

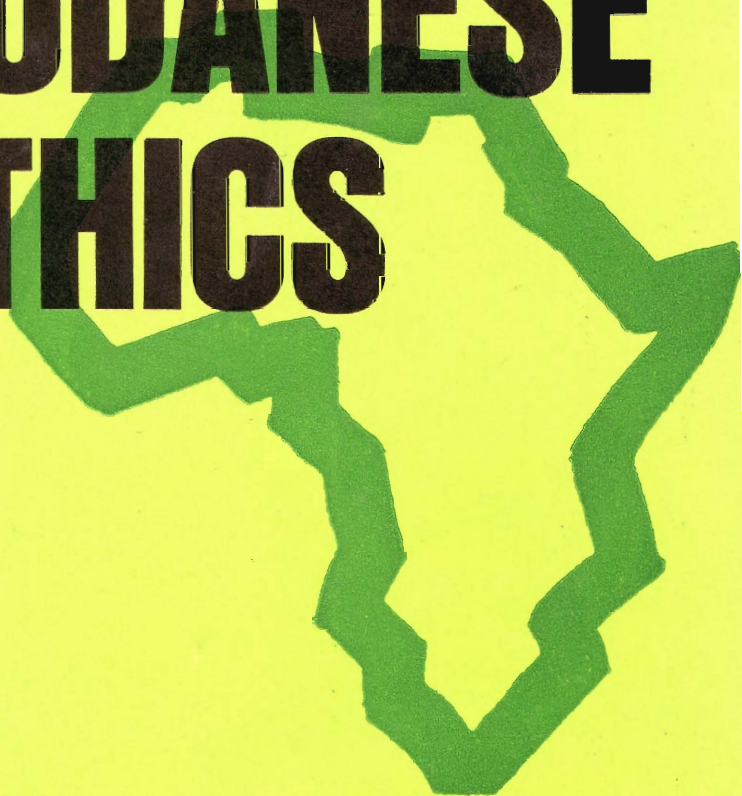
TORE NORDENSTAM

SUDANESE ETHICS

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Sudanese Ethics

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The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies

UPPSALA 1968

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Preface

This is a study in descriptive ethics, based upon interviews with Sudanese university students.

The first part of the book outlines a framework and methodology for research into ethical systems, with particular attention to those aspects which have to do with personality ideals.

In the second part, this theoretical framework is applied in a study of how some well-educated young Sudanese conceive of the virtues which are traditionally highly valued in their own society: courage, generosity and hospitality, honour, dignity and self-respect.

The third part of the book contains the transcripts of the interviews.

Intercultural research into moral ideologies can be expected to prove significant for moral theory, which has hitherto been concerned almost exclusively with European moral thinking. From the practical point of view, studies of moral ideologies can be seen as one aspect of the mapping of human resources which might be expected to contribute both to more rational development planning and to the successful implementation of development programmes. There are reasons to pay special attention to the educated élites when planning for development, since it is the educated élite which has got the task of initiating and directing the development of a country.

The book is a revised version of a University of Khartoum doctoral thesis. A report on a further study of moral concepts among Sudanese university students is in preparation.

I am deeply grateful to all those students, colleagues and friends who have assisted in the project. In particular, I should like to thank the three main informants for their invaluable cooperation; Prof. A. P. Cavendish and Prof. Håkan Törnebohm for their constructive criticism and constant encouragement; and the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies for practical assistance. I should also like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude

to Profs. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, K.-G. Izikowitz, Sven Krohn, Arne Næss, K. E. Tranøy and G. H. von Wright for valuable comments on the first version of this book. Publication grants from the Swedish Research Council for the Social Sciences and the Nathorst Foundation are gratefully acknowledged.

Part I

Methods in Descriptive Ethics

Chapter 1

The Field of Ethics

A person's ethics can be regarded as part of his ideology, but there is no general agreement on how much of a person's ideology should be regarded as belonging to his ethics. This problem about the size of the field of ethics can be seen as a definition problem. In this chapter I shall survey different approaches to the problem of the definition of 'ethics' and state and defend my own views on the subject. There are two related reasons why it will be convenient to open a discussion of ethical methodology by a consideration of the problem of the scope of ethics: (1) because this will provide the general setting for the ensuing methodological discussion, (2) because one's methodology is obviously dependent upon how one conceives of the field of ethics.

1. Ethics and ideology

'Ideology', like 'ethics', has got a number of different uses. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* gives the following explanation of the meaning of 'ideology': "Science of ideas; visionary speculation; manner of thinking characteristic of a class or individual, ideas at the basis of some economic or political theory or system, as *Fascist, Nazi*."¹

Of these three meanings, the second is irrelevant in the present context, the first is too vague as it stands, and the third is too narrow. Statements about the ideologies of classes, groups, societies, and cultures are, I take it, somehow based upon findings about individual persons' ideologies. The relations between higher-order statements about group ideologies and lower-order statements about individual ideologies present many theoretical and methodological problems of their own which will, however, not be dealt with here. In this book we are only going to be concerned with the fundamental questions about individual persons' ideologies. An individual's ideology can roughly but not quite clearly

be said to be "the manner of thinking characteristic of him", but for the present purposes it would be inconvenient to restrict the use of the term 'ideology' to his thinking about political and economic subjects. We therefore propose the following definition of 'ideology': by an individual's 'ideology' shall in this book be meant the same as 'the whole of that individual's beliefs, convictions, ideals, standards and values'. This definition is not very precise: it partakes of all the indeterminateness of the terms 'belief', 'conviction', 'ideal', etc. which are used in the definition. The impreciseness of the definition is, however, no disadvantage, since the purpose of the definition is merely to stake out the field of ideological research, and one would be ill advised to draw sharp boundaries in the beginning.²

This kind of definition which is intended to give a rough indication of the field one is concerned with is quite common; examples can be found in the beginning of almost any university text-book. Yet, it has been oddly neglected by logicians who have dealt with the theory of definition. I propose to refer to such definitions as "programmatic definitions."³

Ideological science can now be said to comprise any kind of research into the ideologies of individuals and groups. As 'ideology' has been defined above, it is clear that an individual's ethics will belong to his ideology, on any normal interpretation of the word 'ethics', and that descriptive ethics – the discipline which describes and analyses the ethical norms, values and ideals of individuals and groups – is part of ideological science. There is, however, no general agreement on how big a part of a person's ideology should be referred to as his 'ethics'. What ideals, norms and values are ethical ideals, ethical norms and ethical values? The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of this question.

But first a digression in order to forestall some possible misinterpretations. When there is no indication to the contrary, the word 'ethics' is used in this book in the way in which it is normally used outside philosophy, viz. to refer to a certain kind of system of norms, values and ideals. In moral philosophy, it is common to refer to ethics in this sense as "normative ethics" to avoid confusion with "descriptive ethics" and "metaethics" (or "critical ethics", "theoretical ethics", "analytical ethics"). Normative ethics is the subject matter of both metaethics and descriptive ethics. Metaethics is usually taken to be a discipline

which deals with themes like the meaning and function of moral judgements and principles, the justification of moral judgements and principles, the nature of an ethical system. Descriptive ethics can be characterized as the discipline which describes and analyses the ethical norms, values and ideals which individuals and groups actually have. On these definitions of 'metaethics' and 'descriptive ethics' there is no sharp line of division between the field of metaethics and the field of descriptive ethics. Nor is there any need to draw a sharp line of division between them. The two fields are partly overlapping, but the centers of interest in the two disciplines are different. The main problem of metaethics could be said to be to investigate the criteria of adequacy for ethical systems. Metaethics is thus an essentially evaluative discipline, the object of which is to answer the question "What should one demand of a satisfactory ethical system?" Descriptive ethics, on the other hand, is a non-evaluative discipline the object of which is to map existing ethical systems rather than to investigate the conditions which a good system ought to fulfil.—Whenever the words 'ethics' and 'ethical' occur in this book without the riders 'descriptive' or 'meta-', they should be taken as abbreviations of the phrases 'normative ethics' and 'normatively ethical'. After having clarified this terminological point, we can now return to the main route. What is ethics?

There is a common tendency to identify the field of ethics (or morals) with the sphere of sexual behaviour. (A distinction is sometimes drawn between 'ethics' and 'morals', and there is a tendency to use the word 'morals' rather than 'ethics' to refer to sexual matters. It is not always clear what distinction the two words are intended to mark. In this book, the words 'ethics' and 'morals' (and their derivatives) will be used indiscriminately as synonyms.) Social anthropologists sometimes restrict the field of ethics to that sphere of human behaviour which is backed by religious sanctions.⁴ In the Western tradition of moral philosophy one can discern two main conceptions of the field of ethics. One is the time-honoured idea that ethics is the inquiry into the good life or what is "good for man" (Aristotle) or, even wider, that ethics is "the general inquiry into what is good" (G. E. Moore).⁵ The other kind of conception of the field of ethics is narrower, so that a moral system becomes just one system among other value systems like prudential, economic and political systems.⁶ Ethics is often taken to include some principle of justice or

equality or nonegoism, so that a norm which is not disinterested or universalisable is non-ethical by definition.⁷

It is among such conceptions that we now have to make a choice which will be suitable for the purposes of this book. What is needed is a programmatic definition of 'ethics'. But before a definition is proposed, we had better consider the demands which a successful definition ought to fulfil.

2. Demands on the definition of 'ethics'

A definition of 'ethics' which is to be useful for the purposes of descriptive ethics should fulfil several conditions:

(i) *It should be explicitly formulated in so many words.* The selection of data should not be guided by intuitions about what is moral but by explicit criteria so that it becomes intersubjectively checkable.

(ii) *The proposed definition should bear some similarity to what is ordinarily meant by 'ethics';* otherwise, one could as well invent a completely new term. This is obviously a weak demand which leaves much freedom to the definor. If one takes some familiar system of ethics as a paradigm case of an ethical system (e.g. the ethics of Aristotle, Jesus or J. S. Mill), one can select some of its features as defining characteristics of any ethics and leave the remaining features of the ethical system aside as accidental properties of that particular system. There are as many possible definitions for the definor to choose from as there are features or combinations of features which one cares to pick out as essential. One can e.g. base the definition of 'ethics' on the contents of the paradigmatic ethics, so that any system which is sufficiently similar to the given system in that respect will be classified as an ethical system. Or one can start from other features of the favoured system like its structure, social function, importance for the individual, the justification procedures it uses or the vocabulary which is typical of it.⁸ Illustrations of these different approaches can easily be found in recent discussions of the nature of ethics.⁹

(iii) *The definition should delimit an interesting field of inquiry.* This is obviously the most important condition a programmatic definition has to fulfil. Like the foregoing condition,

it is not a strong demand in the sense that it narrows down the range of possible definitions to a great extent. People's interests vary; what interests me may not interest you. The definition which I shall adopt reflects my own intentions and interests, and is not intended in any way to cast suspicion on the value and importance of other interests. It is, however, of some practical importance (e.g. in communication with money-spending authorities) to have a relatively stable use of a term which is used to delimit a field of research, and the best way of ensuring stability without infringing upon legitimate research interests would seem to be to opt for a *wide* definition. Just how wide a programmatic definition can be allowed to become without making the field it delimits lose in interest-value must depend upon the circumstances. There is no point in attempting to formulate any general rules here. The demand which is intended to ensure stability in the use of the term can therefore be formulated vaguely as follows:

(iv) *The definition should not delimit too narrow a field.* A definition of 'ethics' which would limit descriptive ethics to inquiries into (say) Western civilization only would obviously be inadequate for the purposes of the present investigation, for instance. We list as a separate demand:

(v) *The definition should be interculturally applicable.* Further, the definition had better be framed in such a way that the selection of data does not become intolerably difficult. The definition should hold some promise of being 'pragmatically useful in prosecuting an inquiry in descriptive ethics':¹⁰

(vi) *The definition should be effectively applicable.* This is the most interesting demand from the point of view of ethical methodology. It is easy to find examples of definitions of metaethical terms which fail to fulfil this demand (e.g. many definitions of 'virtue' and 'trait of character'; cf. ch. 5 below). I shall elaborate on the relations between definition and methodology in the next section and shall return to the question in the discussion of Brandt's and Ladd's definitions of 'ethics' (see sec. 5 (b)–(c) below).

