

Islam and the African World

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The Islamic religion is now a major factor in human life and its impact is felt not only in Arabia, where it started out and then spread to the four corners of the earth, embracing a significant portion of humanity, but also in Africa where it has in many cases displaced an indigenous belief system whose world view, though similar to Islam in certain respects, varies widely from it.

This section of the chapter deals with the Islamic world view. It does not only seek to elucidate the most salient and very important points about the Islamic faith, but it also wishes to provide the reader with background information so that he can, after having read the first part of this study, reach a better understanding of the difference between traditional African thought and orthodox Islamic thought.

The Islamic View of Life

To sum up this discussion on the Islamic view of life, one can say that, contrary to traditional African thought, Islamic theology sees man as a privileged creature who is given trust on earth by the Divine; that is to say, he is called upon to serve as the Viceregent of Allah on earth, and to account for each and every deed of his life in this sublunary world (1) Another point of importance in the Islamic belief system about man and his destiny is that, although life is short and full of evil, man should take heart in the fact that there is life beyond the grave. This promise of a hereafter is a major difference between Islam and traditional African thought, which generally pays less attention to the details of a hereafter.

As already noted in the first section of this study, the traditional African cosmologist focuses primarily on the dead man's post-mortem relations with his family, his clan, his tribe, and the fellow humans who have survived him. To put this in another way, one could say that old Africa believed that immortality was obtained through the acts of respect shown to departed ancestors by the community of the living, or through the gradual recession of the dead ancestor into the realm of the spirits.

Last but not least, on this subject, one could argue that the Islamic view of man sees him as a creature whose destiny is determined both by himself and by his Maker. The Quran has addressed numerous warnings to rebellious mankind not to go astray; and it is also known for its announcement that the last days of the earth are ones in which our Lord will certainly bring

to justice all those men who have taken no note of man's finitude, his dependency and his judgement before Allah.

The Islamic Penetration of Africa

The advent of Islam in Africa was a result of the rapid sweep the Muslim armies were making in the early decades of the Islamic movement. Though Africans had contacts with Arabians prior to the rise of Islam (2) the fact remains that Africa's territorial integrity and her peoples' destiny were never threatened by Arabians. Such a possibility became a reality only when Egypt fell into their hands.

The harbinger of the Muslim victory in Africa was 'Amr Ibn Al-As, a Muslim commander who saw the Muslim victory over the Byzantines in Syria as a signal to the Muslims. This act of 'Amr Ibn Al-As opened the doors of Africa to Arab military power and cultural influence.

Soon the Arab armies began to march across the continent in search of new kingdoms and new opportunities for themselves. Those who came as military governors founded towns and villages, which later became the basis of urban life and culture in the Northern part of Africa. To these Arab immigrants from the East this part of Africa was comparable to the new frontier of the Americas in later years and every enterprising fellow in the Islamic world saw the Western part of Daral-Islam as the Maghrib.(3)

The conquest of the Maghrib gave rise to two processes, namely, Arabization and Islamization. The first process proved successful because Arabic was the language of government and trade. Because it was the language of the conquistadores from the East, it gradually gained ground, owing to its prestige and usefulness.

One of the most interesting factors which assisted in the realization of the second process, mentioned above, is the mercantile community. These merchants, who came from as far as Iran to conduct business, were bent on gaining a foothold in the centers of civilization in the Maghrib. It was, therefore, in this role that they made a meaningful contribution to the Islamization of this region of Africa. In light of this understanding one could say that this intermingling of peoples and cultures actually paved the way for the gradual penetration of Islam into the Maghrib.

When Islam conquered Egypt, the western part of North Africa was inhabited by the Berbers. This large ethnic group, which was then occupying the mountains and plains of the area as well as the Sahara, was divided into three major groupings, Lowata, Sanhaja, and Zanata, each subdivided into a great number of smaller tribes. Prior to Islam the majority of these groups remained outside the cultural orbit of the powerful civilizations that dotted the shores of North

Africa. Though ancient historians gave us some account about the subservient relationship between these Berbers and the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans and Byzantines, who came over as conquerors and traders, the fact remains that, up to the time of the Islamic conquest, the Berbers enjoyed a high degree of political freedom. They came under Arab rule only after much struggle and blood. E. W. Bovill, in describing this crucial period in North African history, captured this fact when he wrote:

Just when the Arab triumph seemed complete the Berbers' passionate love of liberty gave birth to one of those supreme national efforts, which, at the moment of crises, have so often saved the conquered from extinction.(4)

Despite their heroic resistance to Arab domination of North Africa, the Berbers gradually lost ground to these invaders from the East. They succeeded only in keeping the highlands, which proved too difficult for the Arabs to attack and take over.

The Arab triumph in North Africa was a result of a series of raids by commanders from the East. The most historically significant invasion took place in the middle of the eleventh century when the members of the Banu Hilal and Sulaim fell on the Maghrib. The atrocities perpetrated by these tribes sent a shock wave throughout the length and breadth of the area. Much arable land was destroyed and many of the Berbers, for the first time in their national history, came directly under Arab dynasties and rulers.

The decision of these tribes to settle down in the Maghrib led to the intermarriage and cultural fusion that took place between certain groups in North Africa and the Arabs. The process of Arabization gained limited momentum as a result of the mass exodus of Arab tribesmen from the East. Many of these men settled down in urban areas and hence intermarried with Berber women. This integration of families of Arabs and Berbers made it possible for Islam to grow and spread.

The growth of Arab power, be it noted, did not mean the total collapse of Berber resistance. To the contrary; the processes of Arabization and Islamization were accompanied for several decades by violence and coercion. In fact, so unstable and rebellious were the Berbers that they "apostatized twelve times before Islam gained a firm foothold over them. (5) When the Berbers finally succumbed to Islam the Muslims in the Maghrib began to build up a major civilization in the area. This process was made possible, and in part accelerated, by the constant passing of men and ideas from the East to the Far West (al-Maghrib Al-Aqsa). These new arrivals from the East were pioneers who were in search of adventure. Many passed through the Maghrib on their way to Andalusia, which was already conquered by the Arabs in

collaboration with Berbers and other Africans from Maghrib.

