necessarily drawbacks in the development of Pentecostalism in Ghana. Out of the various disputes and conflicts new groups were created and it may be suggested that the controversies and the resulting secessions contributed to the vitality of the movement as a whole. Without men like Anim and McKeown the Pentecostalist movement in Ghana might well have retained its unity. But it is also possible that the movement would have become stagnant and moribund.

MODERNIZATION AND CHANGE IN THE NIZARI ISMAILI COMMUNITY IN EAST AFRICA— A PERSPECTIVE

BY

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The aspirations and problems of contemporary Muslims both in Africa and elsewhere have been variously formulated as "the challenge of the Modern Age to Islam," the modernization of technologically backward and traditional societies, or in even broader terms as a tension that is by no means peculiar to Islam.[1] Whereas the varied uses of terminology to express properly the nature of the problem may be questioned, we can agree in principle that since the onset of the so-called period of modernization, there has come about in the minds of concerned Muslims a certain new motivation.[2] This has led them to consider and evaluate Islam, as they had come to believe in it and practice it, in terms of their ability to revitalize their faith, in dealing with the emerging existential situation.[3]

This essay, then, is concerned largely with analyzing this motivation as it has been reflected within the Nizari Ismaili community of East Africa and relating this to the wider issue of the processes by which a specific Muslim group has been able to effect change. The

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1) For these three views, see Manfred Halpern, *The Politics of Social Change in the Middle East and North Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 25-37; James Kritzeck and William H. Lewis (eds.), *Islam in Africa* (New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1966), 1-2; and Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947) 17-38. Some extremely relevant remarks are also to be found in Leonard Binder, *The Ideological Revolution in the Middle East* (New York: Wiley, 1964).

2) The term "modernization" has perhaps been best defined in relation to tradition in Cyril E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization...* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), as a process with a "continuous series of changes accompanying the growth of knowledge and its effects on man's way of getting things done." Traditional societies on the other hand are seen as "a pattern of inherited institutions or structure that is relatively static at the time modern knowledge makes its initial impact on it" (p. 55).

3) The modern age and its impact on the Islamic world is generally thought to begin in the 19th century. See Halpern, *Politics of Social Change*, 30.

Nizari Ismailis of East Africa, also called Khojas, must be properly distinguished from other Shia groups in East Africa like the Ithna-ʿAshari and Bohora. All three trace their origin back to that group of Muslims who, on the death of Muhammad, held the view that his son-in-law Ali inherited the role of leader and guide of the Muslim community. This group, which came to be known as the Shiʿa, further developed this claim into the doctrine of *Imamat*, where this role would be perpetuated by a designated transmission through the descendants of Ali. In the course of Shiʿa history a number of splits took place over the issue of succession to the *Imamat*, and the Nizari Ismailis are one resulting group. They maintain that their present Imam, His Highness Karim, Aga Khan IV, is the rightful and legitimate heir to the position of Iman, while the Ithna-ʿAshari and Bohora give allegiance to a different set of Imans. The latter two groups believe that the last Iman of the respective time has gone into concealment, or occultation, to reappear towards the Day of Judgment.[4]

Since the question of modernization and development is one that has wide implications for the developing world as a whole, it is necessary to establish at the outset certain criteria for evaluating modernization. Karl Deutsch advocates the barometer of "social mobilization," which he defines as the "process in which major clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior."[5] This "social mobilization" would then be reflected in the various socio-demographic and structural corollaries of a modernized society, with all its well-known institutions. Such a limited and unilinear definition serves however to characterize only the separate external manifestations and fails to take into account a deeper, more significant dimension of modernization. Modernization needs to be seen as an ongoing process that generates a series of common and often similar problems, to which different responses are possible. The Ismaili response can be seen as an attempt to develop a society which, while creating a new system and generating continuous change, would also be able to absorb these changes without breaking at the center

4) Works on all aspects of Ismailism have shown a steady increase recently. For a general view on the various groups and the reasons for the splits, see Wladimir Ivanow, "Ismailiya," in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 179-183, and also A. A. A. Fyzee, "Ismailis," in Arthur J. Arberry (ed.), *Religion in the Middle East* ... (Cambridge University Press, 1969), II, 318-330.