These are the conditions which I propose a definition of 'ethics' suitable for the purposes of descriptive ethics ought to fulfil. It ought to be pointed out that no condition on preciseness has been included. It is, in my opinion, a serious mistake to demand of a programmatic definition that it should delimit a

field of investigation *sharply*. Sharp boundaries can profitably be drawn only after a good deal of initial exploration and theory-formation.

The same conditions apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to definitions of other terms for cultural entities to be used in intercultural research (e.g. the terms 'ideology' and 'virtue').

Somebody might demand that these requirements on programmatic definitions should in their turn be justified. The answer to that demand is simply that the purpose of formulating the criteria is to make explicit what is otherwise implicitly assumed, so that there is no need for any further justification of the requirements provided that the list of requirements correctly explicates what is meant by a good programmatic definition. The reader will have to decide for himself whether in his opinion it does so or not.

3. Definition of 'ethics'

After these preambles, I can now state the definition of 'ethics' which I want to adopt for my own purposes in the present context and recommend to the consideration of others. Ethics (in the sense of normative ethics) is, I propose, the inquiry into the good life. The task of (normative) ethics is to determine what kind of a life one ought to live. An individual's ethics consists, then, of all those ideals, norms, conceptions of right and wrong, good and bad, and so on, which together make up his ideal of the good life. A question is, according to this definition, moral (or ethical) to the extent that it has to do with the kind of life one thinks one ought to live. Anything which is relevant for one's ideal of life is morally relevant for oneself, although, clearly, some things will be more important than others, and some things, though not altogether irrelevant, will be of only peripheral interest. Ethics, in this wide sense, is not concerned with any particular field of human affairs. The field of ethics coincides with, but is not identical with the field of human life.

The definition of 'descriptive ethics' follows directly from the definition of '(normative) ethics' just suggested, since descriptive ethics is the description and analysis of systems of normative ethics: by 'descriptive ethics' shall, in this book, be meant the description and analysis of ideals of life.

It remains to be argued that the proposed definition fulfils the six demands which were formulated in the foregoing section.

(i) I have given a verbal definition, so the first condition is fulfilled.

(ii) The definition which I have proposed is not a new one – it is the definition of the Aristotelian tradition referred to above; so the second demand is also fulfilled.

(iii)–(iv) The definition is a wide one which runs no risk of failing to fulfil condition (iv), but the question is whether it doesn't delimit too wide a field. I think not. The point of the definition is directed against e.g. those moral philosophers who have virtually restricted the field of ethics to the question of when actions are right and wrong. One can hope that if such questions come to be seen in their complex contexts of whole ideals of life, that will help to give new life to the academic discipline of moral philosophy which tends to give a rather anaemic impression at the present. A too narrow field of interest is, I think, one of the two main reasons for that impression. The other is the prevalence of the deductive ideal, which will be discussed in the next chapter. It would, however, be a waste of time to argue the point about the salutary effects of taking a broad view of ethics any further. The proof will be in the results – only the success of the programme can ultimately decide whether the programmatic definition was adequate or not.

(v) The broadness of the definition ensures its intercultural applicability. In any culture, one can expect to find ideas about what kind of a life one ought to live, what one should and should not do, what is good and what is bad.

(vi) The definition is rather imprecise as it stands: it refers to "ideals", "norms", "values" and so on which are somehow related to a conception of what the "good life" consists of. To make the definition operationally effective, one would have to specify procedures which will enable the researcher to decide when an individual should be said to have an ideal, accept a norm or believe in a value. This task belongs to ethical methodology, and it would be a mistake to demand that a whole methodology should somehow be squeezed into a definition. There is a tendency to put exaggerated demands on definitions which one had better beware of.¹¹ The demand on effectiveness should be construed as requiring that the definition should be compatible with a sound methodology rather than as requiring that the whole

methodology should be there from the beginning. Unlike e.g. a definition of 'ethics' in psychoanalytic terms, which would probably not lead to a sound methodology,¹² it seems likely that the proposed definition can be made effectively applicable by suitable specifications. One of the purposes of the chapters on methods in descriptive ethics which are to follow is to make the definition of 'ethics' more effective in the sense of condition (vi). The reader might therefore do well in suspending his judgement on the effectiveness of the suggested definition for a while.

4. The special authority of ethics

Moral considerations are sometimes considered to be more important than other considerations like prudential, aesthetic and political considerations, so that if there is a conflict between moral and non-moral considerations, the moral considerations should always take precedence over the others. It has e.g. been claimed that "moral rules are invested with a special authority by virtue of which they are obeyed simply because they command", to quote one influential proponent of this view.¹³ A brief consideration of the question why moral reasons should be given more weight than other reasons will help to bring out the difference between the wide conception of ethics which was defended in the previous section and more narrow ones. If one takes the narrow kind of view of the field of ethics and considers ethical systems as one kind of value system on a par with other systems, then one will have to provide a justification for giving ethical systems the place of *primus inter pares*. The question "Why should one be moral?" becomes an important normative problem on this view. If, however, the field of ethics is taken to include the whole of that part of ideology which concerns norms and values, then the moral point of view will no longer be one point of view amongst others – the moral point of view is then *by definition* the overall point of view. The question "Why be moral?" ceases to be an important normative problem on this view, for the decision to look into an issue in the broad context of a whole way of life rather than from a specialist point of view hardly requires any special justification; rather, it is the decision not to adopt the moral point of view in this general sense which requires justification. The burden of proof rests upon the specialist and not upon the moral agent.¹⁴

5. Comparison with some other definitions of 'ethics'

Philosophers have on the whole been less interested in descriptive ethics than in the problems of normative ethics and metaethics. In the last decade or so, three full-length studies in descriptive ethics have, however, been published by professional philosophers: Macbeath's *Experiments in Living*, Brandt's *Hopi Ethics* and Ladd's study of Navaho ethics *The Structure of a Moral Code*.¹⁵ A comparison between their approaches to ethics and my own will, I think, help to illuminate my own position and, at the same time, it will be a proper tribute to works from which I have learnt much about ethical methodology.

(a) I find myself entirely in agreement with Macbeath's criticism of contemporary tendencies to approach ethics in an atomistic way¹⁶ and with his emphasis on the necessity of looking at moral questions in the context of a whole way of life. Macbeath approaches ethics in the spirit of the Aristotelian tradition: ethics is concerned with "the good for man".¹⁷ "Morality (he says) seems to me to be concerned with the whole of life, without being the whole of it. It is concerned with the whole of life in the sense that moral considerations may arise in any sphere of life, that in all spheres the moral judgement is the final judgement, and we cannot understand or justify a moral judgement without taking the whole way of life into account".¹⁸ The views of the two foregoing sections could not have been summed up in a better way.

(b) Brandt uses 'ethics' in a narrower sense. He does not want to use the word 'ethical' in such a broad sense that "any problem about what is desirable is called an 'ethical' question" and "any attitude of favor or disfavor broadly related to aims or conduct will be an ethical attitude" and proposes to use the word in such a sense that beliefs about e.g. "obligations, duties, the praiseworthy, the blameworthy, and human rights" will count as ethical beliefs.¹⁹ The basic concept for Brandt is the concept of an ethical attitude which he defines as a disposition to have affective reactions which are both (a) disinterested ("in the sense of not being causally dependent on any of the individual's personal desires (except his desire to act rightly and to be the kind of person he thinks he ought to be) or attachments for particular persons or attitudes toward social groups or statuses"), and (b) feelings of obligation or reactions elicited by judgements about

voluntary acts, motives or traits of character.²⁰ This definition seems to me to be too narrow for the purposes of descriptive ethics, on two accounts. (1) The definition allows only for ethical attitudes towards acts, motives and traits of character but does not make it possible to refer to attitudes towards e.g. the distribution of material goods and the relations between state and individual as ethical attitudes. The definition virtually limits the field of ethics to personal ethics at the expense of e.g. political ethics. (2) The definition excludes the possibility of ethical attitudes which are causally dependent upon one's personal desires, and so it excludes at least certain varieties of egoism from the field of ethics. The definition thus seems to reflect the tendency in Western ethics towards altruistic and universalistic systems of ethics. It would seem improper, however, to propose a definition of 'ethics' which prejudices the normative problem of the relative merits of egoism and non-egoism. Definitions in terms of disinterestedness, universalisability, and so on, tend to be more or less consciously persuasive – they pave the way for the ideals which are recommended by the definor. But propagation of one's own moral views is out of place in descriptive ethics. An unsympathetic critic could also point out that the explanation of what it means for a reaction to be disinterested probably makes *all* reactions non-ethical (are there any reactions which are not somehow causally dependent upon one's personal desires?); but that defect could, I take it, be remedied fairly easily.

My objection to Brandt's definition of 'ethics' is thus that it fails to fulfil condition (iv) for programmatic definitions of 'ethics': it is too narrow. On the other conditions it seems to score well, possibly with the exception of demand (vi) on effectiveness. To make the definition effectively applicable, it would have to be supplemented with workable criteria for distinguishing e.g. feelings of obligations from other feelings. Without wanting to prejudge the possibility of having such a methodology, one might have a suspicion that a less psychologistic approach would be more suitable for ethical fieldwork.

(c) Unlike Macbeath and Brandt, Ladd explicitly formulates and discusses a number of requirements which a successful definition of 'ethics' would have to fulfil. I think one can find formulations or indications of most of the six criteria listed above at one place or another in the course of Ladd's extended discussion of the problem of definition.²¹ Ladd also makes two

interesting additions to the list which require some comments. In addition to the demands on conformity to ordinary usage, intercultural applicability, effectiveness and so on, he demands (1) that a satisfactory definition of 'ethics' (and 'morals', which he wants to distinguish from 'ethics') should give us "an adequate explication of the notion of "moral obligation" and (2) that the definition should "approach ethics from the point of view of the informant".²² It will be convenient to take the second point first.