This conquest of Spain was very significant for, as Bovill noted in his *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, the transaction flow between the Maghrib Muslims and their brethren in the Andalusian country helped keep them well-posted with the great achievements of their fellows in Europe. Such a transaction flow made Morocco a vital link in the chain which bound eastern and western Islam. From the East came scholars, merchants, and craftsmen seeking a share in the wealth and culture of the West. Bovill captured the mood of the day when he wrote the following passage:-

From Spain there was a ceaseless flow of the oppressed, victims of political and religious persecution, and fugitives from justice; most of them were skilled agriculturists, but many erudite scholars were of their numbers. Thus was the Maghrib al-Aqsa nourished by two converging streams of fresh and invigorating blood. How richly their confluence blessed the country is strikingly illustrated by the city of Fez.(6)

With the growth of this Islamic civilization in Morocco, ideas and wares began to flow to the south of the Sahara. This trade between the Maghrib and the sub-Saharan peoples, which many historians believe to have existed prior to the advent of Islam in the area, must have been of great benefit to Morocco. Bernard Lewis has suggested that the two most important Moroccan exports to the East at this time were gold and slaves, and that when the Berbers became Muslims the rulers felt it necessary to find alternative sources of slaves. This alternative source of supply was found in the still unconquered lands to the south, and Muslim merchants from the Mediterranean coast travelled for months to reach the trading centers of Ghana, where gold and slaves were easily obtainable."(7)

These merchants were to a certain extent responsible for the spread of Islam in the Sahara, because it was through their constant peddling of goods from both Maghrib and the Sudan that they succeeded in impressing upon the Africans the beauty and simplicity of their faith. These merchants, however, were not primarily interested in propagating Islam; they came to the south mainly to make money and to buy at a very low price. It was not until later that they set out deliberately to win converts, and then it was largely a Berber affair.

The Berbers seemed to have been chosen by history to carry the banner of Islam into West Africa, because of their geographical location and their historical role as middle-men between Arabs and black Africans. The first Berber tribe in the Sahara to play a major role in the Islamization process was the Sanhaja. This ethnic group became Muslim as a result of their interaction with the Muslim traders who had settled in their midst. One result of the Sanhaja conversion to Islam was the performance of the Hajj by their rulers.

This process went on for many years until Yahia ibn Ibrahim, a Sanhaja Paramount Chief who was passing through Kairawan on his way from Makkah, asked Abu Amran to help him secure the services of someone who could teach him and his subjects about the religion of Islam. This search for a teacher resulted in the selection of Ibn Yasin, a fanatical instructor whose austere doctrine proved unbearable to Yahia's people. In response to their act of rejection of austere doctrine, Abdulla Ibn Yasin set off towards the Sudan borderland.⁽⁸⁾ He founded a fortified fraternity center (ribat) somewhere near the Atlantic coast. This center quickly turned into a war camp and Ibn Yasin wasted no time in conquering his enemies. It was indeed the series of successes enjoyed by his followers that made their name famous. The Almoravids went down in history as a major religious movement whose activities and successes, though short-lived, helped in bringing many people into the fold of Islam.

The rise of the Almoravids did not only mean the fanatical propagation of Islam in the Sahara, but it also opened the door to greater contact between the Berbers and the Africans to the South. This interaction, which was beneficial to the dissemination of the Islamic religion, was conflictive in many respects, because both parties found it politically and strategically useful to keep each other in check. So preoccupied were those two parties with such a power play that each was ready to attack the other. The Sanhaja Berbers were quick to realize that Islam could be a useful tool with which to rally and organize themselves.

The historical evidence seems to point out that such politically astute decisions were taken only under circumstances of grave danger, and that the most interesting example which is directly related to our discussion of early Islam in the Sahara and the West of Sudan is that which occurred at about 1020 A.D. This act of unity by the different Berber tribes was motivated by their collective desire to bring down the Ghanaian Kingdom. In fact, this much-needed unity which the Lemtuna, Godala and Masufa Berbers hoped for was based on the ideas acquired by one of their leaders, Tarsina the Lemtune, whose pilgrimage to Makkah inspired him to rationalize his campaigns against black Africans in the name of the Islamic Jihad.

Added to this political calculation was also the fact that "these Atlantic Berbers were feeling hemmed in between the Zanata who had gained control of the Moroccan oases and ruled from Sijilmasa and the powerful black kingdom of Ghana which had captured Awadaghast, their south Saharan center. "⁽⁹⁾ The insecurity of these Berber groups led to much conflict between them and the sources of their fears and apprehension – the Kingdom of Ghana. The Kingdom of Ghana collapsed only after the Almoravids were successfully organized in the name of Islam. With their Islamically oriented organization these Atlantic Berbers embarked on a

campaign to win converts by force of arms. After many years of planning and organization the Berbers, under the leadership of Abu Bakr, finally managed in 1076 to seize control of the capital of Ghana, Kumbi.

"The consequences of this Almoravid conquest," E. W. Bovill has told us, "were not as far-reaching as might have been expected, because the collapse of the Almoravids in the south was even more rapid than in the north. "(10) What Bovill wished to say was that, with the destruction of their common enemy (Ghana) the Atlantic Berbers, particularly the Godala and the Masufa, soon found themselves at each other's throats. This growing disunity within the Berber ranks finally led to the end of Almoravid rule in 1087.

Such a rapid decline in the power of the Almoravids paved the way for the peoples of Ghana. In fact, little more than a decade after their defeat, Ghanaians succeeded once again in exercising control over their own destiny. Like the Berbers of the Atlantic area, they too began to fight each other, and soon their once great empire degenerated into a number of petty states, each vying for power and being very jealous of the other.(11) The end of the Almoravids' dynasty and the collapse of Ghana did not necessarily mean that Islamization ceased with the death of the Almoravid movement. The process of propagation continued and Islam began to penetrate more and more into the western Sudan. This phase in the propagation of Islam in Africa was made possible by the active involvement of three different groups of Arab-Berber and Sudanese Muslim cultivators of Islam in the West Sudan.

These three groups, according to J. R. Willis and his fellow contributors in the volume entitled *Studies in West African Islamic History* (1979), are the Zawaya clerisy, the Mande Islamic clerisy, and the Torodbe clerisy. The first group has been traced to a community of Berbers who suffered oppression at the hands of fellow Berbers and Arabs. According to Willis in his comprehensive introduction to the volume cited above, the Zawaya formation began to take shape in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They decided to be pacifists and so laid down their arms and took up the life of Muslim scholars dedicated to the propagation of Islam in the area.(12)

The Mande-Islamic clerisy emerged from the numerous trading centers created by Mande Muslims throughout the West Sudan. Because of their range of activities and the very wide area in which they lived, these men of commerce and Muslim learning came to be known by different names. They were known as Marka to the Bambara, Dafa to the peoples in the Upper Black Volta area, Yarse to the Mole-Dagbani speaking peoples, and Wangara and Djula to many others in the West Sudan. In the Senegambia area, the Jahanke (a Mande-speaking people of Serahule origins) are well-known for their historical role of peaceful promotion of

Islamic culture and learning. Perhaps the best work on the Jahanke is that which was recently completed by the Gambian historian Dr. Lamin O. Sanneh. According to him, the Islamic religion was promoted by the descendants of al-Hajj Salim Suware, (the father of the Jahanke) not by the sword or through trade as is commonly thought by many scholars on the West Sudan, but through their dedication to the life of piety and scholarship.(13)

The Torodbe clerisy has been traced to manumitted slaves in Futa Toro. According to Willis and many others, the Torodbe evolved out of a mass of rootless peoples who saw in the religion of Islam an opportunity to change their subservient lives for better ones, based on Islamic solidarity and brotherhood. Those who hold this view regarding the origin of the Torodbe clerisy usually see the group only as culturally Fulbe, and so deny its members any direct and respectable connection with the ruling Fulbe classes.