5) "Social Mobilization ..., *American Political Science Review*, 55 (3) 1961, 493.

and assure at the same time the continuity of its essential identity and values.[6]

In order to facilitate a discussion within the framework of a short essay, the issues will be focused in the context of two specific developments. One concerns the constitutional development of the community; that is, the creation of institutions and organizations that have led to a corporate and individual identity. This discussion in turn necessitates an outline consideration of the structural changes that have taken place in the last seventy-five years or so and the underlying factors. The other area of consideration revolves around the more contemporary issue of the community's attitude and response to political changes in East Africa with the onset of independence for her three states. This highlights particularly the problem of how a close-knit, highly centralized group like the Ismailis have attempted to align themselves within the complex of national policies and objectives. The issues have in a sense been arbitrarily chosen, but I hope it will become clear, as the discussion progress, why they are central to the understanding of the ways in which the Ismailis see their role as Muslim facing up to changing circumstances. Moreover, the two issues also reflect the mechanisms by which the community is able to redefine its objectives and self-image.

SOURCES

Recently there has been growing interest in the development of the Ismailis within the wider field of the study of Islam in East Africa as well as in the consideration of sociological factors like pluralism and minority groups.[7] The Ismailis themselves have been willing to submit their own development to analysis by fellow members and others, and consequently there is enough material to permit an outline discussion, particularly on the two problems set out above. Sources

6) Such a view is being increasingly advocated by theorists of development and modernization; see, for instance, Kritzeck and Lewis, *op. cit.* 2, and S. Eisenstadt, Social Change and Modernization in African Societies South of the Sahara, in William H. Lewis (ed.), *French-Speaking Africa* ... (New York: Walker, 1965), 224. Even stronger advocates are the theorists of African socialism in East Africa; see Julius Nyerere, Ujama: The Basis of African Socialism, and Tom Mboya, African Socialism, in William H. Friedland and Carl Roseberg (eds.), *African Socialism* (Stanford University Press, 1964) 238-247 and 250-58, respectively.

7) Among important studies are H. S. Morris, *The Indians in Uganda* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), and Dharam Ghai (ed.), *Portrait of a Minority* ... (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1965, new ed. 1971).

for this essay are therefore based in the main on field research carried out by myself and others, and also on publications by the community. These sources are further complemented by the availability of *firmans* and speeches made by the last two Imams, which lay down the aims and guidelines for the community. [8]

BACKGROUND

In 1876 a British official, Sir Bartle Frere, wrote that there were more than 700 Ismaili families in Zanzibar, and they were being continually augmented by immigrants from India. [9] In the Aga Khan case, ten years previously, Justice Arnould mentioned the existence of 450 Ismaili families in Zanzibar. [10] An official, writing from Zanzibar in 1860, noted that every vessel arriving from India at the East African coast contained many Ismaili immigrants. [11] Though it is difficult to pin-point exactly when this wave of immigration began, we know of certain factors that encouraged this growing trend. Asian traders were known to have plied the East African coastal trade for a long time, but with the establishment of the Omani Sultanate on the East African coast in 1840, which encouraged Asian settlement and trade, full-fledged immigration began. [12] Second, adverse conditions in India, coupled with the advice of the Imam, encouraged the Ismailis to seek newer pastures. It seems that even at this very early stage one can discern some sort of a planned awareness on the part of

8) The historical work in Gujarati, *Noorum Mubin*, 4th edition (Bombay: Ismaili Association, 1961) incorporates the modern developments. A recent M.A. thesis, *Ismailis of Mainland Tanzania*, by Shirin Walji (University of Wisconsin, 1969) also provides interesting materials. Eva Kjellberg's *The Ismailis in Tanzania* (Dar-es-Salaam: Institute of Public Administration, mimeo, 1967) is also important. Also available are *Speeches of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan*, 2 pts. (Mombasa: Ismailia Association for Africa, 1963-64), and some copies of *firmans* made in English and Gujarati by the last two Imams. For a definition of *firman*, see N. Q. King and A. K. Adatia, Some East African Firmans of H. H. Aga Khan III, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2 (3) 1969, 180-181.

9) The Khodjas, *Macmillan's Magazine* (1876), 342.

10) For a description and analysis of this case, see Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *Cases in the Muhammadan Law of India and Pakistan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

11) Hatim Amiji, The Asian Communities, in Kritzeck and Lewis, *op. cit.*, 143.