Ladd argues that if one investigates in how far somebody from another culture accepts moral principles like one's own, then one is guilty of ethnocentrism, and that such an investigation is bound to give a distorted view of the informant's ethics.²³ Comparing his own approach with that of Brandt, he asserts that "much of Brandt's study of Hopi ethics consists of a cross-cultural investigation of the extent to which the Hopi accept principles like our own", whereas he himself was "concerned with presenting the Navaho ethical system as it appears to the Navaho moralist informant".²⁴ This seems to me to be an exaggeration of the differences between what Brandt and Ladd do. There are three points which will have to be disentangled. The first point is that if one is interested in the mapping of ideological *systems* (e.g. the ethical system of an informant), then it is surely necessary to adopt the informant's point of view, for otherwise one is bound to miss out some parts which the informant himself considers to be parts of the system in question. Now Ladd was certainly more interested in the systematic character of ethics than Brandt was. But this does not mean – and that leads us to the second point – that Brandt's approach was any more or less ethnocentric than that of Ladd. Brandt selected two features of some Western systems of ethics – their disinterestedness and tendency to give rise to certain reactions – as defining characteristics of any ethics and proceeded to investigate those features as they occur in one non-Western culture. Ladd selected other features of some Western systems of ethics – that they contain prescriptions with a special authority and legitimacy – as defining characteristics of any ethics and proceeded to investigate these features as they occur in another non-Western culture. *Any* investigation of one culture in terms of another culture is bound to be ethnocentric in the sense that the terms of reference of one's study are ethnocentric. The third point is that though any cross-cultural investigation is neces-

sarily ethnocentric in this weak sense which has just been explained, it does not have to be – and should not be – ethnocentric in another sense which is the usual sense of that word. To avoid ethnocentrism in that sense means e.g. to avoid imputing one's own motives and reactions to the individuals under investigation without having found evidence which entitles one to do so. To avoid ethnocentrism in this sense in ideological research it is certainly a good idea to adopt the informant's point of view in the sense of trying to find out how the informant looks at it. But it does not seem necessary to incorporate this piece of methodology into the very definition of 'ethics' as Ladd somehow wants to do. (Cf. my remarks on exaggerated demands on programmatic definitions in sec. 3.) This is my main objection to Ladd's demand.²⁵

I now turn to a consideration of his other demand, (1), on the definition of ethics. Ladd rightly emphasizes the importance of distinguishing clearly between the informant's point of view and the investigator's point of view. Yet, it seems obvious that when he asserts that the core of any ethical system consists of statements of moral obligation, he fails to distinguish clearly between how his own analytical framework compels him to look upon an informant's ethics and how the informant himself looks upon it. Ladd seems to construe 'statement of moral obligation' in such a way that e.g. a virtue-statement is not a statement of moral obligation.²⁶ But it is easy to imagine a system of ethics where virtue-statements are central from the informant's point of view. In the terminology of chapter 4 below, Ladd's definition of 'ethics' is an expression of an action-centered approach to ethics which fails to do justice to agent-centered systems of ethics. Ladd also takes his definitions of 'ethical' and 'moral' to have methodological implications which I find unacceptable. If statements of moral obligation are central to any ethical system, then, Ladd suggests, one ought to start any investigation in descriptive ethics by finding out what moral prescriptions are accepted by the informant; and, indeed, he states that one must begin by seeking to elicit *specific* prescriptive statements from the informant.²⁷ I shall argue, on the contrary, that an agent-centered approach might be better from the heuristical point of view and that it might be useful to elicit general statements to start with (see ch. 4, sec. 5 below).

6. Ethical relevance and ethical adequacy

One further source of confusion remains to be cleared up before we can leave the problem of the definition of ethics. There is a tendency in discussions of the nature of ethics to confuse two senses of the term 'ethical' or 'moral': (1) the sense in which the ethical or moral is opposed to the nonethical or non-moral; (2) the sense in which the ethical or moral is opposed to the unethical or immoral. I shall refer to criteria of the ethical in the first sense as criteria of *ethical relevance* and to criteria of the ethical in the second sense as criteria of *ethical adequacy*.

A question can be said to be ethically relevant for a person P in so far as it is relevant for his ideal of life. For a person who thinks of the good for man in terms of general welfare, anything which has effects on the general welfare will be ethically relevant; for a person who thinks of the good for man in religious terms as the salvation of one's soul, for instance, the field of the ethically relevant will include anything which is related to that factor; and so on. This point seems sometimes to have been overlooked by writers who have assumed that ethics can in no sense be based upon religion; in fact, different conceptions of what is ethically relevant can be an effective obstacle to successful communication on moral questions between e.g. religious groups and outsiders. To remove that obstacle, a more general conception of the ethically relevant is needed:

A question can be said to be of general ethical relevance in so far as it is related to somebody's ideal of life.

An individual's criteria of relevance delimit the field of ethics for that individual. His criteria of adequacy have got quite another function: they divide his field of ethics into two parts, the adequate and the inadequate. One can use one's principles of relevance to divide e.g. principles of action into moral and non-moral principles. But to decide which of the moral principles in this sense are adequate or well justified, one would have to apply one's criteria of adequacy.

Criteria of universalisability, generalisability and disinterestedness have sometimes been taken as criteria of ethical relevance (see e.g. Brandt's definition of 'ethics' which was quoted above), but if my plea for a broad definition of 'ethics' has been convincing at all, such criteria had better be regarded as proposed criteria of adequacy so as to enable one to refer to e.g. egoistic

principles as ethical principles instead of barring any discussion of their ethical adequacy from the outset by relegating them to the field of the non-ethical. To use criteria of adequacy as criteria of relevance means to invite confusion between the unethical and the non-ethical.

Chapter 2

The Deductive Ideal

The deductive ideal enjoys a somewhat surprising popularity among moral philosophers. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate the untenability of this ideal in ethics and to outline the methodological implications of the rejection of deductive models of ethics.

1. The subsumption model

According to a widespread conception of moral reasoning, moral arguments consist essentially in the application of moral norms to specific situations. The moralist formulates and defends certain norms; when the facts in a particular case are known, it is merely a question of applying the relevant norm to the facts and of drawing the appropriate conclusion by e.g. syllogistic reasoning. The premiss describing the facts is subsumed under the appropriate norm, and the conclusion follows automatically as it were. I shall call this view of what happens in a moral argument *the subsumption model*.

This view leads to a neat division of labour in ethics. Moral principles are the concern of the moralist. Opinion is divided on the question whether a moral philosopher qua moral philosopher should act as a moralist in this sense. The more extreme view holds that he should not, which leaves metaethics and descriptive ethics as the only proper fields for the moral philosopher's exercises. According to the less extreme view, general normative problems also belong to the field of moral philosophy. But both views agree that the application of the principles is a mechanical matter which can safely be left to what Stevenson has referred to as "the specialists", those whose specialised knowledge about means-end relations and about facts enables them to apply the given norm to particular situations.¹ The result is a sharp distinction between ethical theory (which is concerned with general

principles) and ethical practice (which is concerned with the application of the general principles). It is the purpose of this chapter to show that the belief in such a sharp distinction is unjustified.

Familiar illustrations of the use of the subsumption model can be found in the utilitarian tradition. The utilitarian formulates the basic principles of ethics (e.g. "An action is right if and only if it maximizes happiness"), produces reasons in favour of those principles, and after having added a number of qualifications and dispensed with objections, he leaves it to the moral agents to apply the norms to specific situations. If the agent finds that an action A probably maximizes happiness, then it is right for him to do A, and wrong otherwise.²

Another example of the use of the subsumption model can be found in Ladd's reconstruction of Navaho ethics. According to Ladd, all Navaho moral norms can be reduced to one basic principle which can be formulated in two ways:

Positive formulation: Do all those actions necessary to promote your own welfare!

Negative formulation: Do not do any action leading to your own misfortune!³

Ladd claims that "all the particular prescriptive statements and practical rules of morality of the Navaho code" are derivable from this basic norm in conjunction with the informant's own stated reasons.⁴ If e.g. the informant says that one shouldn't steal because that leads to trouble (one will be caught), then the analyst can provide the understood premiss and reconstruct the argument as follows:

Do not do any action leading to your own misfortune!

Stealing, and getting caught, will produce misfortune for you.

Therefore, don't steal!⁵

The two dubious assumptions behind this kind of reconstruction are (i) that the premisses of a moral argument always *entail* the conclusion (that the conclusion is *deducible* from the premisses), (ii) that the premisses referring to particular situations are purely factual statements which can safely be left to the specialists.

The example from Ladd is instructive because it shows how the use of the subsumption model in ethics tends to lead to a certain methodology. The two assumptions behind this model encourage the view that the main task of the descriptive ethicist

is to reconstruct the basic norms of the informants' ethics, and since the relation between those basic norms and the rest of the ethical systems is held to be one of entailment or logical implication, the parallel between what the descriptive analyst does and what logicians and mathematicians sometimes do becomes too obvious to be likely to remain unnoticed: the road is open for construing ethical systems as deductive systems where the basic norms play the role of axioms and the derived rules the role of theorems.

The deductive ideal in ethics has been clearly formulated by Brandt in a passage which is worth quoting in extenso:

Ideally a normative "theory" consists of a set of *general* principles analogous to the axioms of a geometric system. That is, ideally it comprises a set of *correct* or valid *general* principles, as *brief and simple* as possible compatibly with *completeness* in the sense that these principles, when conjoined with true nonethical statements, would logically imply every ethical statement that is correct or valid. Such an ideal for a system must be our guide.⁶

An interesting consequence of the deductive conception of ethics is that the criteria of adequacy for ethical systems will be identical with the criteria of adequacy for other axiomatic systems.⁷ That the deductive ideal leads to this consequence could be regarded as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the deductive ideal; even a cursory examination of what properties an ethical system ought to have to fulfil its functions will be enough to show the untenability of the parallel with axiomatic systems. An adequate ethical system would e.g. have to be flexible enough to be applicable to new and unforeseen types of situation, and to be flexible the system must be *open* to a certain extent. It is hard to believe that the deductive ideal should have enjoyed much popularity had not this feature of ethics been so much overlooked. We must now consider this feature of openness in more detail.

2. The open texture of ethics

A comparison between ethics and the law will be illuminating at this stage. The deductive ideal in law has often been castigated in recent jurisprudence. In the beginning of the twenties, Roscoe Pound talked about "the fiction of the logical completeness of the legal system and the mechanical, logical infallibility of the

logical process whereby the predetermined rules implicit in the given legal materials are deduced and applied" and emphasized that it is essential for the proper functioning of the law that it leaves "a wide margin of discretion in application".⁸ Or, to use Friedrich Waismann's useful term,⁹ the law must, to a certain extent, have an "open texture".¹⁰ A term can be said to have an open texture when there is no fixed set of conditions necessary and sufficient for the correct application of the term. Most of our general terms have got an open texture in this sense. Is it, for instance, necessary to have a certain minimum length in order to be properly referred to as a "man"? The meaning of the word 'man', as ordinarily used, is not determinate enough to enable one to give a clear answer to this question. There are clear, paradigmatic cases where we would not hesitate to apply the term 'man'; but ordinary language is flexible enough to permit us to apply the term also to all sorts of unforeseen cases when they arise. Mathematical terms, on the other hand, have got none of this flexibility. Terms like 'rectangle' and 'two' (as used in mathematics) have got a closed texture: their usage is governed by a set of fixed, determinate rules which allow for no discretion in application.

So far, 'open texture' has only been defined for terms. Sentences, e.g. legal rules or moral principles, can, by extension, be said to be open-textured when they make essential use of an open-textured term (and not only mention it in a quotation e.g.).

There are two reasons why legal terms and legal rules must have an open texture to ensure the proper functioning of the law: (i) the law-maker can't foresee all future cases which one might want to subsume under the law, and has therefore to leave its meaning indeterminate to a certain extent; (ii) if one attempted to make the law cover all possibilities, it would not only be certain to leave undesirable loopholes, but would also become impracticably complicated. Not only is our knowledge of what will happen in the future limited; our aims are also partly indeterminate. We do not decide in advance what we are going to do in all sorts of possible situations. Standards of "reasonable" care, for instance, are intended to secure people against harm, but it is not feasible to lay down in advance exactly what kinds of circumstances amount to substantial harm so somebody.¹¹

The moralist is clearly in the same predicament as the law-maker. He cannot now tell people exactly what they ought to do

in all sorts of circumstances, because his intentions have to be indeterminate to a certain extent. The open texture of the general principles the moralists provide us with leaves a certain latitude of choice open for us as moral agents. In that respect, the moral agent is in the same position as the judge in court: his decisions make the rules more determinate. There are of course clear, uncontroversial routine cases where there is no problem about the application of the rule, but in any novel, problematic situation, to apply a rule means to decide to give the rule a certain interpretation. And when the moral agent makes such a decision, he makes an *ethical* decision. The subsumption model overlooks the importance of good judgement in ethics. "Mechanical ethics" is as faulty as "mechanical jurisprudence". "Formalism" is a vice in both fields.