Such negative definitions of the Torodbe are not very correct, for it should be noted that the Islamization process also included some members of the noblemen. The detractors of the Torodbe would cite all the negative accounts in folklore mentioned by Willis in his introduction, but as he himself pointed out, among the people of Futa Toro the term Torodbe "came to be associated with the inhabitants of the villages and towns" who were committed to Islamic learning, spoke Fulfulde and disavowed the inferior occupations.

In addition to what is said above regarding the roles of the Arab- Berber and Sudanese merchants whose activities in the West Sudan gradually led to the conversion of many African rulers and their entourages, one can also point out that Islam penetrated the southern reaches of the West Sudan through the labors of Sufi Shaykhs and divines. Writing in January, 1977, the Gambian Islamic scholar Dr. Omar Jah of Bayero College in Kano, Nigeria, suggested that the spread of Islam in the West Sudan was to some degree accelerated by the decline and fall of Mali and Songhay. In his view, the political disintegration of these two centers "added more learned people to the group of itinerant scholars - who contributed tremendously to the dissemination of Islamic culture in the area.

This situation coincided with the introduction of the Qadiri Sufi order into West Africa, under the leadership of celebrated people like the Kunti family."(14) Dr. Jah further informed that members of this order "played a prominent role in disseminating Islam in the West Sudan. "(15) This view is shared by Dr. Batran, whose chapter in J. R. Willis' volume, Studies in West African Islamic History, is one of the best studies on the role of a leading Muslim family in the propagation of Islam in the West Sudan.

Dr. Batran has recently revealed to the scholarly community that the Kunta shaykhs helped extend the frontiers of Islam through their longstanding custom of Siyaha - their peripatetic

travels in pursuit of knowledge and the propagation of Islam. According to him, Sidi Ahmad Al-Bakkai was the prime mover behind the earliest dissemination of the Qadiri wird (Wird is one of the rituals of an initiated member of a Sufi brotherhood. It usually consists of reciting the prayers and divine names strongly recommended by the founder of an order) in the West Sudan. The family exercised great influence over the members of their Sufi order because they were noted for their learning, piety and noble pedigree.

In fact, so conscious of their origin were the members of the Kunta family that they hardly let an outsider marry one of their female members. Yet, in all their travels in the West Sudan, they did not hesitate to marry Sudanese women in the various communities they settled or passed through. (16) Jenkins, who also contributed a chapter in the above-mentioned volume, has pointed out that the spread of Islam in the West Sudan could also be traced to the trade and commercial activities of the *turuq* (Sufi brotherhoods). He informs that the tendency of the Maghribian *turuq* to diffuse southwards into the West Sudanese zone culminated in their occupation of strategic position along the trans-Saharan trade routes.

Such advantages, Jenkins argues, were enjoyed by the shaykhs because their influence enabled them to guarantee the smooth operation of trade and commerce along the routes under their control. This capability to keep the peace and to protect the merchants' person and wares (through the provision of guides to travelers and places of lodging and board for voyagers) gave lucrative income to the leaders of the *turuq*. (17) In fact, Norris, another contributor in the above-mentioned volume, has informed us in another work of his that the Kunta controlled the salt "mine" at Ijjil (near Shinqit) in Mauritania, and that the people paid them a paltry sum in relation to that which they received from their customers. (18) In order for us to understand the role of the two major Sudanese clerical groups mentioned above, we must go back to the early history of Islam in Tekrur and Ancient Ghana.

The conversion of the Tukulor (Torodbe) and the Serahuli (Soninke) led to their gradual emergence as active cultivators of the faith of Islam in the West Sudan. The arrival of Islam on the banks of the Senegal dates back a thousand years or more. The Arabic sources tell us that Tekrur was the first Sudanese Kingdom to enter the commonwealth of Allah in the West (Maghrib) and that Ibn Yasin, the founder of the Amoravid movement, contemplated going to Tekrur to seek support from his Muslim co-religionists, who were then at the helm of things in this West Sudan society. From the same medieval and post-medieval writers we learned that the Ghanaian kings and ruling emperors allowed Arab-Berber merchants to settle in their land and that these traders from North Africa lived in their own residential areas which served as the pivot of trade and commercial transactions between the Muslim guests and the traditional

African hosts.

As a result of these transactions, traditional Africans began to observe Islam at work. Some of these early hosts of the Muslims, we can argue, were most probably very much impressed by the religious devotion of the merchants who most likely stopped their business transactions to engage in the prescribed five daily prayers. Another area where the early Muslims could have affected the minds and hearts of the traditional Africans was their possession of the powers of the written word. This technology of intellectual conservation must have deeply impressed their early African hosts in the West Sudan, for it must have looked like a miracle to them that a man could reduce long court proceedings into signs and symbols.

In the course of this transaction flow between the North and the Sahel and the West Sudan areas, a new class of black African traders came to being. At first this body of men was very insignificant and their activity was limited to the securing of gold, slaves, and other marketable items in the North-South Saharan trade. However, as they gained knowledge of the various trade routes and cemented their relationships in to religious solidarity bonds, many of these early Serahuli traders adopted the role of trader-cum-marabout. It is, indeed, against this background that one can speculate about the role of the Serahuli or any other Muslim group that entered the West Sudanese trade and helped promote the cause of Islam among their pagan African clientele.

The Serahuli contribution to the spread of Islam was not significant in the beginning. There were many reasons for this slow speed in Islamic proselytization. First of all, one can argue that Serahuli propagators of Islam were not only limited in numbers but also in effectiveness. This early phase of the Serahuli effort to propagate Islam was limited because their empire was, in the main, based on traditional African religious symbols. Things began to change when the number of Muslims increased in the West Sudan. This trend became more evident when the Ghanaian empire was about to come to an end. During this period the rulers accepted Islam and tolerated Muslim minorities trading or living within the empire by letting them occupy a certain part of the town or village.⁽¹⁹⁾

The Serahuli propagators of Islam must have constituted a part of this gradually expanding Islamic base within the West Sudan, and their activities as Marabout-cum-merchants must have prepared the ground for later expansion of their faith, even though they made no effort at direct proselytization. Indeed, it should be added that the Serahulis' activities as marabouts and traders took them to many parts of the West Sudan.

When the Mali empire replaced the Ghana empire the Serahulis, who are the northern branch of the Mande-speaking people, found themselves dispersed and weakened. Those who had

converted to Islam found trading and religious instruction useful occupations. This became very clear to them when the Mali empire was firmly in the hands of Muslims. There are many historical accounts of how, under the Mali empire and the other kingdoms after it, the Marabout-cum-traders were guaranteed the right of passage at both peacetime and war.