12) For the background to this, see Roland Oliver and G. Mathew, (eds.), *History of East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), I, 150-161, and J. S. Mangat, *A History of the Asians in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), ch. I. Also see Robert G. Gregory, *India and East Africa...* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

the Imams to encourage immigration and eventually the development of a large community in East Africa. [13] In terms of organization, during this early period of settlement on the coast, the main features were the *jamat-khanas*, which acted as the religious and social focal points, each administered by two officials, a *Mukhi* and a *Kamadia*. [14]

Even from the earliest days migration to and settlement in the interior took place. The main lines of this move are not very clear, but by the end of the century an Ismaili trader, Allidina Visram, had extended his influence and commercial services far into the interior, along with the penetration of the railway line from the coast. Before long he had built a trading empire with more than thirty branches, which came to be staffed and run by fellow Ismaili immigrants or relatives. [15]

Thus, by this time there were developing, on the coast and inland, pockets of Ismailis based on the *jamat-khana* type of organization. In this respect, as a group they probably resembled other Asian communal groups who, also after immigrating, had tended to cluster into groups around temples or mosques. The common denominator of all these groups, it must be remembered, was their basic entrepreneurial orientation; whatever organization they had could only have been the caste or communal bonds they had brought along with them. [16] In 1899 and 1905, however, the Ismailis were visited twice by their Imam and received their first constitution. The programme of constructing a community with a highly 'individual and dynamic identity had begun.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRESENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

The impact of the judgment in the Aga Khan Case on the future development of the community was immense. On the one hand, it clarified the position of the Imam and his relations with his followers, giving him absolute right to all communal property, without any responsibility of trusteeship. On the other hand, it served to establish the

13) See Shirin Walji, *Ismailis*, 22-31.

14) The terms are of Indian origin and refer to their capacity as officials; the first *jamat-khanas* were established at the same time as the immigrants started settling in. The term *jamat-khana*, literally "place of assembly," appears to have originated among Sufi orders of Muslims in medieval India as a result of the fusion of the Arabic term *jam'ia* (meeting) and the Persian *khanch* (place). See K. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar* (Aligarh: 1955), 46-49.

15) For Allidina Visram, see Mangat, *History of Asians*, 51-53, 77-82.

16) See Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, ch. III.

identity of the Ismailis as a community in its own right, with an additional safeguard against dissenters or dissatisfied seceders, who could be excommunicated. The Imams themselves, after their considerable problems in Persia, had more freedom to exercise their initiative under the relatively more benign rule of the British in India. 17) Though the historical factors were thus favourable, the problem of dissenters still remained. The Constitution of 1905 was therefore meant to provide a framework that would apply to the community and act as safety valve against seceders who might lay claim to communal property. A case dealing with such a claim was fought in 1905 in Bombay. Aga Khan III sought to resolve the problem in Africa by executing a power of attorney by which three of his followers would act as his agents in matters of land and property in Africa. 18) These earliest days of the community's development, thus focused attention on the need to place the reins of organization in the Imams' hand and to create safety valves for future development in case the legality of his authority was questioned. Once this was done, it becomes easier to understand how the Imams could more easily extrt their initiative in creating change and transforming their followers who now gave them complete allegiance. However, the individual personality of the Imam also played a key role, and the policies started by Aga Khan I in India were carried through with even more vigour by Aga Khan III in Africa. 19)

By 1924 the interplay of these factors became more evident as the community grew in numbers. Due to an upsurge of economic growth in the interior of East Africa, Zanzibar ceased to be the centre of Ismaili activity and, as new centres of Ismaili activity came into existence, they had to be provided with councils and administrative organizations. 20) A new Constitution was thus issued in 1926. Under its provisions, provincial councils were set up in what had now become the three East African territories of Tanganyika, Uganda, and Kenya. The members were selected by the Imam, who also supervised much

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17) These events are succinctly described in Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan, *The Memoirs of Aga Khan* (London: Cassell, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 20-22, and *Noorum Mubin*, 430-442.

18) Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 24 ff. Sporadic dissent continued but it did not have any real impact, and the dissenters converted in most cases to Ithna-Asharism.

19) The educational and economic development started by Aga Khan I is given brief mention in some early writings, for example, J. Rahimtullah, *Khoja Komno Itihas* (Bombay: Privately printed, 1905).