3. Methodological implications

The role of open texture in ethics has important methodological repercussions for both descriptive and normative ethics. The search for basic norms can no longer be regarded as the main task for the descriptive analyst: his task will be to spell out the whole moral system of general and specific norms, for the general norms cannot be fully understood in isolation from the specific norms which help to make their meaning more determinate. And it is not enough to stop with the norms, general and specific: one has to study examples of the application of the norms, for the norms are rendered more determinate in meaning by their applications. The application of ethics can therefore not be separated from the job of working out the "theoretical" aspects of an ethical system. Knowledge about the general principles of somebody's ethics does not make it superfluous to assemble knowledge about his particular moral judgements, just as knowing the statutes in the law-books does not eliminate the need for studying cases. Casuistry is an essential part of ethics.

These conclusions can be reinforced by a consideration of the consequences of two other aspects of ethical discourse and ethical reasoning: (1) the importance of reasoning by analogy in ethics, (2) the fact that some of the crucial terms in normative ethics have got a predominantly emotive meaning.

(1) The subsumption model assumes that ethical reasoning con-

sists essentially of the application of rules to particular situations. Yet it seems reasonable to assume that much ethical reasoning is more like legal reasoning from precedents than like legal reasoning from statutes.¹² The subsumption model overlooks the role of examples in ethics. Good examples of reasoning from precedents can be found e.g. in the ethics of Christianity and Islam which are to a considerable extent based upon reasoning by analogy from particular events. Conventional group moralities are usually transmitted to the young both by rules and by examples. To attempt to reconstruct such ethical systems as a body of rules would be like attempting to reconstruct case law as a system of statutes: it might be possible, but would give an inaccurate picture of the existing system. If one wants to give a correct description of somebody's ethics, one of the things one would like to find out about it is the extent to which he uses rules in his ethical reasoning and the extent to which he proceeds by analogical reasoning from precedents. The particularistic approach to ethics which has just been advocated is of course absolutely essential for the investigation of an ethics which is expressed in terms of examples.

As Hart has emphasized, reasoning from statutes partakes of much of the latitude of choice which reasoning from examples gives to the individual. Much reasoning from rules is, in fact, of an analogical nature, which has to do with the way general terms in ordinary language acquire their meaning. Explicit conditions for the application of terms are not usually laid down in everyday life; it is only in special contexts, like science and the law, that expressions are given their meaning in that way. Outside such specialized contexts, the application of a term is done on the basis of previous applications which are regarded as normative. Talk of "rules of meaning" tends to be misleading for this very reason: usually, language users are not consciously aware of any such rules, and great care should be exercised when one tries to reconstruct rules of meaning from applications. Now, this is the way in which the crucial terms in many (but not all) ethical systems acquire their meaning. Rather than to look for any general rules governing the application of those terms, the investigator had better make a survey of their ranges of application. If one wants to find out e.g. what somebody means by 'sin' or 'welfare', one had better find out to what kinds of things he applies those words¹³ and leave it at that rather than to try and

sum up the findings in the form of sets of necessary and sufficient conditions for the correct use of the words.

Philosophers fascinated with mathematical and scientific contexts have tended to overlook or minimize these differences between open and closed concepts. A crude semantics, epitomized in the doctrine of connotation and denotation,¹⁴ seems to be one of the reasons for the popularity of the subsumption model in ethics.

(2) A further reason for a particularistic approach to ethics is that many of the crucial expressions in ethics have got a predominantly emotive meaning. Terms like 'happiness', 'welfare', 'misfortune' can be applied to practically any human situation towards which one has got the appropriate attitude. To be told e.g. that the basic norm in somebody's ethics is to achieve happiness is rather uninformative until it has been spelled out what kinds of situations the person is willing to subsume under the norm. Such terms do not even have that hard core of determinate descriptive meaning which opentextured empirical and legal terms have got. Terms like 'happiness', 'welfare', and 'misfortune' have got a summarising function, and the basic norms which employ such terms have got very much the same function as the heading of a chapter. But a heading does not make a chapter. Nor does a basic norm make an ethical system. To state the basic norms of an ethics is no substitute for spelling out the whole system which helps to interpret the basic norms.¹⁵

4. Note on the teleological—deontological distinction

The open texture of ethics has some interesting consequences for the distinction between teleological and deontological systems of ethics. This distinction is often considered to mark a basic dividing line in ethics. I shall present some reasons for doubting that that is so. The teleological-deontological distinction seems to me to be trivial, for either (i) it is interpreted in such a way that all systems of ethics become teleological or else (ii) it seems reasonable to assume that all systems of ethics are deontological, openly or in disguise.

(i) There are different explanations of what the difference between teleology and deontology consists in, but the main idea is that if an ethical system is such that the moral quality of acts

depends entirely upon their consequences, then the system is teleological; and otherwise it is deontological.¹⁶ The first point to note about this distinction is that if the term 'consequence' is taken in a too inclusive sense, then all systems of ethics will, trivially, become teleological. If e.g. acts which are expressions of personal integrity are held to be intrinsically worthwhile, and if the value of such acts is considered to be a result of the acts on the ground that doing the acts brings the value into existence, then the way is open for construing any ethical system as a teleological one. Generally, if the value which is brought about just by conforming to a norm is considered as a consequence of doing the act in question, then there could not be any deontological systems of ethics. If the distinction between teleological and deontological systems of ethics is to be of any use at all, the term 'consequence' must not be made to refer, in disguise, to *all* the factors in the agent's situation which could possibly be regarded as morally relevant but must be restricted to those "results" which can reasonably be said to be *caused* by the act in question. Whenever an act is done, one can always find norms which are satisfied by the performance of the act, but the satisfaction of the norms can hardly be said to be *caused* by the performance of the act, although, in some loose sense, the satisfaction of the norms could be said to be a consequence of the performance of the act.

(ii) When that loose sense of 'consequence' is avoided, there are reasons for believing that nobody has ever succeeded in being a consistent teleologist, and that any reasonable ethics must be deontological, which again makes the distinction trivial. The moral value of any act (its rightness, wrongness, obligatoriness, etc.) depends, according to teleological ethics, entirely upon the value of the results of the act. This presupposes, of course, that the value of the results of any act can always be estimated in isolation from the moral value of the act. This presupposition holds for some ethical systems, e.g. for Bentham's hedonistic utilitarianism with its assumption that pleasure can be measured. But quantitative utilitarianism is not very popular today¹⁷ for the reason that no general methods for measuring goodness have been forthcoming. In the absence of methods for estimating goodness, it seems reasonable to assume that even professing teleologists are sometimes influenced by preexisting ideas about right and wrong, when they make their estimates of what quantities of goodness

the acts in question lead to. In other words, I want to suggest that sometimes the results of an action are declared to be better than the results of the alternatives because the action is already known to be right. Otherwise, how could teleologists be so sure that at least many of the actions which are ordinarily believed to be right anyway will turn out to lead to better consequences than their alternatives when, in some indefinite future, methods for estimating their goodness will have been worked out? The difficulty for the teleologist is to keep out irrelevant considerations of the moral value of acts when he considers the value of their results. As long as only one kind of thing (e.g. pleasure) is believed to be good in itself, it is perhaps relatively easy to keep such irrelevant considerations under control, but the more variety one believes there is in the field of the intrinsically good, the more difficult it becomes to do so. And if the net is cast so wide that, in the last analysis, the only thing which can be considered to be good in itself is a whole way of life, then the last possibility of separating questions about the value of results from questions about the value of actions disappears. Now this is virtually what happens when 'happiness' and similar terms which are used in basic norms are construed as umbrella terms which make a summary reference to whole way of life. Once the logical character of the basic norms in ethical systems is recognized for what it is, it seems reasonable to assume that even those philosophers who have professed to be teleologists have been deontologists in disguise; and so the distinction between teleological and deontological ethics ceases to be of much interest. I shall, therefore, make no use of this distinction in the metaethical apparatus of this book. (In ch. 4, I shall introduce a distinction between action-centered and result-centered systems of ethics which is similar to the deontological-teleological distinction but avoids the objections which have been raised against the latter.)

Chapter 3

The Study of Ideologies

The nature and objectives of ideological studies are often misunderstood. In this chapter some general methodological problems will be discussed, and a number of distinctions will be introduced in order to expose some of the more common sources of misunderstanding.

1. Describing an ideal of life

The idea of a science of ideology is sometimes met with suspicion. On the one hand, there is a view that the mapping of ideologies is an impossibly difficult task: people constantly change their views; if you ask them, they invent something on the spur of the moment; they hide their real beliefs and motives; and so on. In short, the whole field is in an indescribable state of flux. On the other hand, one sometimes encounters the view that the mapping of ideologies is very simple: personal experience, preferably acquired over a prolonged period of time, will somehow give you an adequate picture of other people's norms and values, beliefs and attitudes.

Both these views make valuable points, though in an exaggerated form. The study of ideologies is complicated, but not impossibly complicated. Experience is, indeed, necessary, but experience is not enough; one must also be able to specify the evidence on which one bases the account. The problem of evidence will be discussed later on in this chapter. Let us now consider some of the complexities of ideological research.

(1) In the first place, the mapping of an individual's ethics (not to speak of his whole ideology) is a complicated task because of the complexity of the contents of an ethical system. An individual's ideal of life has been defined as the sum total of all his ideals, norms, conceptions of right and wrong and good and bad, and so on. An exhaustive account of somebody's ethics should

contain chapters on his personality ideals, his social ideals, his opinions on rights and responsibilities, blame and praise, deserts and punishment, responsibility and free will, his views on the value of specific classes of actions, things and situations, and so on. It would also have to include an account of the other parts of his ideology in so far as they are relevant for the justification of his ethical beliefs, for, ultimately, one's moral ideals depend upon one's beliefs about the constitution of the universe. The open texture of ethics adds to the complexity. Any description of an ethical system which aims at giving more than the outlines of the system would have to include accounts of the applications of the general norms to specific situations (cf. ch. 2, sec. 2-5).

(2) In the second place, a person's ethical beliefs rarely form a fixed, unchangeable system. His normative commitments tend to vary in several dimensions. It will be useful to introduce a number of scales along which the features of an ethical system can be placed. Features of ethical systems vary with regard to (a) *explicitness*, (b) *stability*, (c) degree of *integration* with the individual's personality, (d) *prominence*, (e) *centrality*, and (f) *operational efficacy*. The picture one gets of a person's ethics depends to a high extent upon the investigator's attitudes to these factors.

(a) Some of an individual's normative commitments are quite explicit, others can easily be elicited, but one is not likely to encounter a vast body of fully explicit commitment statements in most people's discourse. Usually, a person's normative commitments have to be reconstructed from his more or less inarticulate moral discourse. What kind of a structure one finds in the body of an informant's commitments depends upon whether one considers only his explicit commitments or also the implicit ones. A description of an ethics based exclusively on explicitly formulated statements, spontaneous or elicited, would, in most cases, give an inadequate picture of the informant's ethics. In my opinion, the use of indirect evidence, when such is available, facilitates the descriptive ethicist's task greatly. The use of indirect evidence in descriptive ethics is, however, a controversial question which will have to be discussed in some detail (see sec. 4 below).

(b) Some commitments are adopted momentarily and then dropped again, others have a high degree of stability. If the analyst concentrates on the highly stable commitments, he will find one pattern in an informant's ethics; if he also pays attention

to the floating and changing weave of unstable moral views, he will get another picture of the informant's ethics. There is a tendency in ideological research to disregard unstable features, which will be commented upon below (in (f) and the next section).

(c) Commitments vary with regard to the degree to which they are well integrated with deep-lying traits in the individual's personality. Low-integrated commitments tend to be unstable, but need not be so; views on subject-matters which are unimportant to the individual, e.g., can be highly stable even if they have a low degree of integration.¹ Again, the findings of the investigator will depend upon how he deals with low-integrated commitments and what criteria he uses to distinguish between high- and low-integrated commitments.

