studied concurrently with reading.⁴ The Qur'ān is learnt in six sections. Beginning with the first *sūra*, they turn to the last and work backwards until they reach the second. Higher studies begin after the Qur'ān is learnt by heart. *Firugol* involves *ka' bē* (or *to-bē*, a translation of *tawhīd*), study of the divine unity, and *tafsīr*, Qur'ānic exegesis in Fulfulde. *Ka' bē* is based on the *Ṣughrā* of Sulaim al-Awjālī; and some teachers include the *Burhān* of As-Suyūṭī. Along with theology goes the study of *tafsīr*. Hausa 'ulamā are strongly opposed to the trans-

¹ The terms for teacher and school are frequently derived from Ar. *qara'a*, 'to recite'. *Allo* is Ar. *al-lawḥ*, 'slate'; Mandinka *walaṛa*, *walaha*; Fulfulde *hallu-al*, *wallu-al*.

² Songhay: *tirahu* ('place of writing') *koran* and *tirahu tyitab* (i.e. *kitāb* = law book) or *tirahu alem* (Ar. 'ilm).

³ See P. Marty, *L'Islam en Guinée*, pp. 349-55.

⁴ The Sudani script is derived from that of the Maghrib from which, however, it is distinguishable. Adopted in the days when the Maghribī was still less differentiated from Kufic than it is today, it has remained little changed, whereas the Maghribī has become somewhat more elegant. Calligraphy was not cultivated as an art in the Sudan any more than in the Maghrib and the Sudani script is very clumsy, angular, and irregular.

lation of the Qur'ān,¹ but it is translated orally into local languages at the *wa'z* sessions, in which case it is called *tafsīr*. In Futa Jalon, however, manuscript translations of the Qur'ān exist in Fulfulde and with the help of these Fulbe give their pupils more intelligent instruction than in most parts of West Africa. *Firugol* ends with an examination by the principal *karamokos*. One of them reads sections of the Qur'ān and the candidate translates and comments. If successful he is entitled to be called *tyērno*.

Those who succeed in passing *firugol* can proceed to law proper (*fennu*) which includes study of the *Tuhfat* of Ibn 'Āṣim, *Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zaid, and the *mukhtaṣars* of Khalīl ibn Ishāq and al-Akhḍarī, with commentaries on these works. A few study *tawhīd* in as-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn*, Sulaim's *Kubrā*, and other books. Arabic is studied by means of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī and the *Burda* of al-Būṣīrī, and grammar in *al-Ajurrūmiyya* and sometimes the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik. Tradition is rarely studied as a separate subject. The few who attain this degree are called *alfa*, which is a high title only in Futa Jalon.

It will be seen from the titles of the law books that the prevailing *madhhab* is that of Mālik; the only exceptions being Shuwa Arabs and Indian Aḥmadiyya who are Ḥanafīyya, and some Bornu jurists, said to follow the same school. In the medieval Islam of the Sudan zone reverence for the law assumes an importance out of all proportion to actual observance. Islam is the written law. Hausa clerics so prize the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalīl that if one mentions *al-Kitāb* they think the reference is to Khalīl's treatise and not the Qur'ān. In Nilotic Sudan reverence for Khalīl is tempered by Ṣūfism, the one not being more important than the other, but in western Sudan, even though all clerics are linked with a *ṭarīqa*, only the Law is revered.

From the nature of their training and reading it is not surprising that their religious compositions are stilted, unnatural, couched in legalistic language, and entirely unoriginal in thought. 'Uthmān dan Fodio, his brother 'Abd Allāh, and his son Muḥammad Belo were copious compilers. Thus 'Uthmān dan Fodio's tract² on the conditions under which

¹ When a translation into Hausa was suggested they uttered a shocked, 'It will lose all its *baraka*'. Sultan Sa'īd Njoya of the recently converted Bamum, on his return from Mecca in 1947, decided that the law would be better understood and applied if the Qur'ān were translated into Bamum. The following year a passing Moorish cleric forbade the translation. This question divided the Bamum into two camps before its translation was finally decided upon (see Cardaire, *Contribution à l'étude de l'Islam noir*, I.F.A.N. 1949, p. 92). A previous Sultan Njoya at the beginning of the present century invented a script for writing Bamum. This was at first an ideographic alphabet, then became syllabic, and finally quasi-alphabetic.

² Entitled *Sirāj al-ikhwān fī aḥamm yuḥtāj ilaihi fī hadhā 'z-zamān*.

the waging of war upon bad Muslims is permissible is based upon the work of al-Majhili, which in turn is a compilation of citations from earlier authorities. Among the writings of al-ḥājj 'Umar are a commentary on at-Tijānī's *Rimāḥ al-ḥizb ar-rahīm* (on the duties of the affiliated Tijānī), written in 1261/1845, *Suyūf as-Sa'id*, *Safinat as-Sa'āda*, and a *ta'shīr* of Fazāzī's *al-Qaṣā'id al-'Ishrīniyyāt*. The literary output of Sudan Muslims is impressive on paper but in fact their writings show no originality and slavishly follow the form and terminology of the books they have assimilated. Given the nature of their training, which stresses only the necessity for establishing precedents, this lack of originality, regarded as *bid'a*, is natural.