(20) The Serahulis were certainly among these traders, and Mungo Park revealed a great deal of the Serahuli preoccupation with, and love for, the west Sudanese trade, when he wrote that among the Serahuli a merchant who returns from a long trip without any exciting report of profit and gain becomes the laughingstock of his peers. Such a man, according to Mungo Park, is socially and disrespectfully described as the one who came back without anything but the hairs on his head.(21)

The Tukulors, too, have left an indelible mark on the pages of West Sudanese history. This ethnic group has given to Africa not only pastoralists, but also warriors and scholars. From their original homeland in the upper Senegal region called Futa Toro, the Tukulors have successfully migrated to different parts of the Senegambia and beyond. Indeed, it was their migration which led to the gradual expansion of Islam in the West Sudan. The activities of Fulah shepherds along the route in the West Sudan gradually opened the doors of opportunities to the inhabitants of Futa Toro.

This became most evident in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when the Tukulors and their maraboutic leaders led the Islamic revivalist movement in West Sudan. Their propagandistic drive did not only bring them into conflicts with the defenders of the African status quo at the time, but it also helped them conquer a huge portion of the West Sudan. These revivalist movements were a reaction to the corrupt and compromised nature of Islam in the West Sudan. With the collapse of the major West Sudanese empires, African Muslims found themselves at the mercy of traditionalists who were desperately trying to re-establish the Ancien Regime. Unwilling to turn the historical and religious clock backwards, and determined to concretize their longstanding dream of an Islamic state and society, some of the leading West Sudanese intellectuals saw the Jihad as the only solution to the problem of pagan intransigence.

Another fact which must have affected their thinking and their attitude towards the traditional rulers was their knowledge of what was going on in the other parts of Darul Islam (the Land of Islam). B. G. Martin has written that "in West Africa, the Torodbe (Tukulor) intellectuals were not isolated from political or cultural developments in other parts of the Islamic world." He adds that Usman Dan Fodio's teacher, the Tuareg Jibril bin 'Umar al Aqdasi who had made pilgrimage to Makkah twice and was sojourned in Egypt for many years, must have passed on

to the young Shehu news about the Muslim lands to the east and the determination of the dedicated ulema who wanted to wage a Jihad against the vile ulema and their traditionalist patrons.(22)

Though we may never know the exact details and the extent to which the developments in the Muslim east affected the trains of events in the West Sudan, we can say with some degree of confidence that almost all scholars agree that the revivalist idea was first put into action in Futa Jallon where the Torodbe (Tukulor) and other Fulfulbe- speaking elements ganged up on the tyrannical rulers in the name of Islamic reform.

This successful Islamic movement was led and directed by Karamoh Alfa (1726), whose victory resulted in the establishment of an al-mamiyyah (an Islamic order headed by an Imam) in Futa Jallon. Following the Muslim success in Futa Jallon, the idea spread to Futa Toro, where another revivalist movement, under the leadership of Sulayman Bal and Abdul Qadir, quickly took root and the traditional pagan hierarchy dismantled.(23) After the idea of an Islamic reform had gained ground in the Senegambia region of the West Sudan, other enthusiastic reformists to the east found it useful in their own communities. The acceptance of these ideas from the two Futas gave rise to the revivalist movements of Usman Dan Fodio in Hausaland in 1804 and Shaykh Ahmad Lobbo in Macine in 1818.

After this long trip to the east the idea of the jihad once again, like the Hegelian spirit, started to take a westerly course, giving rise to the jihad wars of Alhaji Omar al-Futi in Futa Toro, Bambara country and in other neighboring lands, to the revivalist efforts of Maba Jahu of the Senegambia, Samori of Mande country in Upper Guinea, Muhammadu Lamin and several other minor Jihad leaders throughout the West Sudan.(24) The most widely celebrated hero of this age of Tukulor conquest in the name of Islam was Alhaji Omar Tall (commonly called Shaykh Omar Futiu).

This Islamic Marabout conquered much of his homeland and regions to the east. In fact, up to the time of his death he held under his rule one of the largest empires in West Africa. Unfortunately for the Shaykh, the empire he struggled hard to build fell to pieces as a result of succession feuds between his children and talibs (students). This was not new in the West Sudan, for one of the most difficult problems of rulers of empires in this part of the world has always been setting guidelines for orderly succession.

The conquest of Alhaji Omar and others like him in the West Sudan led not only to the spread of the Islamic doctrine but also to the breaking up of the traditional order in the area. The successes of Muslims in many areas of the West Sudan led to the gradual destruction of traditional cults and the emasculation of the old aristocracy.

These two processes of de-traditionalization and Islamization were going on at the same time that the West was beginning to seize African territories for the expansion of capitalism. This fact is very crucial to an understanding of the European role in the mediation between African thought and the Abrahamic tradition. That Europe came on the scene just when an embattled Africanized Islam was in the process of settling scores with an older African tradition whose foundations had been undermined over the centuries by the followers of a Holy book and a literate tradition, means a great deal to us today. Those who are interested in the big "its" of history can spend hours debating what would have happened had Europe's expansion into

other areas of the world been delayed for a century or more; but for me, one thing is clear: that is Africa was destined to face up to the Abrahamic challenge in another guise and her children had to assimilate the new message from Europe and then mobilize themselves for a collective defense of their pride and dignity- Whereas in the earlier days Africans fought and traded with Arab bearers of one version of the Abrahamic heritage, under European rule Africa's peoples became the reluctant subjects of a western civilization in search of converts. It is this tragic experience with the western civilization that I wish to unravel in the next chapter. My purpose is not necessarily to pour fuel into the fires of racial conflicts resulting from the European blunder in Africa, but to trace in brief outline the western conquest of Africa and the resultant planting of Christianity. But before proceeding to the next chapter let us trace the history of Islam in Eastern and Central Africa. After discussing the rise and spread of Islam in the West Sudan, let us now look at its penetration of the Eastern Sudan. By the term Eastern

Sudan, I mean that geographical area which is now called the Republic of Sudan. Islam came to the Eastern Sudan because certain factors propelled the Arab conquerors of Coptic Egypt to move southwards into the regions below the Aswan. One of the major factors was the harassment of Arab Muslim settlements by the Nubians and Bejas. The former were not very happy with the Arabs whose conquest of Egypt brought their Christian co-religionists under Arab domination. Another factor which led to the Arab attempt to conquer and rule the Eastern Sudan was the trade and commercial interest of their mercantile classes. A third would be the desire of the religiously-devout to gain a foothold for Islam in Nubi and Beja countries. According to the Sudanese scholar Yusuf Fadl Hassan, the Arab Muslims were able to enter the area by three routes. The first was across the Red Sea, either through Ethiopian territory or directly to the Red Sea ports of Badi, Aydhab and Suakin. In Hassan's view, the number of immigrants who took the Red Sea route must have been significant when compared to the large numbers who inched their way through Misr (Egypt). This second route was largely responsible for the gradual but successful Islamization of the Eastern Sudan. Many Arab

immigrants wangled their way into Nubian territory without the permission of the authorities. The last route, according to Fadi Hassan, was the least significant: the North-West African route through which many religious men passed. This was the path of the Sufi men of Islam who travelled from the West Sudan to Makkah or Egypt, or who took and promoted their religious causes from the North African desert to the land of the Baja and of the other groups located along the Nile valley. The relationship between the Muslims and the Christian Nubians remained peaceful on account of the strict observance by both parties of the Baqt treaty, which remained the foundation of Muslim-Nubian relations for over six centuries. Though the terms of the Baqt treaty specifically stated that a citizen of one of the two countries could not stay permanently in the other, evidence shows that Muslim traders began to enter Nubia soon after the treaty, and their growing numbers were to serve as the basis for an eventual takeover by Islamic forces.(25)