(d) Normative questions which for some reason or other assume a special importance for an individual can be called prominent questions in his ethics. Questions which seem peripheral to some people might assume an unexpected prominence for others.

(e) From the subjectively important features of an ethical system – i.e., its prominent features – one should distinguish the objectively important or central features. A feature of an ethical system can be said to be objectively important to the extent that a well-informed and impartial spectator would consider it to be central to the system. In practice, prominent issues are important clues to the central issues of an ethical system. The treatment of certain animals or the wearing of certain garments, for instance, may be prominent questions for an individual, and yet peripheral in themselves to his way of life. It is a sound hypothesis in such a case to assume that there are some underlying norms connected with the peripheral issues which are more central to his ethics.

(f) Finally, the features of an individual's ethics vary with regard to their operational efficacy: they are more or less effective in determining his conduct.² It is sometimes assumed that operationally ineffective norms and ideals can be disregarded in ethics. Hare has e.g. argued that the best way of finding out what a person's moral principles are is by studying what he did, on the ground that the function of moral principles is to guide conduct and that if a person "really believes" in a moral principle, then he will act according to that principle.³ "I think", he says, "that

if a man consistently breaks a moral principle which he professes, this inclines us to say that his professions are insincere."⁴ This is an inclination to be resisted. The quotation from Hare can easily give the impression that the only reason why people sometimes do not follow their professed moral principles is that they are dishonest. This seems to me to be a moralistic attitude in the bad sense. There are many reasons besides insincerity why people break their explicit principles:⁵ their principles may be unstable though often repeated; or stable but low-integrated so that the principles have to compete with conflicting tendencies; people may have conflicting principles; they may be mistaken about the facts so that they don't find an occasion to apply the principles; they may interpret the situations in another way than the moralizing observer does (without making any factual mistakes), so that the principles which look relevant to the observer are not applicable on their own structuring of the situations; they may express their convictions inaccurately (without dishonest intentions); they may interpret their own principles differently from what the observer does. The moralistic attitude which overlooks these possibilities leads, in practice, to serious misunderstandings, especially in intercultural contact. There are thus many reasons why moral principles are not always translated into conduct. Moral principles are conduct-guiding but not conduct-producing.⁶

It would thus be a serious mistake to overlook operationally inefficient norms in ethics. Even a person with the best of intentions – not to speak of others – might fail to live up to his standards.

It is also worth noticing that phenomena like remorse, guilt, shame, disappointment and frustration can sometimes only be explained by reference to operationally inefficient norms. The fact that a norm has remained inefficient may, for instance, be the cause of remorse, guilt, frustration, and so on. To disregard operationally inefficient norms is to assume that the only interesting way in which a norm can manifest itself in a person's behaviour is in overt conduct; and that is just bad psychology.

And, to clinch the argument, the idea that the best way to find out what moral principles somebody has is by observing his overt behaviour breaks down totally in the case of prohibitions. An operationally efficient prohibition is a norm such that the individual who has the norm abstains from certain kinds of behaviour. To

infer from the absence of certain forms of behaviour that that behaviour is forbidden by a norm would obviously be a bit hazardous.

2. Three types of ideological research

A well-known anthropologist has given the following description of his discipline's concern with ethics:

What the anthropologist does in the study of moral systems is to examine for particular societies the ideas of right and wrong that are held, and their social circumstances. He studies the terms in which they are expressed; their range of application to different kinds of actions. He studies also the degree to which these ideas are put in rules and the extent to which the rules and moral ideas in general operate as sanctions in affecting conduct. He looks for the source to which these moral ideas are attributed. He is interested also in seeing how far the moral ideas, rules, and associated conduct can be regarded as a system – that is, what degree of coherence can be seen between them. Further, he studies the moral system of a society, if it can be called such, in terms of its social correlates, endeavouring to see what other elements of the whole social system are particularly related to the moral ones. And in all this he is concerned not solely with the immediate aspects, but also with the extent to which the moral ideas can be identified over a range of societies, and presumably therefore have some general validity.⁷

I have allowed myself to quote at some length from Firth because it seems to me that he gives a very good précis of how social anthropologists approach the field of ethics. It is interesting to note that there are no traces of the deductive ideal here. Instead, one finds a clear expression of the particularistic approach presented and defended in ch. 2 above. It is for this reason that the best anthropological reports on foreign people's moral systems are such a useful antidote to the oversimplified pictures drawn by philosophers. On the other hand, the social anthropologist casts the net very wide indeed. He is not only interested in moral systems for their own sake but also in all sorts of relations between moral systems and other systems.

It will be useful to introduce some distinctions between different kinds of ideological research at this point:

- (i) Consistently morphological, synchronic research where moral

systems (or other ideological systems) are selected as isolates for intensive study;

(ii) Historical studies, causal analyses, studies of e.g. the relations between moral systems and other kinds of systems (like social systems, personality systems);

(iii) Combinations of (i) and (ii), mixed synchronic and diachronic studies, combined morphological and functional studies.⁸

Most ideological research is probably of the second and third types, and justifiably so, since it is only by studying moral and other ideological systems in their contexts that one can get a full understanding of them. A disadvantage of the broad approaches to ethics is, however, that the problems involved in morphological research are too often glossed over rather hurriedly. To give a detailed and well-documented morphological account of one individual's moral system is rather complicated task. To give a detailed and well-documented account of the structure and contents of the ethics of a whole society is an infinitely more complicated task. Causal and functional studies of ethical systems are still more complicated, not least because a well-documented study of that kind presupposes the results of morphological studies. Studies of the operational efficacy of moral norms, e.g., or causal investigations assume that the nature of the moral norms is already known. This point might seem trivially obvious once it has been made, yet it seems worth making in the present climate of research with its emphasis on causal and functional relationships. The failure to appreciate the distinction between morphological studies and causal – functional studies is, for instance, probably one of the reasons why social anthropologists are sometimes suspicious about the value of interviews as a tool for ideological research. Thus, one author who stresses that “every social fact recorded must be supported by concrete documentation” tells us that “the social anthropologist may, and does, inscribe in his note-book, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery’, but he cannot understand the whole tribal attitude to marital fidelity until he has haunted the native courts, analysed the divorce and marriage rates, and, better still, in concrete cases, listened to excited comments shouted from hut to hut. Such a statement may seem obvious, but it must be remembered that most of the existing accounts of African societies are based on narratives dictated to the anthropologist at the tent door.”⁹ This is to throw out the baby with the bath-water. Admittedly, the operational

efficacy of a norm about adultery cannot normally be studied at the tentdoor, nor are tribesmen usually very good at making causal and functional analyses. But from this it does not follow that interviews are of no value for morphological research or that people in emotional distress are better informants than in their calm, reflective hours.

This quotation, like the previous one from Hare (p. 48), illustrates a general tendency not to take informants seriously.¹⁰ As Arne Naess has put it, analysts tend to disregard explicit ideological statements as "mere talk, evasion, dishonest claims, mere propaganda in the dyslogistic sense."¹¹ That informants may fail to be honest and serious is, however, no reason for disregarding their ideological discourse. As the discussion of the moralistic attitude shows, detailed morphological investigations are often necessary in order to decide upon the informant's seriousness and honesty.

3. Ideals and behaviour

Many philosophers, linguists and social scientists have been very optimistic with regard to the possibilities of inferring meanings, values, norms and beliefs from actual behaviour. Recent developments in semantics and ideological research, especially the work of Prof. Naess and his associates ("the Oslo school") with their painstaking analyses of the difficulties involved, have, in my opinion, effectively undermined the basis for such optimism.¹² In the two foregoing sections, I have time and again tried to bring out the fact that ideals can't somehow be read off from facts, since there is no one-one correspondence between ideals and forms of conduct. The same form of conduct can be covered by many norms, or by no norm at all; a norm or ideal may or may not be operationally efficient. Instead of elaborating these points any further, I shall give two simple illustrations from intercultural contact which I hope will bring home the point that observation of overt, non-verbal behaviour is not enough for ideological understanding.

Case 1: A European school-teacher in an African country finds that her pupils have bad manners, and reproaches them for that. The girls start to cry. The teacher interprets this as a sign of immaturity in the girls: she finds them unable to stand criti-

cism; whereas, in fact, the girls are not at all impressed with the criticism as such. They do not feel ashamed of their behaviour, but *insulted*: they interpret the teacher's remarks not as a piece of personal blame but as an attack on the honour of their whole families, the implication being that their fathers and other relatives have failed to educate them properly. No amount of observation of overt behaviour could be enough to remove the misunderstandings inherent in this situation – the teacher could live in the foreign country for five or fifteen or twenty-five years without ever coming to understand her pupils.

Case 2: A locally employed worker leaves his job for a couple of hours to entertain a relative. The foreign expert who supervises the work concludes that the worker is an irresponsible person who takes the opportunity to escape from work to have fun; whereas the worker sees it as his duty to receive relatives properly, and in the conflict between the obligation to perform the job properly and the obligation towards his relative, he estimates that the latter has a higher stringency. The misunderstanding could not be removed merely by further observation of the worker's behaviour, and if the expert claims long experience of the country, one need only point out that his experience is limited to kinds of evidence which are not enough to give a proper understanding of a situation like this.

4. Verbal and non-verbal evidence

Norms and ideals cannot be read off in any simple way from people's overt conduct, but it would be a mistake to conclude from this, as John Ladd does in his study of Navaho ethics, that non-verbal behavioural evidence is irrelevant in a morphological study of descriptive ethics. Ladd argues that "ideologies can be investigated only through the explicit discourse of an informant",¹³ goes on to define ethical discourse in such a way that a relatively high degree of clear thinking is a necessary prerequisite of ethical discourse,¹⁴ and is quite prepared to admit the conclusion which follows from these premisses, viz. that ethical discourse is rarely to be met with in ordinary people: "only the 'thinker' is able to discriminate clearly between moral and non-moral prescriptions", etc.¹⁵ Now if the only way of investigating people's ethics is through their discourse, and if, further, most

people don't produce ethical discourse on the whole, then there is no way of investigating ordinary people's ethical views. This conclusion seems sufficient to refute Ladd's position. It may be difficult to map the ethics of plain people, but surely it is not impossible?

What is wrong with Ladd's approach to ethics is its intellectualism, which seems to depend upon a failure to appreciate (1) the difference between having an ethical norm and being consciously aware of the fact that the norm one has is an ethical one, (2) the difference between accepting a norm and being consciously aware of a norm.

(1) Ladd seems to think that the ability to distinguish clearly between ethical and non-ethical norms is a necessary prerequisite for having ethical norms. It would seem more suitable for the purposes of descriptive ethics to have a definition of 'ethics' which enables the investigator to say that an informant has an ethical norm although the informant would not be able to say so himself.

(2) The best way of investigating somebody's norm consciousness (his awareness of norms and values, his explicit ideology) is through his discourse. But there is an important sense in which one can be said to have a norm without necessarily being clearly aware of it. This is the sense in which a social scientist can talk e.g. of "the norms of the employee — employer relationship" to which an African from the countryside may quickly adjust himself when taking up a job in a factory in an urban area, or of the norms governing the relations between husband and wife, or of the norms "implied" by a course of action or an institution.¹⁶ Linguists, like other social scientists, also investigate norms in this sense. Semanticists have e.g. tried to formulate the norms to which a speaker commits himself by placing himself in different kinds of speech-situations. If a speaker places himself in a statement-making situation, then he is under an obligation to conform to the norms governing that kind of speech-situation. But as the difficulties of formulating norms for statement-making show, there is usually not much clear awareness of such norms; yet, breaches are recognized which shows that some norms are acknowledged and presupposed.¹⁷ A norm in this sense is not a mere regularity; it is a regularity which is accepted as making a claim upon us, a regularity to which one ought to conform. One way of finding out whether a habit is also regarded as

normative is by studying what happens when deviations from the regular pattern occur: if they are followed by sanctions of some kind, e.g. signs of disapproval, then one can conclude that the regularity is normative for the individuals concerned.