20) For the development of the interior, see Kenneth Ingham, *A History of East Africa*, 3rd ed. (London: Longmans, 1965), chs. II, III.

of their work. These new organizations were welcomed by the various colonial administrations, since they facilitated their dealings with the community. 21)

The next thirty years saw a gradual filling out of these institutions as economic and educational bodies became attached to them. In education the most significant developments were the schools built in major towns and, on the economic side, the establishment of an insurance company, an investment trust company, and various cooperative organizations to unify trading interests. Simultaneously, medical institutions were built in major centres. 22) If one were to simplify and pinpoint the areas within which the community saw its future at this stage, the emphasis would undoubtedly be on education and trade. Education was seen as the means to guarantee the future of the children in a highly competitive society and one of the instruments whereby the community could always maintain its leading role. Trade was seen as the pillar on which the economic stability of the community rested and the main field towards which their inherited talents as traders could be geared.

In 1952, the Imam called an important conference in Europe for all Ismaili leaders in Africa with the aim of formulating new tasks and goals for the Ismailis in that part of the world. The outcome of this conference was far-reaching. The institutions were restructured, a greater degree of interrelation among the institutions was developed, and in fact the new pattern went so far as to accommodate every aspect of the community's development to a changing situation. The late Aga Khan, explaining one aspect of these changes, stated, "The [the Ismailis] arrived there with Asiatic habits and an Asiatic pattern of existence, but they encountered a society in process of development which is, if anything, Euro-African. To have retained an Asiatic outlook in matters of language, habit, and clothing would have been for them a complication and in society an archaic dead weight for the Africa of the future." 23)

The changes thus reflected a preparation for the community to pass into what was soon to be a new era. Since the accession of Karim Aga

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21) Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 79.

22) There is no adequate study of this development, but references are found in *Noorum Mubin*, pp. 511 and 547, and Walji, *Ismailis*, chs. V, VI. Two major events during this period were the Golden and Diamond Jubilees celebrated on the occasion of the 50th and 60th years of the Imam's office; both were marked by the setting up of ambitious economic and social projects.

23) Aga Khan, *Memoirs*, 30.

Khan in 1957, the changes in the Constitution have been slightly re-defined. The close-knit, highly organized system as it is reflected in the latest Constitution (1962) appears as follows: [24]

1. Provincial Councils for each province in charge of local af-fairs—under them come the economic committees, welfare societies, women's associations, youth associations, etc.

2. Territorial Councils, one in each of the three states—members are selected from various provinces.

3. A Supreme Council for Africa with a changing headquarters—this supervises and coordinates the various Territorial Councils.

Each of the above councils has a tribunal with a chairman and four members. Their main function is to deal with disputes arising in marriage, divorce applications, disputes of inheritance, and so forth. Cases of breach of the Constitution are also brought before the Tribunals, who act further as Courts of Appeal. [25]

4. An Executive Council for Africa was established with the main function of acting as a financial body channeling funds to the various organizations.

5. Educational institutions fall within the jurisdiction of an ad-ministrator in each state. Under him come the provincial education boards which deal directly with the schools. The chairman of these boards have *ex officio* status in the provincial councils, and the administrators hold similar positions in the territorial councils.

6. Health institutions are the concern of the health administrator in each country, with provincial committees under him.

7. Jamati affairs are under the jurisdiction of a *Mukhi* and a *Kamadia* for every *jamat khana*, whose main function is to perform and officiate at all religious and social ceremonies such as prayers, rites attendant upon birth, marriage, and death. They also collect what are termed *Sarkar Sahebi* dues. [26]

8. For purposes of religious education, propagation, dissemina-tion, and publication of religious literature, there exists in each state an Ismailia Association with provincial bodies at local levels. Those involved in the work of the Association act primarily as exponents of the faith and are concerned mainly with the explication and preaching of the Islamic tradition and values. [27]

Having delineated the present structural situation of the Ismailis, the next important step is to consider how its essential components are related to each other and how the whole system in fact operates. The preliminaries prefacing the Constitution establish two points: first, that the Rules of Conduct have been conceived within the "spirit of Islam," and second that "nothing therein contained shall affect the Absolute Power and Sole Authority of Mowlana Hazar Imam to alter, amend, modify, vary, or annul at any time, or to grant dispensation from the Constitution or any part thereof." [28] We may note, there-fore, that the ideological framework within which these have been con-ceived has its roots in the historical origins and development of Is-maili ideas of polity, a point to be examined. At the conclusion of this study, we will analyze the factors and assumptions that motivate the system.