According to Fadl Hassan, "the end of Christian Nubia came at the hands of the Muslim Arabs, who had for centuries entered in small numbers from Upper Egypt. "(26) He adds that Al-Maris was the first region to feel the impact, because here the Arab elements settled and intermarried with the local inhabitants. This arrangement proved quite favorable to the expansion of Islam. One factor which has always worked in favor of the Arabs in the whole region called Bilad Al-Sudan was the matrilineal system of which the Arabs took full advantage, and so landed themselves in positions of chiefly power in their newly adopted homes. The Banu a'l-Kanz were the main beneficiaries of the Nubian matrilineal system, and in a very short time, they became the virtual rulers of the region of Al-Maris.

This process of settlement and penetration of Nubian lands by the Arabs continued and in time the Muslims seized control of the Nubian throne. This came when Sayf al-Din 'Abdullah Barshambu, the nephew of King Dawud, was made King by the Mamluk forces. He was the third puppet king appointed by the Mamluk but he was the first to profess Islam. With his conversion the door was opened for the massive Islamization of the entire Kingdom.(27) With the Nubians gradually drawn into Darul Islam, the Arabs began to fish for more converts elsewhere.

The relationship between the Arabs and the peoples of the western coast of the Red Sea dates back to the lifetime of the Prophet. At the height of the Makkan persecution, he advised some of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia. This major incident in early Islamic history made these peoples no strangers to the Muslims. As early as 640 A.D., the Muslim merchants were already active in the area; in fact, a Muslim migrated to Badi (one of the Sudanese ports) in the same year. Through trade and warfare the Muslims gradually penetrated and conquered the Beja

territory.

At first the Beja were nominal Muslims, but after many attacks and counter-attacks, the spirit of Islam gradually conquered the Beja and Muslims became the predominant force in the area. Mosques came into being, trade and commerce flourished, and so the Beja became part of the wider world of Islam. Soon the voice of the Muezzin was heard from Aswan to Massawa. This gradual Islamization of Beja country intensified during the reign of Al-Mu'tasim, whose Turkification program deprived many Arab Muslims of their pension rights. This act of the new ruler of Egypt drove many of the Arabs to farming, and many opted to settle permanently in Beja country. This mass settlement of Arabs in Beja country and the Eastern Sudan, plus the fact that between 1058 and 1261 pilgrims from Egypt and North-West Africa passed through Beja country on their way to Mecca, exposed the Beja more and more to the influences of Islam.

Although Islam has not succeeded in winning the hearts of all the inhabitants of the Eastern Sudan, we can conclude this brief survey by saying that, in the Islamization of the peoples of the Eastern Sudan, conflict of interest between invading Arabs and self-protecting Eastern Sudanis, trade and religious instruction were the means by which the children of Darul Islam brought the area under their control. As Fadl Hassan concludes in his paper in the volume edited by I. W. Lewis, "the process of Islamization was accompanied by a process of Arabization which left its mark on a large part of the country; for Arabic was not only the language of Islam but also of trade." (28)

When we move farther south to what is today called the Horn of Africa, we find that the arrival of Islam in Somalia and Ethiopia dates back to the early period of Islam. In fact, long before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), many transactions were conducted across the Red Sea. Though the sea had been taken as a very difficult one to navigate, it was never looked at as a formidable obstacle to the Arabs and the peoples of the Horn. The beginning of Islam goes back to the attempts of Arab merchants of the rising Islamic state to gain a foothold in the area and to expand their trade opportunities. As in the other areas of the world where the Arabs came into contact with new peoples, here too, the usual patterns of trade, commerce and intermarriage developed.

In his study of Islam in the Horn of Africa, Trimingham sees two strains of Islamic culture. There is on the one hand that of the nomads, and on the other that of the sedentary village or town dwellers. In the first case, Trimingham asserts, Islam exercises practically no influence in the life of the pagans. Where Islam is accepted, however, three stages become evident. In the first stage, there is superficial adoption of Islamic ways, and this is reflected in the borrowing of

certain material elements associated with the Islamic culture. In the second stage, actual elements of Islamic religious culture are adopted and assimilated. The third stage, which is very revolutionary in its effects, consists of transforming the person into a Muslim who is genuinely convinced of the efficacy of Islamic sanctions and hence, is willing to change his customs and habit of conduct.(29)

If we are to accept this model of Islamization worked out by Trimingham, we can conclude by saying that among the numerous Muslim peoples in the Horn there are many persons who fall under one of his three stages of Islamic development. But since Trimingham's model is meant for the scholars who are interested in working out the finer points in the psychological and psycho-cultural manifestations of human encounters with new forces within his social universe, we can briefly say in passing that Islam has succeeded in gaining a firm foothold in Somalia where, I.W. Lewis tells us, Islamic orthodoxy under the leadership of two Sufi Turuq (Qadiriyya and Ahmadiyya) seems to be faring well. Besides the Somalis, there are the Galla and the Harari peoples of Ethiopia who have joined the fold of Islam.(30)

Islamization is very weak in some parts of this region, and the people who lend empirical support to Trimingham's theoretical model of Islamic assimilation are the Borans. According to P. T. W. Baxter, this African ethnic group, whose members are found between the Republic of Somalia and Kenya, has yet to be fully Islamic. The main influence of Islam is evident only in the realm of material culture. The valuation and institutional bases of Islamic culture have yet to take root. Baxter further informs that only those Borans who have been drawn within the cultural net of the Muslim Somalis are Islamized and, hence, assimilated to the Somali view of Islam.(31)

The arrival of Islam in East and Central Africa goes back to the settlement of the East African coast by the Shirazi and the Arabs. The evidence that is now available to the historians of East Africa suggests that very few of the merchants from the East settled in the area at the early phase of their contact with the coast. Gradually, however, things changed. These changes were largely exogenously inspired. In fact, it was due to political developments in Arabia and Iran that some elements from the East began to settle in towns along the East African coast. According to Neville Chittick, the Shirazi immigrants first moved to the Somali coast and then resettled themselves along the coastal towns of East Africa. By the time many of these Shirazi immigrants came to the Shungwaya region, most of them were racially mixed with the Bantu peoples of the area