The distinction between studies of people's norm consciousness and studies of their accepted norms is of some importance for ethical methodology. Ethical discourse is of relevance for both kinds of studies, and it is the only kind of evidence which is directly relevant for studies of norm consciousness. (Non-verbal, behavioural evidence can, of course, be of indirect heuristical value for the investigator.) But to base all studies of accepted norms exclusively on verbal evidence would be a serious impediment for successful work in descriptive ethics. The more inarticulate an informant is, the more necessary it is to investigate the background of social relationships and practices against which his remarks are made. This does not mean that statements about norms and values follow logically from statements about actual behaviour; the only sense in which norms and values are "implied" by overt conduct is that what people actually do gives good *clues* to what norms they accept.

The prevailing practice in the social sciences of basing accounts of people's ethics on both verbal and non-verbal evidence seems, therefore, to be sound on the whole. I would, however, also like to make a plea for more restricted studies based only on verbal evidence of the kind which is exemplified by Ladd's study of the moral consciousness of a Navaho man. The investigation of patterns of thought seems to me as interesting as the investigation of patterns of behaviour, and should be of practical value e.g. for educationists in schools and universities and in adult instruction, not least in intercultural contact. Lack of adequate knowledge about the receivers is one of the main reasons why well-intended aid programmes often prove less successful than one could have hoped.

Chapter 4

The Ethics of Virtue

The ethics of virtue in the European tradition has come to be closely associated with "the inner life" of moral agents rather than with their external actions. This conception proves too narrow for the purposes of intercultural research. The European who approaches the ethics of virtues and vices in other cultures has to free himself of a number of preconceptions. It is the purpose of this chapter to disentangle some of the aspects of the ethics of virtue which are not clearly separated in the Aristotelian-Christian tradition but ought to be separated in descriptive ethics to avoid ethnocentric interpretations of non-European ethical systems.¹

1. Ideal rules and rules of duty

G. E. Moore once made a distinction between moral rules which recommend or condemn something which is within the direct control of our will, on the one hand, and all other moral rules, on the other hand. The first kind of rules he called "rules of duty", the second "ideal rules".² "Thou shalt not steal" would probably be regarded as a clear example of a rule of duty by most people, since it seems to be generally assumed that one can avoid thefts, if one really wants to. The Christian rule "Love your enemies", on the other hand, recommends something which one can't decide to do just like that and which is perhaps unattainable in many cases. So that this rule inculcates an ideal which it might be hard to live up to; it is an ideal rule.

Moore thought that this distinction between ideal rules and rules of duty, to all intents and purposes, is identical with the distinction between "the ethics of being" and "the ethics of doing":

It will be seen [he said] that this distinction which I am making coincides, roughly at all events, with the distinction which is often

expressed as the distinction between rules which tell you what you ought to *be* and rules which tell you merely what you ought to *do*; or as the distinction between rules which are concerned with your inner life – with your thoughts and feelings – and those which are concerned only with your external actions. The rules which are concerned with what you ought to *be* or with your inner life are, for the most part at all events, “ideal” rules; while those which are concerned with what you ought to do or your external actions are very often, at least, rules of duty.³

The ethics of virtue has sometimes been identified with the ethics of being in this sense, and the ethics of being with that part of ethics which consists of ideal rules in Moore’s sense. In *Norm and Action*, von Wright points out that some norms are immediately concerned with “things that ought to or may or must not *be*” rather than with actions, and adopts Moore’s term ‘ideal rules’ for such norms. As examples of sentences which express ideal rules, he mentions a number of virtue-sentences: “Ideal rules are referred to, for example, when we say that a man ought to be generous, truthful, just, temperate, etc., and also when we say that a soldier in the army should be brave, hardy, and disciplined;” and so on.⁴ From the grammatical point of view, this is of course correct: the ethics of being is often expressed by sentences which contain the verb ‘be’ in some form rather than an activity-verb; virtue-sentences in English use the words ‘is’ and ‘are’ and ‘was’ and ‘were’ and so on. (But in Arabic word-order carries the same function as the copula in English). For the purposes of descriptive ethics, it is, however, important to keep apart a number of distinctions which tend to be blurred when one talks about the ethics of being and the ethics of doing. For the present purposes, it must be insisted that the distinctions which Moore thought were at least roughly identical need not coincide. The distinction between ideal rules and rules of duty should not be confused with (i) the distinction between inward-oriented and outward-oriented conceptions or (ii) the distinction between agent-centered and action-centered systems of rules. To this it might be added that none of these distinctions is identical with e.g. (iii) the distinction between internal and external sanctions or (iv) the distinction between guilt-dominated and shame-dominated systems of ethics. In the Aristotelian-Christian tradition in ethics, all these distinctions tend to coincide, roughly at least. That is, some of the most familiar systems of ethics in the West which have been dominated

by ideal rules have also been inward-oriented, agent-centered, and guilt-dominated.

The ethics of virtue, which consists of ideal rules at least in the grammatical sense just referred to, has thus come to be closely associated with the idea of an inward-oriented, agent-centered, and guilt-dominated ethics.⁵ We must now proceed to disentangle these conceptions.

2. The inward-oriented and the outward-oriented conception of a virtue

According to one conception of a virtue, a virtue is essentially tied up with feelings, thoughts, beliefs, intentions, and attitudes; in short, with what Moore referred to as "the inner life", rather than with external actions. I shall call this *the inward-oriented conception of a virtue*, and an ethical system where such conceptions play a dominant part I shall call an *inward-oriented system of ethics*. The Christian ethics, with its emphasis on the right spirit, may be cited as an example of a system which has often been interpreted as clearly inward-oriented. Buddhism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism are other examples of strongly inward-oriented systems of ethics.

According to the other conception of a virtue, virtue-expressions are not necessarily connected with an inward-oriented ethics of feelings and attitudes. This is the conception of a virtue one finds in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*. The virtues, Sidgwick said, are "departments of duty"; the names of the particular virtues function as headlines for kinds of right conduct.⁶ The virtue-names can be used as chapter-heading expressions, summarizers of sets of duties, and the duties they point to may be of all sorts, external as well as internal. When a person uses a virtue-expression to refer only to external actions with no reference to the ethics of thoughts and feelings, I shall say that he has got an *outward-oriented conception* of the virtue in point; and I shall say that an ethical system where such conceptions play a dominant role is an *outward-oriented system of ethics*. The pre-Islamic ethics of the nomad Arabs, which is often expressed in terms of virtues and vices, seems to have been highly outward-oriented. The ethical systems in the utilitarian tradition are all strongly outward-oriented.

It is convenient to refer to virtues and vices as *traits*, where 'trait' should be taken in a non-committal sense to mean nothing more than quality or property or feature.⁷ (The question whether virtues and vices are traits in any stronger sense, e.g. traits of character in the sense in which some psychologists use that term, remains open for discussion; see ch. 5.) A trait is manifested in certain types of situations which can be called *trait situations*, and in certain types of action, *trait actions*. How a trait is manifested depends upon what kind of a situation the agent is in; different kinds of trait situation demand different trait actions. Courtesy at home is not the same as courtesy in church. Again the same trait may require different trait actions from different persons. Courtesy for a child is not the same as courtesy for a grown-up person.⁸

Now the point of this section can be put more precisely. There are many ways in which a trait can be manifested; trait actions are not the only kind of *trait manifestation*. An outward-oriented ethics of virtue can now be said to be an ethics which puts an emphasis on overt trait actions, whereas an inward-oriented ethics stresses other kinds of manifestations. More exactly: if the regular display of trait actions is held by a person P to be a sufficient condition for ascribing the corresponding trait to the doer of the actions, then I shall say that P has an outward-oriented conception of the trait. And, generally, if P considers the performance of trait actions a sufficient condition for the ascription of virtues (and vices), then P has an outward-oriented conception of the notion of a virtue (and of the notion of a vice). A system where such a conception plays a dominant part is an outward-oriented system of ethics. And if P does not have an outward-oriented conception of a virtue, then he will be said to have an inward-oriented conception of it.

G. E. Moore seems to have had an inward-oriented conception of the notion of a virtue. But it would be a mistake to assume that any ethics of virtue must be an inward-oriented system of ethics. There are both inner and outer manifestations of virtues and vices. The language of virtues and vices is neutral with regard to the importance of feelings and thoughts in ethics.

It seems to be true on the whole that most virtue-sentences express ideal rules in Moore's sense. For on the whole our virtues and vices are not within our control to the same extent as our particular actions are, and this holds good for both the

inward-oriented and the outward-oriented conception of a virtue: we do not have the same power over our feelings and attitudes and habits as we have over most of our actions. But there is no sharp borderline between ideal rules and rules of duty. Often, to acquire an attitude or habit requires more training than to perform an action, but one can also think of cases to the contrary. Strictly speaking, one ought not say that most virtue-sentences express ideal rules but that many or perhaps even most virtue-sentences express rules which are more ideal than many or perhaps even most other moral rules. Many virtue-sentences are highly ideal, but so are many rules of duty.⁹

3. Agent-centered and action-centered systems of ethics

From the variety of moral situations, the following has often been singled out for special attention as a kind of paradigm of a moral situation: a single person performs a single action which leads to certain results. Much discussion has been devoted to the question of the relations between the moral quality of the elements in the paradigm. Does e.g. the moral value of an agent depend entirely upon what he does and does the moral value of an action depend entirely upon its results? According to which element in the moral paradigm situation is considered the focus of moral value, one can distinguish between agent-centered, action-centered, and result-centered theories about the foundations of moral value. Hume might be cited as a clear example of a proponent of an agent-centered theory about moral value: "actions are objects of our moral sentiment, so far only as they are indications of the internal character, passions, and affections";¹⁰ the utilitarians and other teleologists are clearly result-centered; W.D. Ross and other deontologists are more action-centered than both Hume and the utilitarians.¹¹ The elements in the paradigmatic moral situation can thus be used for a classification of theories about the focus of moral value. One can, however, also make a more sweeping use of the terms 'agent-centered' and 'action-centered' to characterize tendencies within whole systems of ethics and this is how I intend to use these terms here.

By an *agent-centered system of ethics* I shall mean a system of ethics which gives a prominent place to considerations of the

moral agent rather than to actions and their results, and by an *action-centered system of ethics* I shall mean a system of ethics where considerations of actions and their results loom large. (One could of course also make a finer distinction between result-centered theories and action-centered theories in a narrower sense, but that does not seem essential in the present context). Clearly, these two kinds of ethical systems are not mutually exclusive: a system can, and should perhaps, pay much attention to both agents and their actions (and the results of their actions). It could also be said that these terms are very imprecise, and admittedly they are rather imprecise as they have been introduced here. Still, they seem illuminating for a characterization of the ways in which moral philosophers have approached their subject-matter.

Recent moral philosophy has been much preoccupied with the distinction between right and wrong actions and with the idea of a good thing, but this is not what one could call the traditional approach to ethics. Plato, Aristotle, and Hume, to mention some traditionalists, did not discuss the moral quality of actions and their results directly. In Aristotle, e.g., there is no direct discussion of the difference between right and wrong; instead, one finds a discussion of what it means for a man to be morally good, and this being determined, he seems to have thought that there is no special problem about actions left: a right action is an action that a good man ("a man of sense or practical wisdom") would do.¹² Hume's ethics is another clear example of an agent-centered system of ethics. *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* is not an analysis of the difference between right and wrong actions or of the difference between good and bad results but an enquiry into the difference between virtues and vices. Questions of right and wrong are dealt with only by implication.¹³

The modern approach to ethics, typified by Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) reverses the procedure. Explicit attention is now paid primarily to the distinction between right and wrong conduct and good and bad results and the ethics of virtue is dealt with only in passing or by implication. Whereas conduct was preciously judged upon in relation to the agent, the status of the agent now tends to be held dependent upon his conduct.