The various councils and organizations, seen against the background of the whole system, emerge as extensions of the Imam's authority and guidance, both of which, in a sense, mirror the community's vision of life. These extensions are coordinated to involve as many Ismailis as possible at varying levels of organization. Hence, though the main thrust comes from the Imam, it is, in actuality, the community by its involvement in the day-to-day workings of the system that keeps it functioning. It is worth noting that the promulgation of the Rules was not a sole act of the Imam but the outcome of "Constitutional Committees," formed under the Imam's initiative, which toured Africa, invited proposals, and worked to formulate a code that related the legal validity of the Constitution to the juridical framework of the various African states where the Ismailis were living. [29]

When we consider the type of people who hold the various posts, we also notice some interesting developments. Whereas in the earlier

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24) This is based on "The Constitution of the Shia Imami Ismailis in Africa" (Nairobi: Ismailia Supreme Council for Africa, 1962). Some comments on the new constitution particularly the changes in personal law will be found in J. N. D. Anderson, The Ismaili Khojas of East Africa, *Middle Eastern Studies*, I (1964), 24 ff. A fairly complete set of the constitutions is available at University of California, Santa Cruz. A close study of them reveals the logic of each step towards modernization.

25) An appeal can always be made to the Imam whose decision is final (*Con-stitution*, Article 557).

26) These include the payment of *Zakah* (or *Dasond* as it is called in Guje-rati) and any other voluntary contributions made by the followers.

27) This is in a sense a continuation of the institution of the *Da'wa* except that there is no attempt to seek converts at this time. See E. Tyan, "Da'wa" *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), II, 168-172.

28) See *Constitution*, part I and Article 5.

29) Anderson, *art. cit.*, 23.

days it was the business-minded, more influential, members who served in the councils, today there is considerable diversification. The tribunal members are in most cases lawyers, the educational and health administrators are professional men, and so on. As the institutions have become more sophisticated, so the general educational level of the administrators has risen. This in itself is the outcome of the early transformation is thus always accompanied by a simultaneously developing educational system, the products of which are then able to man these institutions. Nevertheless, the continuing influence at the communal as well as the national level of the wealthier businessmen means that in most cases they still hold the highest posts. One general result, however, has been that there is "a continuous restructuring of the distribution of power, wealth, and prestige, and rearrangement of different social groups and roles within the constitutional framework." [30]

That these people work as unpaid volunteers may seem to need some explanation of motivation. Basically one can see this stemming from the sense of belonging to the group. The Imams have succeeded in inculcating a cooperative outlook in a business society originally motivated towards individual, entrepreneurial objectives, and in this way have given the community a sense of solidarity. The idea of service to the community is thus emphasized as a value. In addition, the last two Imams have succeeded in identifying and relating the needs of individual followers to wider needs in the interest of the community. The previous Imam instituted a system of titles for the volunteers which have much prestige and honour attached to them. [31]

In considering the actual working of the system, three levels can be discerned. The first level represents the original impetus from the directive of the Imam himself. The community visualizes his role as that of a captain guiding and directing the ship to its destination. [32] The Imam's initiative is transposed at the second level into the form of an institutional addition or change under the close scrutiny of the

30) Walji, *Ismailis*, 93. This at present is the continuing trend, with a lot of "new blood" taking over the organizations every four years, as recommended by the Constitution.

31) See Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 83. The titles ranged from *Vizier* to *Count, Alijah*, etc., each signifying the amount of service performed and seniority.

32) This simile is quite standard, but far more detailed expositions have also been made. See M. J. Kassim Ali, *Ever Living Guide* (Karachi: Ismaili Association of Pakistan, 1955), 31 ff.

various councils and in accordance with constitutional checks and balances at every subsidiary stage. Since every council is also directly in touch with the Imam, he is involved in the daily affairs of his followers. The activity within the body involves nearly all the members, for most of them find themselves concerned in its workings and being called upon to contribute to it, and profit from it. [33] These three levels accordingly sum up ways in which the Ismailis as a body are able to achieve efficiency and maintain vigour and dynamism.

However, to explain such a system in purely structural and mechanistic terms as something that "just works" is to be oblivious of the other, more complicated, human factors. For example, there are the vital questions as to what enables these three levels to function in harmony while maintaining the hegemony of the institutions and what allows the community to bring about transformation without disruption of its main components. The first element can be loosely defined as allegiance and acceptance on the part of those that comprise the system — once this is a question more related to an examination of the psychology of belief, we can here only take the existence of such factors for granted and try to explain how they are perpetuated.