4. THE INFLUENCE OF ARABIC UPON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

A noteworthy aspect of the spread of Islam is the interrelationship between linguistic and religious factors and here as elsewhere its spread has been accompanied by the absorption of an Arabic vocabulary. The mediating factor, however, has not been Arabic-speakers but the law books learnt by the clergy. This means that Arabic has remained an exotic means of expression. Few colloquial and daily-life words seeped into African languages and when talking in Arabic to higher clergy stilted legal terminology has to be employed for them to be able to understand.

This limited literary diffusion may be contrasted with the part played by Arabic in North Africa, Mauritania, and Nilotic Sudan. Throughout Mauritania a vast linguistic revolution led to the substitution of the Hassāniyya dialect of Arabic for Berber and Soninke. Apart from Moors Arabic is only spoken by Arab tribes in central Sudan. Even upon people in contact with Arabs spoken Arabic has had little influence except among urban Songhay and in Bornu and Waday. On the other hand, the literary language of the law books has enriched the languages of Muslims with hundreds of religious, political, commercial, and abstract words and expressions. The difference this has made is evident when the means of expression at the disposal of Wolof, Mande, Dyula, Songhay, and Hausa are compared with those of animist tribes speaking related languages. The last two are especially rich in words of Arabic origin. Common vocabulary for anything to do with Islam provides a link between languages that have no linguistic relationship. The need for wider means of expression became felt everywhere after the establishment of European rule. Through the work of Christian

missions the main African languages were reduced to writing and enriched with a wider vocabulary, but the effect of European languages upon those of Muslims is restricted to new needs which do not include religion, and that term covers the whole of traditional life.

Another effect of the influence of Arabic has been to stimulate the writing of African languages in Arabic characters, although its lack of vowels makes the script unsuitable.¹ Tokolor and Fulbe in Futas Toro and Jalon, Hausa, Songhay, and even Wolof, often correspond with each other in their own languages. One reason for the depth of Islam in Futa Jalon may be ascribed to the composition of poems in Fulfulde, for which they have formed a special prosody, whose purpose is to mediate the main features of Islam to the illiterate masses. These versified sermons were preserved by the adaptation of Arabic characters to their sounds through the use of special diacritical points. 'Uthmān dan Fodio also composed verse sermons in Hausa² but his initiative was followed by few others. Because of their exaggerated reverence for Arabic Hausa clerics set themselves against the practice of reciting vernacular religious poems and thus stifled this means for spreading religious ideas. It is noteworthy that Fulbe adapted their own language for new religious expressions and employ few Arabic words and phrases compared with the vast number Hausa introduced into similar poems.

Arabic borrowings do not disturb the linguistic equilibrium for they are transformed in accordance with phonetic laws governing African languages. Thus double consonants are separated by vowels and final consonants given a vowel ending, sounds 'ain and ghain disappear, *kh* changes to *k* and *sh* to *s* (*seku* for *shaikh*), *s*, *ṣ*, *d*, *dh*, *ḍ*, *z*, *ẓ* coalesce into one sound. Although words may be considerably transformed (Hausa: *gaskiya* for *ḥaqīqa*, 'truth', and *aḷlōwa* for *al-wudū*, 'ablution') few undergo the phonetic changes characteristic of Bantu languages in forming verbs and plurals (e.g. Fulfulde *sobore*, 'spur', Tunisian Arabic *shābūr*, becomes *ṭoborēde* in the plural), and in general the Arabic original is recognizable.

A new range of ideas has been assimilated through the formation of

¹ The only alphabet in existence in West Africa before Arabic was the Libyco-Berber Tifinagh of the Tuareg. All others, excepting graphic and symbolic signs (such as are described by S. de Ganay, 'Graphie bambara des nombres', *J. Soc. Afr.* xx (1950), 295 ff.), were invented within relatively recent times.

² Vernacular poems by 'Uthmān and others are given in C. H. Robinson, *Specimens of Hausa Literature*, 1896. Hausa employ the term *ajami* (Ar. 'ajamī, 'ajamiyya, 'outlandish') for vernacular texts written in Arabic characters. It is also used for bad Arabic, cf. Spanish *aljamiado* in both senses.

calques, words and phrases formed by mechanical translation of Arabic expressions. This is especially evident in languages like Hausa and Songhay which have the instinct of composition: Hausa *Allah yayi masa jinkai*, Songhay *yer-koy ma hinni ga*, 'May God have mercy on him', said after mentioning someone who is dead. Also vernacular words gain new significance through the influence of Islamic ideas. From Hausa *ɗaya*, 'one', derives *Makaɗaichi*, the One, and *kaɗaita*, to acknowledge the unity of God; similarly *sulmiya*, 'to fall off', is employed for 'to apostatize'.