For some reasons, the agent-centered approach to ethics has come to be closely associated with inward-oriented systems, so

that the distinction between agent-centered and action-centered systems has not been clearly separated from the entirely different distinction between inward-oriented and outward-oriented systems of ethics. Perhaps this is so because inward-oriented systems also tend to be agent-centered. It is difficult to avoid making explicit references to the moral agents when one deals with their "inner life", but apparently easy to do so when one's main interest is in overt actions and their results. But it would be a mistake to assume that all agent-centered systems of ethics are also inward-oriented. It would, for instance, be a bad misinterpretation of the popular Sudanese ethics of virtue to construe it on Christian lines as concerned with the inner aspects of the moral life rather than with its outer manifestations, as I shall try to show in Part II of this book.

4. Self-determined and other-determined systems of ethics

The term 'sanction' has been used in philosophy and the social sciences to refer to all sorts of control mechanisms which ensure conformity with moral and legal norms.¹⁴ The sanctions of a moral norm are what makes people conform to the norm. There is a great variety of pressure mechanisms which ensure conformity with given norms: threats of punishment of various kinds like fires of hell, public disgrace, economical loss, pangs of conscience; anticipations of rewards of various kinds like eternal life, peace of mind, praise and prestige; and so on. Two kinds of sanctions in this sense have recently received much attention, viz. *shame* and *guilt*. Since Ruth Benedict introduced her sweeping distinction between "shame-cultures" and "guilt-cultures" in 1946,¹⁵ the notions of shame and guilt have been the subject of an extended discussion and received a fair amount of criticism. The distinctions which have been introduced earlier in this chapter are not identical with any of the distinctions which have been made between different kinds of sanctions; yet, there might be a temptation to confuse especially the distinction between inward-oriented and outward-oriented systems of ethics with the distinction between guilt-dominated and shame-dominated systems of ethics or with the distinction which has sometimes been made between internal and external sanctions.¹⁶ The confusion within

the field of sanctions itself no doubt invites confusion between inward-orientation on the one hand and guilt-domination on the other hand. I propose, therefore, to introduce a distinction between "self-determined" and "other-determined" systems of ethics, which is intended to explicate one aspect of the guilt-shame distinction which is particularly relevant for the purposes of the present investigation and which I hope will be clear enough to dispel any tendency to confuse it with e.g. the distinction between inward-oriented and outward-oriented systems of ethics.

If a person has got an ethical system according to which an agent's *moral status* is determined entirely by the agent's own actions, attitudes, beliefs, motives, and so on, I shall say that the agent's moral status is *self-determined* according to that system. If a person's ethical system is such that the agent's moral status depends, partly at least, on other people's beliefs, actions, attitudes, etc., I shall say that the agent's moral status is *other-determined* according to that system. It will also be useful to extend this distinction to apply to whole systems of ethics, so that an ethical system in which the moral status of the agent is other-determined will be said to be a *self-determined system*, and an ethical system in which the moral status of the agent is other-determined will be said to be an *other-determined system*. (I shall count moral systems according to which one's moral status is held to depend upon God's beliefs, actions, attitudes, etc. as self-determined.)

Like the other distinctions introduced in this chapter, this is a distinction of degree rather than of kind. Ethical systems may be more or less clearly self-determined or other-determined. Clear examples of other-determination can be found in the popular Arabic morals, e.g. in the stories in the *Arabian Nights*. And to judge from the tales from modern Kuwait and Sau'di Arabia in Dickson's *The Arab of the Desert*, that aspect of Arab ethics does not seem to have changed much since the Middle Ages. The following quotations seem to indicate a clearly other-determined ethics: "Alas, I had a quarrel with the *Qadhi* (judge), and in a fit of rage I killed him, but if you, my friend, will help me to dispose of the body secretly, no one need know, and all will be well".¹⁷ And perhaps even clearer: "What he couldn't stand was the man who did things crudely, and got found out. For such there was no forgiveness".¹⁸

The distinction between self-determined and other-determined

systems of ethics is closely related to the distinction between internal and external sanctions. For provided that the agent's goal is to preserve or improve his moral status, self-determined and other-determined systems will tend to employ different kinds of sanctions. External sanctions in the sense of actual or anticipated reactions from other people will tend to be irrelevant to an agent in so far as he has got a self-determined ethical system.

It is also closely related to the distinction between shame and guilt. If an ethical system is such that the agent's moral status is self-determined, then it would seem to be in accordance with ordinary usage to refer to the moral uneasiness which an agent who has internalized the system experiences when transgressing the norms of the system as guilt. For a person who has internalized an other-determined ethics, on the other hand, the uneasiness or "moral anxiety" he experiences when violating one of his ethical norms depends upon anticipations of other people's reactions, and it would seem appropriate to refer to such anticipations as anticipations of shame.¹⁹ The person with an other-determined ethics experiences uneasiness at the prospect of lowered status in the eyes of others; the person with a self-determined ethics experiences uneasiness at the prospect of lowered status in his own eyes.

5. Heuristical advantages of an agent-centered approach to ethics

One of the notable features of the development of moral philosophy in the last hundred years is the change which has taken place from discourse on character to discourse on the manifestations of character. One of the reasons for this change of focal interest was that talk about virtues and vices came to be felt to be too vague to be satisfactory. The transition from the agent-centered approach with its interest in discourse on character to the action-centered approach with its interest in the manifestations of character can be clearly seen in Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, originally published in 1874. A substantial part of that book is an essay in descriptive ethics where Sidgwick tried to map the common sense morality of his own society. It is significant that he did this in the form of a review of the popular conceptions of virtues and vices. But Sidgwick found common sense unclear as to first prin-

ciples, and so he proposed the utilitarian criterion of rightness and wrongness as a clarification of ordinary morality. Now this new approach certainly made good some faults of omission, but at the same time it came to lead to a comparative neglect of the role of the agent in the moral life. And somehow, it seems that information about people's opinions on what kind of a person one ought to be yields more insight into the spirit of their ethics than information about what particular actions one ought to do, as Richard Brandt found in his analysis of Hopi ethics.²⁰

Why is it more revealing to start with character ideals, conceptions of virtues and vices, rather than with particular prescriptions for action, when one wants to understand someone's ethics? I propose that it is precisely the feature which led Sidgwick away from the ethics of virtue: its indeterminateness. Discourse in general terms on virtues and vices tends to be more indeterminate in meaning than discourse on overt conduct, and this is what makes it more suitable to indicate the broad outlines of an ethical system. The names of the virtues function as headlines for kinds of right conduct; the virtues are "departments of duty", as Sidgwick put it.²¹ Since each virtue and vice branches off into particular prescriptions and prohibitions,²² it has heuristical as well as expository advantages to approach an ethics through its character ideals. For the same reason, the language of virtues and vices plays a prominent role in moral instruction. Professional codes, codes for school-children and boy-scouts, and so on, usually contain a mixture of virtue- and duty-terminology.

W. E. H. Lecky once wrote that "The history of morals is essentially a history of the changes that take place not so much in our conception of what is right and wrong as in the proportionate place and prominence we assign to different virtues and vices".²³ This might be a bit exaggerated, but I tend to agree with Lecky that the best key to the "moral atmosphere" of a society is its character ideal, the "ideal moral type" to be found in men's minds.²⁴

The ideal moral type is a blueprint for the moral life.

Chapter 5

The Analysis of Virtues

In the foregoing chapter, we began to develop a notion of a virtue intended to be suitable for the purposes of intercultural research. After those preambles, we can now go on to state an explicit definition of the term 'virtue' which will delimit the field of enquiry which we shall refer to as "the ethics of virtue" (sec. 1). This definition will then be compared with the definition of 'a virtue' as 'a trait of character' (sec. 2). The relevance of psychology to the ethics of virtue will be briefly examined in sec. 3. Finally, we are going to comment upon the semantics of virtue-terms and spell out some practical implications of the looseness of the virtue-terminology for the study of the ethics of virtue (sec. 4-5).

1. The notion of a virtue

The reason why we need a definition of the notion of a virtue in the present context is that we want to delimit our field of enquiry; we want an answer to the question, How large a part of the field of ethics does the ethics of virtue cover? The kind of definition which is needed is thus a field-staking definition or a "programmatic definition" of 'virtue'. We need, in other words, an explicit definition which, while bearing some similarity to what is ordinarily meant by 'virtue', delimits an interesting and not too narrow field of enquiry and which is effectively applicable in intercultural research (cf. ch. 1).

As far as the condition of similarity to ordinary usage is concerned, the definitor is left with much freedom, for, as the three pages devoted to the word 'virtue' in *The Oxford English Dictionary* amply illustrate, 'virtue' is a flexible word which has been used in a large variety of ways. Since we are here concerned with the notion of a virtue rather than with the notion of virtue in general,¹ the following uses of 'virtue' which are listed in the Dictionary are of special interest to us in the present context:

3. With *a* and pl. A particular moral excellence; a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct.

5. Superiority or excellence, unusual ability, merit, or distinction, in some respect.

11. With *a* and pl. A particular power, efficacy, or good quality inherent in, or pertaining to, something ...²

To judge from my own observation of the use of the word 'virtue' in *The Observer* and *The New Statesman* and elsewhere, the most common meaning of 'virtue' in current English is what *The Oxford English Dictionary* refers to in 5 and 11 above: the word 'virtue' has come to mean nothing more than 'good feature', 'good quality' or 'good trait'. The virtue of something, according to this usage, is what is good about it or what makes it good. The virtue of cheap French wines, e.g., is what is good about those wines ("their consistency of style", according to the expert writing in *The Observer*); the virtues of a great general are the features or qualities which make him a great general; and so on.

The moral sense of 'virtue' referred to in 3 above seems to be rare nowadays. 'Virtue' as a moral term has been spoiled, as it were, by being used in moralizing contexts; it has absorbed so much of the moral atmosphere of a time which has passed that it has become difficult to use it seriously any longer. It is an old-fashioned word to use in ethics. Still, it is a useful word, and by surrounding it with the kind of precautions which are mentioned in the present and the foregoing chapters, one should be able to rid it of unwelcome associations.

We have found it convenient to refer to the virtues as "traits" or "features" in some unspecified sense (ch. 4, sec. 2), and we have taken virtue-terms to stand for "departments of duty" or "clusters of conduct and character" (ibid.), so that if anybody exhibits the appropriate conduct and character to a sufficient degree, then the corresponding feature or trait is ascribed to him. Now this way of using the term 'virtue' agrees well with the current tendency to use 'virtue' to refer to any good quality in a thing or human being. We decide, therefore, to incorporate this feature of the meaning of 'virtue' into the definition of 'virtue' which we adopt for the purposes of this book:

(Def.) By a 'virtue' shall in this book be meant "a good feature", a "good quality", a "good characteristic".

The virtues of the good Sudanese are, according to this definition, the qualities or characteristics or features one should have in order to be a good Sudanese; the virtues of the good father are the characteristics which make a man a good father; and so on.

An individual's ethics of virtue can now be defined as that fragment of his ideology which consists of his conceptions of what one should be like in order to be a good man, a good woman, a good citizen, a good tribesman, a good father, a good mother, a good friend, a good farmer, a good mechanic, and so on. The ethics of virtue, according to this definition, comprises all the virtues of human beings in all their capacities and roles.

The proposed definition of 'a virtue' seems to me to fulfil all the conditions which a good programmatic definition should fulfil. It agrees well with how the word 'virtue' is used nowadays, it delimits an interesting – and much neglected – field of research, and is effectively and inter-culturally applicable.