The Ismailis see themselves in relation to other communities as a much more dynamic and progressive group which the others eventually come to imitate. [34] Another vital factor is the personalities of the last two Imams, who have injected into their hereditary role as absolute leaders an immense vitality not only at the communal level but also at the international. [35] The Imams have not rested on the laurels of their religious aura or inherited charisma, but have invested their position with a functional role which has made them indispensable. In more precise terms, was like other traditional institutions the *imamat* has not become superfluous and obsolete; it can be maintained quite simply that had it not been for the Imams' guidance the fortunes of the community would have been vastly different today from what they are.

33) The multiplicity of organizations in the community enables anyone interested to participate in some way or other.

34) Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 90; *Glun*, Portrait, 19.

35) The late Aga Khan's international role in the League of Nations and in the founding of Pakistan is too well known to need to be repeated. Besides the *Memoirs*, see Q. Malik, *H. H. The Aga Khan: Guide and Philosopher* (Karachi: Ismaili Association of Pakistan, 1954); Harry J. Greenwall, *His Highness the Aga Khan ...* (London: Cresset Press, 1952); and Stanley Jackson, *The Aga Khan ...* (London: Odhams Press, 1952). The new Aga Khan has also received much attention recently; see Willi Frischauer, *The Aga Khans* (London: The Bodley Head, New York: Hawthorne Books, 1971, 1970).

This leads us to our second major consideration in this essay—the community in an era of political change in East Africa. Whereas in the discussion of the previous problem the emphasis was on how the community has achieved its present status, this second part seeks to illuminate the far more complex issue of how the community aims to continue the process in the future. The present Imam has enunciated certain guidelines to his followers in this way:

"As true Ismailis you must remember that you will always have two principal obligations. The first and paramount of these is your religious obligation to Islam and to your Imam. Your second obligation is a secular one. You must always be loyal to the country of your adoption and to whatever Government is responsible for your security and well-being. This is the advice which my beloved grandfather gave to you. I believe it is as wise and true today as it was when he was alive. It constitutes the surest guarantee by which you can maintain your faith and your civic identity."[36])

In order to understand the working of this principle, we need to examine Ismaili attitudes towards the problem in pre-independence days. As we noted earlier, they formed part of a wider Asian settlement in East Africa. Morris, in discussing the evolution of the Asian community as a whole in its earliest days, states: "An outsider might have postulated that in these circumstances a single Indian community would emerge, stratified possibly in terms of social class but not in terms of caste or sectarian differences."[37]) Yet the Ismaili community set about deliberately to develop itself into a completely different and corporate group. At the same time, there was a determination to align with other Muslims in the area, especially indigenous Muslims. One way by which this was done was to play down the Asiatic and Hindu cultural traits (which also carried over into the religious sphere). The daily prayer (*salat*) was changed from Gujerati to Arabic, the Hindu inheritance laws that governed the community at the outset were altered to those of the Shia, and Indian ceremonies attendant on marriage, birth, and death were curtailed.[38]) Much more, however, than just these shifts in personal and religious matters was the policy of direct contribution to the promotion of educational and economic development of indigenous Muslims in East Africa through the formation in

36) *Speeches*, I, 35.
37) Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 27.
38) This is based on a piece of research by Aziz Esmail and myself, available in mimeograph form in the Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University College. See also Anderson, *art. cit.*, 33-34. Dr. Esmail's study *Satpanth Ismaism and Modern Changes within it, with special references to East Africa* (P. D. thesis submitted to Edinburgh University, 1972) is to be published soon.

1945 of the East African Muslim Welfare Society. This Society has contributed greatly towards remoulding the Islamic outlook of the indigenous Muslims in the educational and economic spheres, and it still continues to be an active body.[39]) The involvement of the Ismailis in the affairs of the indigenous people is of mutual benefit, for it cultivated in both groups a sense of common purpose. This was reflected in the greater acceptance that the Ismailis received after Independence as compared with other Asian groups.[40])