5. THE INFLUENCE OF THE PILGRIMAGE

The influence of the pilgrimage begins early in the history of Islam in West Africa and Arab chroniclers have left many accounts of pilgrimages made by rulers of Sudan states since that of Baramandana of Māli in the eleventh century A.D. Apart from rulers ordinary pilgrims visited the holy places throughout the centuries.¹ Sudanese with Mecca as their goal were faced with a formidable journey. Practicable routes fell into two groups: northern across the Sahara to the Mediterranean coast and eastwards to the Red Sea. The Sahara crossing offered no great difficulty provided the pilgrim could join a caravan, but it was costly and could not be taken by the poor unless they travelled as servants or slaves of rich pilgrims or traders. The diversity of routes can be seen from a map of Saharan trade-routes. Western Moors travelled to Morocco, especially after the foundation of the Tijāniyya *ṭarīqa*, since this gave them the opportunity of visiting Aḥmad at-Tijāni's tomb at Fez. Others crossed central Sahara from Timbuktu, Gao, north Nigeria, and the Chad. Hausa preferred to take the route to Tripoli through Agadez, Ghat, and Ghadames because it was fairly safe and they could make their way by trading. The only practical way for people travelling on foot was the eastern route, but it was much more arduous and dangerous, and the robbery, enslavement, and massacre of pilgrims was a common event.²

¹ Few of these remained for study in Islamic centres. African *riwāq*s in the Azhar do not include one for western Sudan. They comprise: the *Maghāribā* (North Africans), *Barābra* (Nubians), *Sannāriyya* (eastern Sudan), *Ḥabarta* (Ethiopians), *Barnawīyya* (Kanuri and Hausa), *Ṣulaiḥ* (Dār Sila and Waday), and *Ardoṣor* (Darfur). The number of West Africans studying at the Azhar never seems to have been great (in 1952 there were 105 from the A.O.F. and about 50 from Northern Nigeria). The full certificate of 'alim can only be given to Egyptians, but foreign students receive a certificate testifying that they have attended the requisite lectures. White West Africans were known as *Shanāqta* (from Shinqṭ in Mauritania) and Blacks as *Sūdān*, or, particularly in the eastern Sudan, as *Takārtr* or *Fallāta*.

² Bruce gives an account of the massacre in the Nilotic Sudan of a caravan of Takruri

The nineteenth century was a difficult period for pilgrimage because it was the most disturbed in West African history. Apart from internal wars pilgrim-routes were affected by the crisis the whole Islamic world was undergoing through European penetration. No established religious leaders dreamt of facing the perils, but the fact that ordinary people did attempt it, although they might be enslaved or drafted into Mahdist armies on the way, shows that pilgrimage is an urge from which they could not be deflected by the dangers of the way. When Africa settled down under the control of European powers the position changed and the pilgrimage became easier to accomplish than ever before. New ways were opened by sea and the poor-route eastwards became safe after defeat of the khalifa 'Abd Allāh in 1898. In the early days the lure of Mecca governed the direction of irreconcilables to the new régimes. Tokolor, fleeing before the French advance, migrated eastwards to Sokoto where they took part in the *jihād* against the British, then moved on to settle eventually in Nilotic Sudan and the Hijaz. But since the first decade of European rule the motive for eastward migration has been religious.

The pilgrimage is costly to the rich and arduous to the poor so naturally the number who go are limited. It is not especially prized in Senegal and Marty wrote that out of 1,385 schoolmasters only twenty had accomplished it.¹ Hausa and negroid Fulbe of Northern Nigeria are keener than any other West Africans, a psychological factor distinguishing them from eastern Sudan Muslims. Hausa, of course, are an enterprising people to whom it provides an outlet for their love of travel and trade. Many feel that it is virtuous to live and die near the holy places. Thus the Tijānī khalifa Alfa Hāshim (d. 1934) and 'Umar Gambo (d. 1918) settled in Mecca, where at least 4,000 West Africans are permanently established.

The principal route is through Maiduguri, Fort Lamy, Abeshe, Ginena, Fasher, Nahud, to El-Obeyd from which the train carries them to the Red Sea. This was formerly the route for heavy camel-borne traffic but today the majority travel by lorry. Still the writer has seen many walking, accompanied by women and children, and leading a donkey laden with their possessions. Pilgrimage is undertaken by the

pilgrims led by Muḥammad at-Ṭawāshī ('the Eunuch'), one of the Negro eunuch guardians of the Ka'ba who had been allowed to visit his homeland and was returning via Sennar and Shendi (J. Bruce, *Travels*, 1805, vi. 400-1, 477). M. at-Tunīsi shows that a regular yearly pilgrimage caravan went eastwards from Waday when he mentions that in 1841 it had to proceed by Awjala and Egypt owing to the strained relations which then existed between Waday and Darfur (*Voyage au Ouaday*, p. 236).

¹ R.M.M. xxviii. 31.