As a result of these intermarriages, one can assume Islam began to gain a few converts here and there among the Bantus. Yet, in making this assumption, one must bear in mind that these

settlements were destined to have very limited contact with the hinterland. Even when the Arabs came over to the coast from Hadhramaut, Oman and other points in the Persian Gulf, things did not change. Much of what we learn from the chronicles of such major towns as Lamu, Mombasa, Kilwa, Pate and Malindi, relates to the rivalries and feuds between the ruling classes of these coastal settlements.(32)

The coastal towns began to influence the life and history of the peoples of the interior only after 1800. Prior to this time, we do not know how and where the coastal towns got the goods which they put out on the Indian Ocean market. What has been suggested was that the gold from south-central Africa nourished much of the coast in the days before the arrival of the Portuguese. According to F. J. Berg, at this time in East African Coastal history, "most of the towns do not seem to have enjoyed a flourishing commerce. Ordinary citizens appear often to have lived by cultivating Shamba near their city, frequently on the mainland if the town were on an island."(33) As a result of this new arrangement, settlements on Pemba and the Kenya coast traded extensively in grain with southern Arabia. This was the most important international commercial activity at the coast.(34) Indirect trade with the interior supplemented agriculture and grain shipping. The middlemen in this new trade were the Nyika and the "Mozungullo. "These peoples served as go-betweens, and soon a new era in the history of the East African region began.

As Norman R. Bennett pointed out in his chapter on the Arab impact in East Africa, in the volume on East African History published by the Historical Association of Kenya, the initial stimulus for this new relationship between the coastal peoples and the hinterland came from the Africans from the interior. The most prominent of these interior peoples were the Nyawezi, Yao, Bisa and the Kamba. These groups opened the routes to the Arabs who were keen about gaining footholds in the inland areas.

This new connection soon enabled the Arabs to penetrate further and further into East and Central Africa. Bennett identified three major routes which these coastal Arab and Swahili peoples used to get access into the lands of ivory, gold and slaves.(35) As I pointed out in the section dealing with the Beja, the Arabs in most cases capitalized on the matrilineal and social systems of the Africans. By contracting marriages with their African hosts they soon endeared themselves to some of the ruling families in the area. As a result of such marriages they benefited from the loyalties and material support of their in-laws.

In assessing the progress of Islam in East and Central Africa, one must bear in mind that the religion of Islam was not vigorously promoted by the Arab traders. These men were very business-oriented and, hence, cared very little about the stocks of Islam in the area. In fact,

Bennett tells us that with the exception of Buganda, Islam made no significant progress in the region.⁽³⁶⁾ The Yao and the Nyawezi were among the most active partners of the coastal traders and any list of East or Central African ethnic groups that have joined the fold of Islam must include their names. In Southern Africa, the Arabs were never a significant factor, and hence, one cannot identify South African Islam with them.

The promoters of Islam in the Republic of South Africa were the Malaysian and Indian coolies who were brought into that part of Africa by the Europeans. These groups of non-whites are active Muslims, and they are well-known in international Islamic circles. If one is to make a judgment, then it should be stated that Islam has a great prospect in South Africa once the fetters of apartheid are thrown away and the non-white majority assumes the reins of government in a multi-racial society based on majority rule. This point is made on the grounds that the long oppression of the non-white population in the Republic of South Africa has a negative effect on the minds of the educated elements of the discriminated majority. This will be more so with the young Africans who are born Christian and have earned belatedly that the racists in their country have appropriated the Bible to legitimize their racial rule. Such young people are likely to be bitter with the system and the Christian churches and they are often more receptive to radical materialist ideologies.

On the social plane, the conversion of the tribal African to Islam opened, to a certain degree, the door of inter-ethnic cooperation. The fact that the Muslim propagators were, in most cases, merchants, made the converts more receptive to the new ideas and new wares brought into their areas by their fellow co-religionists. What I am suggesting here is that, even if there were trade ties between a non-Muslim people and traders of Muslim background, the fact that they willingly entered such relationships exposed them to Islamic mode of trade and commerce, for as McCall points out, Islam provided a common moral basis for commerce and trade and the Sharia guided all the Muslim merchants in their dealings with one another and with their non-Muslim customers. According to him, Islam "may have been advantageous to Sudanese merchants in . . . another way.

In areas of endemic conflict there is a need for a neutral to serve as go-between. He must be easily recognized so that he would not be attacked by either side by mistake."⁽³⁷⁾ Working on this assumption, McCall further asserts that the Muslim clothing in the eleventh century West Sudan was probably as effective as tatooing in nineteenth century Typee or calabashes in the sixteenth century Mississippi Valley. In all these above mentioned cases, the parties to conflicts granted special treatment to those who, by virtue of their trade or profession, were considered non-combatants.⁽³⁸⁾

The close relationship between trade and Islam made it possible for the new convert to develop gradually some degree of trust and confidence in men who do not necessarily speak his language but who embrace the teachings of his newly adopted religion. This new attitude towards non-members of one's ethnic group is certainly revolutionary, and its potential for greater inter-ethnic cooperation could not be dismissed lightly. Though Islam was not the factor responsible for the immediate founding of the three great West Sudanese empires, the fact remains that these empires and their rulers profited from the Islamic symbols of their day and their cultural and economic systems were, in varying degrees, exposed to the forces and pressures of the faraway Islamic centers of civilization to the north and northeast.

In fact, in talking about the Islamic contribution to the social universe of the African, one could argue that the arrival of Islam in the continent widened the horizons of the traditional African a little bit. Whereas in the past this man had entrusted destiny to the hands of the spirits who resided in a well, a tree or a stream somewhere in the ecological setting of his tribal group, whereas he wished to placate the gods and the ancestors, under the Islamic religion he found that his life was for an appointed time and that his deeds on earth did have singular meaning.

He also learned from his Islamic mentors that whatever he did in his lifetime would be accounted for in the hereafter, and the only way he could save his soul and himself at the Day of Judgement was to accept the responsibility of living. This is to say that the conversion of the traditional African meant his gradual realization of the spiritual loneliness of man in the world and his responsibility to live up to the expectations of his religion. Such an understanding of self and life gave rise to the attempt on the part of many African converts to put into effective practice the rituals and teachings of Islam.

It is indeed in their attempt to live up to the Islamic ideal that many traditional Africans learn to pray with fellow Muslims, or to stand alone before Allah. In their desire to win the favors of their Maker, they now learn to fulfill the expectations of the Quranic teachings on cleanliness and modesty in clothing. Writing on what the religion of Islam implied to the African convert some years before the European powers success-fully partitioned the greater part of the African continent, R. Bosworth Smith, in his *Mohammedanism in Africa* (1887), identified many areas in the African social universe where Islam was beginning to establish itself and its influence. He noted that the adoption of Islam by traditional Africans raised their sense and understanding of hygiene and that it made them more and more aware of the Islamic belief that the covering of one's physical nakedness is a great step towards the covering of one's spiritual nakedness before Allah.