Even before Independence the Ismailis had identified themselves with Africans by integrating their schools and promoting the local economy. Preparation for the transition from the colonial to the Independence era was also made in the public speeches of the Imam, identifying Ismaili aspirations with those of the nation and openly commanding followers to obtain national citizenship.[41]) The Asians in general, faced with independent national governments, found themselves caught in a dilemma, as their previously segmented, exclusive, and preferential position under the British was felt to be threatened. A considerable number have since left East Africa, the reasons appearing to be twofold. First, the policies of nationalization and "Africanization" meant that those who still held on to British passports or British Protected Status found their primary fields of activity—the retail trade and the civil service—threatened. The second reason is much more complex and has to do partly with the inability of many Asians to make the necessary material and psychological adjustment towards a post-Independence East Africa where the African, having taken over from his colonial masters, would be intent upon redressing the economic and social balance in favour of the majority.[42]) "African Socialism" as practiced, for instance, in Tanzania has meant that the Asian has been asked to change his style of life and adopt material values often the opposite of the entrepreneurial ones he held before. In this situation a combination of accumulated fear and insecurity has prevented the average Asian from taking the initiative in effecting integration. The Ismaili community has attempted

39) J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 171-172.
40) This was evident in the speeches of African politicians who, after independence, urged Asians to follow the example of the Ismailis.
41) See the *Takti Nishini* speeches made during ceremonies in East Africa, *Speeches*, I, 7-11, and other related talks in both parts I and II.
42) See article, That 'Asian Exodus.' Who is reponsible? by Iconoclastes in *East African Journal*, 5, April 1968, 5-8.

to make a constructive transition in the economic sphere by moving into industry. This is illustrated by the establishment of the Industrial Promotion Service which works in close conjunction with the three governments. 43) However, the second and far more important transition into complete integration still remains to be made, notwithstanding the repeated guidance and urging of the Imam.

If the emphasis has been on the positive aspects of Ismaili response to the problems of change and modernization, it is because I have felt that the essay should be concerned with understanding the success which a specific Muslim group has achieved by drawing its sources of vitality from a traditional institution without drastic disruption of its equilibrium or erosion of its religious values. This is, however, not to disclaim the basic tension that underlies the attempt and indicates the problems faced by any minority group striving to retain and cultivate its identity in an era of change. Such a tension is bound to be felt much more intensely in a group like the Ismailis who have a deep religious loyalty to the idea of an Imam and at the same time a secular loyalty to their respective countries. The problem becomes more acute as the demands of commitment made by national ideologies in developing countries are greater today than ever before.

CONCLUSION

In any final analysis of the successful emergence of a community like the Ismailis into the modern world, one must ask two basic questions. The first concerns not only the way changes have been effected, but more fundamentally what type of society these changes have produced and, especially for a Muslim community, what effect this had on their self-image as Muslims. The second question is related to the peculiar historical situation in which the group has developed and how the group's special characteristics have been affected by the historical period in which we have been examining it.

To answer the first question, one needs to delve a little into Ismaili history and thought. In contrast to the Sunnis in general, the sources of law and development for the Ismailis do not stem exclusively from the *Four Usuls* (Basic Principles) and their interplay.44) Modern

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43) The Industrial Promotion Service also has branches in Zaire and the Ivory Coast, as well as in Pakistan. Recently a Tourist Promotion Service has also been inaugurated.

44) For a review of this development, see Joseph Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

Muslim thinkers like Afghani or Abduh, in attempting to revive Islam, have felt it necessary to redefine current attitudes towards these sources. One resultant feature was the need to return to the pristine Islam of the *salaf.*45) In the Ismaili ideological framework, the *imamate* existed as an additional invariable, the impetus from the Imams coming from the special position inherited by them after the death of the Prophet. The work of the Prophet in Ismaili history thus came to be complemented by the role of the Imam, and one of the remarkable features of Ismaili history is the way this institution has survived the mixed fortunes of the community. The ancestors of the present group in East Africa were converted in India, and their form of Ismailism differed vastly from that of the early Fatimids or the Nizari Ismailis of Persia.46) Flexibility therefore was a historically conditioned, built-in trait. This and the concept of the imamate made it easier for the Ismailis to accept change initiated by the Imam. For them a possible dichotomy between sectularization and an already developed system of *shari'a* did not exist, because the Imam himself channeled new institutions into the community, thus giving them their specific acceptability. Another important distinction lay in the way they defined the "spirit of Islam": "Islam means not only faith but it means work; it means creating the world in which you can practice your faith to the best of your ability, and to create the world in which you must be able to do this; to create the world in which you can practice your faith."47) This concept broadened the basis upon which the Ismailis built their system by giving Islam a wider implication and relating it to historical factors. The "worldly" or secular aspect was thus given emphasis, for it was necessary to create a viable environment in which values could be practiced. If we look at the community's development with this concept of Islam in mind, it becomes easier to understand why they felt it necessary to adjust and adapt to the historical milieu in which they lived. This fluidity however is controlled by the Imam, and the ques-

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45) For a discussion of the attempt of Afghani and Abduh, see A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 103-160; and Gibb, *Modern Trends,* ch. III.