Smith also pointed out that the arrival of Islam in the West Sudan broadened the basis of

social solidarity and, in the language of Ibn Khaldun, gave rise to a new Assabiyya (social solidarity) of some sort, which in turn led to the formation of tribal and political organizations. This process of growing political consciousness among the Muslims of diverse ethnic backgrounds, in Smith's view, was largely due to the community of sentiments created by Islam. He also believed that the religion of Islam had a great impact on traditional African society because it ushered in a revolution in the mental estate of the individual. He sums his view of the Islamic impact this way:

As regards the individual, it is admitted on all hands that Islam gives to its new Negro converts an energy, a dignity, a self-reliance, and a self-respect which is all too rarely found in their Pagan or their Christian fellow countrymen.(39)

On the cultural plane, we can also argue that the advent of Islam meant a great deal for many African societies. If we identify the material, value and institutional bases of a society as the essential aspects of its culture, then we can proceed to demonstrate the manner in which Islam affected the cultural realm of traditional African man. First of all we can say that the advent of the religion of Islam in the West Sudanese states of the medieval period led to the penetration of Arab and Berber merchants. There is also evidence that the colonization of the continent by Europeans was partly motivated by their desire to wrest power and trade routes from their Muslim rivals in the Mediterranean.

When viewed from this perspective, we can then suggest that Europe's "discovery" and subsequent colonization of Africa were the result of the frantic efforts of Europeans who wished to weaken Islamic power in the name of Christianity and to establish imperial preserves in glorification of their newly fashioned nationalisms. Though some aggressive European nationalists might have seen Christianity as a horse that could transport them to the "Dark Continent" where they could play out their self-appointed role as cosmic transformers, the fact remains that this Christian horse was very much reluctant to follow the riders' commands. Yet, in saying this, we must concede the fact that this religious horse was in most cases treated by the colonial power as a Trojan horse from Europe to Africa. As a result of these nationalistic and political usages of the religion, Christianity came to be seen by many Africans as a tool in the service of Caesar, a point which was very much resented by devout Christians from the metropole.

At the institutional level, one can argue that the religion of Islam introduced several changes in African life. The arrival of a Muslim scholar into an African community most often led to the establishment of the Madrasah (Quranic schools). This new institution gradually replaced, or co-existed with, the traditional centers of education, and the students who were brought before

the Quranic teacher were slowly inducted into the Islamic culture from the north and northeast. Besides the Quranic school, there were other institutional forms of cultural borrowing. With the gradual penetration of the African consciousness, Islam began to invade the African conceptual world and soon the process of linguistic imbibition started to take effect. Consciously or unconsciously, the newly converted African Muslim began to drop traditional words in his language in favor of borrowed Islamic terminology; A- classic example of an

African language that has been very much penetrated by the Islamic influence is Wolof. The arrival of Islam did not only affect the Wolof's conception of time, but it also replaced many Arabic terms in his vocabulary. As an illustration, let us take the names given to the seven days of the week. As a result of the Islamic influence, the Wolof language as spoken in the Senegambian region carries four Arabic words for Tuesday (Arabic Thalatah), Wednesday (Al-Arba), Thursday (Al-Khamsah) and Friday (Al-Jumma). This is a phenomenon that is widely known in the African communities which have established long contact with the Islamic religion. Commenting on this aspect of the African-Islamic encounter, I.W. Lewis put it this way:

The Muslim lunar calendar is everywhere adopted with Islam, and tends to displace other systems of time-reckoning, except where these are very firmly embedded in an unchanging seasonal cycle of economic interests. . . .

Generally, however, the Arabic names for the Muslim months are adopted, although alternate local names based on an earlier calendar may also be utilized, as well as direct vernacular translations expressive of the religious and social content of the month in question.(40)

Another example of institutional borrowing was the Tariqa (Sufi brotherhood). As Nehemia Levtzion correctly points out, these bodies became significant in the West Sudan only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.(41) But in noting this point we should bear in mind that the arrival of the Sufi brotherhoods ushered in a train of development which affected the history of many African societies south of the Sahara.

It is well-known in the growing literature on the Islamic jihads in Africa south of the Sahara that the followers of the Sufi brotherhoods played an important role. It was men like Usman Dan Fodio, Alhaji Omar, Maba Jahu, Sai(Mati, Foday Kaba, Shaikh Muhammad Abdille Hassan, The Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abdallah and several other minor historical figures in the West Sudan, who carried the Islamic banner against those whom almost all of them perceived as unbelievers. Some of these jihad warriors felt that it was their duty to purge-Islam of decadence and corruption and, for this reason, some of them were quite willing to wage war against those whom they perceived as vile ulema.(42) In light of these developments, one

could argue that the successful adaptation of the Sufi brotherhood in the West Sudan contributed to the growth of Muslim solidarity and cohesiveness at the elite level. In fact, I am inclined to believe that the growing acculturation of African Muslims in the Islamic culture together with their desire to play a more active role in the political systems of their times might have led many of them to agitate for reform and change in the lives of their non-Muslim peoples.

The last contribution of Islam to be discussed in this section is the successful adoption of the Arabic script for the reduction of African languages into writing. This Arab-Islamic cultural contribution is by no means insignificant. Indeed such a development in Africans cultural history led to the emergence of a limited form of literacy among many of the Muslim peoples of the West Sudan. The first products of this newly imported technology of intellectual conservation were the epistles and explanatory comment written down by the ulema in the West Sudan. It is quite conceivable that many of the West Sudanese ulema found it desirable from time to time to reduce to writing their thoughts on certain matters affecting the education of their Students.

Another possible reason for the emergence of "the written forms of the vernacular was the desire of the more aggressive propagators of the religion to make their message more accessible to the rank and file of their Islamic movement.(43) Writing on the development of the vernacular languages in West African zones of Islam and Christianity, some scholars have recently suggested that the earlier literary products of the African vernacular languages that adopted Arabic or even a European language, cannot be classified as literature. They were merely the first manifestation of a foreign script at the service of an African language. They also believe, and quite correctly, that ". . . such texts in the West African languages were usually merely parallel to the more important and prestigious originals in the particular languages of the given cultures and powers."(44)

But regardless of the limitations of the newly established technology of intellectual conservation, there are strong evidences that such a development had a great impact on the traditional African's social universe. Edward Blyden, the celebrated Black intellectual, was very much impressed by the influence of Islam on the black man. He and some of his Christian contemporaries thought that the advance of the religion of Islam was a prologue to the real drama, which would be the gradual and final Christianization of the African man. Blyden, in his attempt to demonstrate the cultural impact of Islam, quoted Barth as saying that some of the vernaculars had been enriched "by expressions from the Arabic for the embodiment of the higher processes of thought." He added that, "they have received terms regarding the religion

of one God, and respecting a certain state of civilization, such as marrying, reading, writing, and the objects have relation thereto, sections of time, and phrases of salutation and of good breeding; then the term relating to dress, instruments, and the art of warfare as well as architecture, commerce . . ."(45)

Notes:

1. This point is discussed at great length in my "The Islamic State and Economic Development: A Theoretical Analysis," *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 50, No. 1, (January, 1976). See also Kenneth Cragg, *The Privilege of Man*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1968), especially Chapter 2', Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1975).
2. For a detailed treatment of these aspects of Islamic thought, see Frithjof Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, (London: George Allen, 1976).
3. Indeed Cheikh Anta Diop, the Senegalese historian and physicist, has argued in a controversial work that there is overwhelming evidence that the earliest inhabitants of Arabia were racially Negro and that these were later invaded by a coarse white Jectanide tribe who gradually became assimilated into Black life and culture. Diop gives credence to his claim by saying:
"These facts, on which even Arab authors agree, prove . . . that the Arab race cannot be conceived as anything but mixture of Blacks and Whites, a process continuing even today. These same facts also prove that traits common to Black culture and Semitic culture have been borrowed from the Blacks." See his *The African Origins of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, edited and translated by Mercer Cook, (New York: Westport: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1974). pp. 123-128.
4. For a detailed account on the emergence of Islam in the Maghrib, see Bernard Lewis' brief chapter on "The Invading Crescent" in Roland Oliver, edited. *The Dawn of African History*, (London: OUP, 1969). 5th edition. Chapter 6. See also J. Spencer Trimingham. *A History of Islam in West Africa*, (London: OUP, 1975), Chapter I; Jamil Abu Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, (London: OUP, 1965); E.W. Bovill, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, (London, 1933); E.W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*, 2nd edition, revised and with additional material by Robin Hallet, (London & New York: OUP, 1968).
5. E.W. Bovill. op. cit., p. 67.
6. Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire de Berberes*, ed..de Slane, (Algiers, 1847) Quoted by J. Spencer Trimingham, op. cit., p. 18.

7. E.W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors*.
8. Bernard Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
9. The role of the Almoravids in the diffusion of Islam in the West Sudan is still being argued among scholars. One of the leading authorities is the Israeli scholar. Nehemia Levtzion. In a recent publication he sums up his position on the role of the Almoravid in spreading Islam in the West Sudan in the following manner:
There can be little doubt that the Almoravids accelerated the Islamization of Ghana, but they did so only after the ground had been prepared through the peaceful influence of Muslim traders. For details about the life of the founder of Almoravid movement, see Levtzion's chapter of Ibn Yasin in John Ralph Willis' edited volume, *Studies in West African Islamic History*, (London & Totowa: Frank Cass, 1979), p. 103ff. 45.
10. J. Spencer Trimingham, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
11. E.W. Bovill, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
12. For this section of the paper, I relied heavily on John Ralph Willis' edited volume, *op. cit.*, especially his Introduction.
13. See his *The Jahanke*, (London: International African Institute, 1979), p. 7.
14. Omar Jah, "Islamic History in the West Sudan," *The Bulletin of the Islamic Center of Washirnton D.C.* Vol. 7 No. 1. (May, 1978). p. 24. Reprinted from *The Journal of the Muslim World League*, (January, 1978).
15. *Ibid*, p. 24.
- 16- See Dr. Batran's Chapter in J.R. Willis', edited, *op. cit.*
17. See R.G.Jenkins' paper in Willis' edited volume.
18. See Norris, "The History of Shinkit, according to Idaw Ali Tradition," *Bulletin I.F.A.N.*, XXIV, 3-4, 1962, pp. 393-403. Quoted by R.G. Jenkidns, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
19. For more information on this subject see J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa*, (New York, Alfred Knopf, 1978), Chapters 6-8, Part 2. See also his earlier work, *A History of West Africa*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1959).
20. For some interesting discussion on this subject, see Philip D. Currin, *Economic Change in Pre-Colonial Africa, Semgambia in the Era of the Slaw Trade*, (Madison, Wisconsin & London, England: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).
21. See Mungo Park, *Trawls of Mungo Park*, edited by Roland Miller, (London, Dent, 1954).
22. See B.G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa*, (Cambridge, London, New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 17.
23. Omar Jah, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

24. For some discussion on these cultivators of Islam in West Sudan, see the respective chapters on Maba Jahu and Samori in John Ralph Willis' edited volume.
25. For a good background on the early history of Islam in Eastern Sudan, see Yusuf Fadi Hassan, "The Penetration of Islam in Eastern Sudan." in I.W. Lewis, edited. *Islam in Tropical Africa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 144-159.
26. Yusuf Fadl Hassan, *The Arabs and The Sudan*, (Khartoun, Sudan: Khartoun University Press, 1973), p. 124.
27. Ibid., p. 125f.
28. Ibid., p. 155.
29. J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, (Oxford: OUP, 1952), p. 270f.
30. See I.W. Lewis, op. cit., p. 261.
31. See Baxter's chapter in I.W. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 248-250.
32. See his chapter on "The Coast Before the Arrival of the Portuguese" in B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran, edited, *ZAMANI: A Survey of East African History*, " (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 107f.
33. See F.J. Berg's paper in B.A. Ogot and J.A. Kieran, op. cit., p. 139.
34. Ibid.
35. The principal route was from such ports as Bagamoyo and Sudani. The second was on the southern Tanzanian Coast, centering on such ports as Kilwa, Kivinje, Mkindani and Lindi. The third route began on the northern Tanzanian and southern Kenyan coasts, from such ports as Pangani, Tanga, and Mombasa. See Bennett's chapter in B. A. Ogot and J. A. Kieran. op cit., p. 216f.
36. Bennett, Ibid., p. 236.
37. Daniel F. McCall and Norman R. Bennett, (eds.). *Aspects of West African Islam*, (Boston, Mass.: African Studies Center, Boston University, 1971), p. 17.
38. Ibid., p. 17.
39. Cited in Thomas Walker Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*. (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1933), p. 361.
40. I.W. Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 70.
41. See Nehemia Levitzion's "Patterns of Islamization in West Africa," in Daniel F. McCall and Norman R. Bennett, eds., op. cit.
42. M. Hiskett, "An Islamic Tradition of Reform in the West Sudan from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century," *BSOSA*, XXV, 3, (1962). See also her *The Sword of Truth* (1973) which deals with Shehu Usman Dan Fodio.

43. This view is attributed to M. Hiskett. Vladimir KJima et al. questioned the validity of such a hypothesis and they underscored their point by saying that "it is doubtful whether such an important process as the creation of a literacy in Hausa was really an instantaneous consequence of a rapid social and ideological change occurring during the Djihadi period. (They) stressed that the roots of such an important phenomenon as writing in the main language of Hausa might perhaps also be found in the long drawn-out process of interference of Hausa and Arabic into the written text produced in the area . . . (that) the revolutionary situation during eh Djihadi period might have represented only the final incentive and an impetus towards a shift in the written form of the language, the roots of which had already objectively existed in the Hausa language community for a relatively long period. For details and references on this important question, see their *Black Africa*, (Dorrecht-Holland/Boston-USA: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1976).

44. Ibid.

45. Edward Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh .University Press, 1967), p. 187