46) A short account of Ismaili development will be found in Wladimir Ivanow, *A Brief Survey of the Evolution of Ismailism* (Leiden: Brill, 1952). An analysis of their ideas of polity will be found in Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *The Fatimid Theory of State* (Lahore: Orientalia Publishers, 1957), ch. III and IV and M. G. S. Hodgson, The Ismaili State, in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1968), V, 422-483.

47) From a speech made by the Aga Khan to the Ismailia Association of Pakistan, which published it in Karachi in 1960.

tion that has been raised in sociological terms, is whether this single invariable can maintain its self-renewing capacity while the other structures are constantly being reshaped.[48] So far this threat has not materialized because, as we have noted, the followers in every generation have been able to identify with the leadership, and conversely their faith in the imamate has been fortified by the actual dynamism of the Imams. The interaction of these two forces can be regarded as the single most important factor in providing the source of vitality.

The particular historical factors, against which the Ismaili development can be seen, have also played a determining role. This is amply illustrated when we compare the East African Ismailis with those in other parts of the world where similar circumstances have not arisen. The communities in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran reflect certain contrasts. However, the factor common to all is their continuing allegiance to the Imam, while their social and economic conditions differ greatly. The vast changes in the Indian community from being secretive, closed, and almost caste-like in appearance may be attributed to the freer and relatively benign British administration. British rule in a sense provided the indifferent umbrella under which the Ismailis had much greater freedom of movement and action.[49] The favourable political conditions continued in East Africa. The Ismailis are able today to participate in the new national objectives with a great sense of belonging to the young, plural society of East Africa. At this stage, then, discounting any drastic political changes, the future does not necessarily bode a reversal of fortune for the Ismailis. If they can continue to participate fully and at every level in the process of nation-building, and become part of the new multi-racial African image that East African nations are trying to promote and formulate, then there is no reason why their particular quality of vigour cannot be integrated into the national effort to aid the task of all those concerned in building stable and equal plural societies.[50]

Finally, a word of caution on the methodological problems that arise when one is dealing with a group such as the Ismailis. A recent attempt at studying Indian immigrant communities scattered over the world essayed a classification of degrees of change in terms of factors that

48) Morris, *Indians in Uganda*, 172-173.
49) Aga Khan, *Memoirs*, 23-24; and *Speeches* I, 53. This is considerably reflected in the very close personal relationships and influence the Imams developed with the British Government.
50) These are the stated aims of all three governments; see Ghai, *Portrait*, 130-50.

favour or retard change. For instance, immigration in groups and as traders, maintaining ties with the homeland, and separation from the host community are given as factors retarding change.[51] It can be argued that these factors would normally apply to the present status of most Indians in East Africa, yet in the case of the Ismailis, as our study more than demonstrates, the conclusions every time would be exactly the opposite. The Ismailis immigrated as traders and in groups, maintained religious links with other Ismaili communities particularly in India and Pakistan, and finally developed as a corporate group well apart from the mainstream of the indigenous society. None of these factors has in any way acted as a barrier to change. Whereas this may prove that the community can be regarded as an exception, it says much more about the limitations of a method that attempts to put a group within any over-narrow classification. One would do well to remember Bernard Lewis' sage advice concerning the Ismailis: "No single, simple explanation can suffice to clarify the complex phenomenon of Ismailism in the complex society of Medieval Islam. The Ismaili religion evolved over a long period and a wide area and meant different things in different places."[52] Though the comment refers to a specific period of Ismaili history, its implications have far greater validity in our times, where the flux, complexity, and human variety are so much more evident.

P.S. In August 1972 President Idi Amin of Uganda issued a proclamation that eventually led to the expulsion of almost the entire Asian community from the country. A large number of the Nizari Ismailis who were forced to leave Uganda have now found new homes elsewhere, for the most part in Britain and Canada.

51) Chandra Jayawardena, "Migration and social change: a survey of Indian communities overseas," *Geographical Review*, 58 (July 1968), 426-449. The table of variables that favour or retard change is found on p. 447.
52) *The Assassins* ... (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 138-139.