2. "A virtue is a trait of character"

The way in which the notion of a virtue has been introduced above makes it an empirical question to decide whether particular virtue-names stand for "traits" of some special kind, e.g. whether they stand for "traits of character" in some sense. Many people seem, however, to have a strong tendency to regard the dictum "A virtue is a trait of character" as analytically true. In other words, they want to define 'virtue' in terms of 'trait of character'. Brandt is an example: "We can define "virtue" as a "desirable trait of character" and "vice" as an "undesirable trait of character".³ 'A trait of character', in its turn, is defined by Brandt as a "relatively enduring response-tendency of the whole person" which is (i) either a social asset or a social liability, (ii) "within our voluntary control at least in the sense that we could have behaved as if we had them if our desires or interests had been what they really should be".⁴ The main defect of this definition of 'a virtue' is that it is inconvenient to use in empirical research. How does one decide e.g. whether an informant's notion of courage is such that 'courage', for him, stands for "a relatively enduring response-tendency of the whole person"? And to make the notion of a virtue dependent upon assumptions about free

will – which is rather common – does not only lead to cumbersome; it also threatens to make the ethics of virtue a much less interesting field of research than it would otherwise be. For it is quite possible that one might find conceptions of the good man which are not related to any assumptions about free will at all or even combined with denials of free will. It is unfortunate for the ethics of virtue that it has been tied in this way to questions about desert and responsibility, punishment, blame and reward.⁵ That our broad notion of a virtue is non-committal in this respect contributes to make it more effectively applicable in ideological research.

If one would like to have an alternative definition of 'trait of character' which avoids assumptions about free will, it would seem natural to turn to books on the psychology of personality, which usually contain sections on "traits" and "character". The precisions of 'trait of character' to be found in current psychology seem, however, to be unsuitable for the purposes of descriptive ethics for two reasons: (1) they fail to fulfil the demand that they should be effectively applicable in fieldwork; (2) they take us away from the field of ideology into the field of moral behaviour. One psychologist has e.g. defined 'trait' of character' as "an enduring psychophysical disposition to inhibit impulses in accordance with a regulative principle".⁶ It is possible that this definition could be combined with a methodology which would make it effectively applicable also outside the psychological laboratory; as it stands, however, it is presumably as useless for the psychologist working under laboratory conditions as it is for the descriptive ethicist doing fieldwork on an informant's ethics. As for the second objection, it should be immediately obvious that dispositions to inhibit impulses, for instance, are irrelevant for ideological research into a person's conceptions of the good man, the good father, the good teacher, and so on. The relations between ideological research and psychology tend, however, to be rather confusing. It will be worth while to devote a special section to an attempt to clarify the situation.

3. Ideological research and psychology

One way of drawing a distinction between ethics and psychology is to say that ethics is concerned with normative or evaluative

questions and psychology with factual questions; ethics deals with values, psychology with facts. To say that ethics deals with values is, however, to slur over the important difference between the ways in which descriptive ethics and normative ethics deal with values. Normative ethics is the discipline which tries to answer normative questions. Descriptive ethics, on the other hand, is not an evaluative or normative discipline at all; descriptive ethics is a factual discipline whose field of study is normative ethics. The distinction between facts and values cannot, therefore, be used to differentiate descriptive ethics from psychology. Descriptive ethics as well as psychology is a factual discipline.

If one likes, one could include the whole of ideological research in psychology. For in ideological research one investigates people's thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, norms, ideals, and so on; and it would not be unnatural to say that such investigations belong to psychology in a wide sense. But usually, psychology is taken in a more narrow sense, so that ideological research does not fall within the scope of psychology. The behaviouristic emphasis in modern psychology is clearly noticeable also in the field of personality and character studies. In so far as psychologists take an interest in ethical matters, their main concern is with moral behaviour rather than with moral ideas. That this is so is clear not least from the definitions of 'trait of character' current in psychological literature which are framed so as to be suitable for studies of moral behaviour. The difference between ideological research and psychology, as these disciplines are practiced nowadays, is thus a difference of emphasis or centre of interest rather than a difference in subject-matter.

The distinction between morphological and causal-functional studies of ideologies (ch. 3, sec. 2) can be used to state this point in another way. A morphological investigation of an ideological system, e.g. an ethics of virtue, studies the contents and structure of the system in isolation from other systems. In a causal or functional study, the system in question is related to external factors, e.g. systems of behaviour or personality. The purely morphological study of ideologies is a task for the ideological specialist (e.g. a descriptive ethicist). Representatives of other disciplines who have an interest in ideological questions (e.g. historians, social scientists, and psychologists) tend to approach the subject in a wider way, and study ideologies in relation to other factors. A study of moral behaviour, for instance, is clearly a

study of the second type – a piece of causal-functional research. Now the important point to notice is that any piece of causal-functional research is concerned with the relations between ideologies and other factors. Studies of moral behaviour, e.g., are concerned with the question in how far the persons under investigation conform to certain standards, which may or may not be their own standards. In so far as the investigation aims at finding out in how far the subjects conform to their own professed standards, it will be an investigation of the operational efficacy of their standards (see ch. 3, sec. 1). Any study of operational efficacy clearly presupposes the results of morphological research. In so far as the investigation aims at finding out in how far the subjects conform to certain given standards which they may or may not have internalised, the investigation again presupposes some morphological work; the given standards should at least be explicitly and clearly formulated. Some confusion seems to have arisen in studies of moral behaviour because of a failure to formulate the presupposed standards clearly and because of a failure to distinguish clearly between studies of the operational efficacy of the individual's own standards and studies of conformity to other standards (e.g. those standards which society wishes the individual to conform to.)⁷

To sum up: psychologists tend to study ethical and other ideological items from the causal-functional point of view, whereas a "pure" ideological investigation is done from the morphological point of view. The psychological literature on trait theory, character, and personality is largely irrelevant for morphological studies in descriptive ethics because of its behaviouristic emphasis.

4. The language of virtues and vices

There exists no standardized nomenclature within the field of virtues and vices. Rather, the language of virtues and vices is extraordinarily rich and flexible. The English language has been reported to include 17,953 terms which refer to traits of personality or character⁸ ("terms characterizing personal behaviour and personality").⁹ Not all of these terms are virtue-terms, but the very length of the list makes it clear that there is no scarcity of virtue-terms in English.¹⁰ Other languages may be less abundant in this respect, but there is no reason to expect any dirth of

virtue-terms in any of the major languages of the world. Like the word 'good', virtue-terms are normally used both to describe and evaluate, but, unlike the word 'good', virtue-terms cannot be used purely evaluatively to express general approval. Virtue-terms always carry some descriptive content; they have a much narrower range of application than 'good'. But it would be a mistake to assume that there is no variety at all in the descriptive meaning of virtue-terms. The criteria of honesty, courage, and justice are not the same for all persons in all societies or for all persons within the same society or for the same person at different times. There is perhaps a hard core of cases to which most people would agree that the word 'honesty' undoubtedly applies, but round this hard core of meaning different people group other cases in different ways, so that the whole cluster which is referred to by 'honesty' is not quite the same for all persons. Children probably refer to a somewhat different cluster than adults do when they use the word 'honesty'. If a child seems inconsistent in his views on honesty or in his scores on an honesty test, the reason may be that the investigator operates with another conception of honesty than the investigated child, so that what looks inconsistent from the investigator's point of view is perfectly consistent from the child's own point of view.¹¹

The unsettledness of the meaning of each virtue-term in conjunction with the abundance of terms available leaves considerable freedom for the individual in his use of virtue-terms. Virtue-terms can be moulded within wide limits to fit one's own purposes without transgressing the limits of correct usage. The following is an illuminating example of how the moulding can take place.¹² The faculty members of a women's college in the United States wanted to work out a code of ethics for their students. Out of a list of 1500 nouns the faculty selected 222 terms which seemed to refer to what could plausibly be regarded as good characteristics in women. The 222 terms were reduced to 31 families of related traits, and one of the members of each trait family was more or less arbitrarily selected as the "key trait" in the family. "Courtesy" was e.g. taken to include "graciousness, good breeding, mannerliness, gentleness, refinement, politeness, gentility, and ladylikeness". From the list of key traits, the ten most important were selected by statistical treatment of the faculty members' ratings of their relative importance. The upshot was a code of ethics grouped round ten items, a favourite number

in codes of ethics. (The ten most important characteristics which the faculty members thought a college girl ought to have were, by the way: cheerfulness, courtesy, discipline, forcefulness, healthfulness, honesty, love of beauty, scholarliness, service, and spirituality.) That virtue-terms lend themselves to this kind of treatment without in any way transgressing the limits of what is felt to be linguistically proper should serve as a warning not to expect too much uniformity in the use of such terms and stresses the importance of detailed case-studies in the field of virtues.

5. Practical implications

The possibility of variations in the clusters of conduct and character referred to by virtue-terms becomes especially important in cross-cultural studies. There must be some similarity between the cluster referred to by a term in the foreign language and the cluster referred to by a term in English in order for the foreign term to count as a translation of the English term. But it would be rather surprising if the cluster referred to by the foreign term happened to be identical with the cluster referred to by the English term (as used by the investigator, for instance). In this situation, it would be unwise to declare that there is no translation of the English term into the foreign language – that would be to over-rate the degree of semantical stability of the term in English.

The best way of avoiding the hazards of translation is always to use the indigenous terms as technical terms even in interviews conducted e.g. in English. If English translations are to be used, and it is sometimes convenient to use translations, one must agree on *standard translations* to avoid e.g. that different informants use different translations, with resulting confusion. Some terms can be translated relatively easily, but the more different the cluster of conduct and character referred to by an indigenous term is from the clusters referred to by English terms, the more misleading the translation will be.

One can probably find terms in most other languages which correspond well on the whole with e.g. the English word 'courage'. But the analyst should not be surprised to find something which he himself considers to be totally unrelated to courage to be included in the cluster which on the whole seems to cor-

respond to what we call courage, or if behaviour which we would call cowardly is included, or if behaviour which we think is typically courageous is not included in the informant's conception of courage. The discrepancy between the informant's and the analyst's views on courage *may* be due to confusion or insincerity on the part of the informant, but it may also be due to a difference in the ideal itself. If an informant tells the analyst that running away when one is faced with certain kinds of danger is not a sign of cowardice, this should not necessarily be interpreted as a feeble excuse or as a rationalisation of unworthy behaviour: there is a *prima facie* case for a difference in the ideal of courage itself. The informant's conception of courage might e.g. include the view that one should not expose oneself to danger unnecessarily, and the situation where the analyst tends to think that the brave man should stay and face the danger might be regarded by the informant as a situation where only the foolhardy would fail to flee. (Cf. § 77 and the comments in ch. 7.) To detect such differences between different conceptions of courage and other virtues, it is essential to go down to the application of the general norms, to study examples, stories, cases. Otherwise, one could stay on forever on the comfortable level of pseudo-agreement: - "Certainly you agree that courage is a virtue?" - "Oh, yes, I think that one should be brave". And so on.

The Traditional Sudanese Virtues:
Some Case-Studies

Chapter 6

Survey of the Investigation

1. Introduction

There is, as yet, no such thing as a homogeneous Sudanese culture or a single Sudanese nationality. A measure of the ethnical and cultural diversity which characterizes the Sudan is the fact that when the first population census took place in the Sudan in 1955/56, provision was made for 115 languages and 597 tribes, grouped into 56 tribal groups.¹ The population census classified 39% of the inhabitants of the Sudan as "Arabs",² 30 % as "Southerners", 13 % as "Westerners", 6 % as "Beja", 6 % as "Nuba", 3 % as "Nubiyin", and the remaining 3% as "Foreigners & Miscellaneous".³ The major cultural division goes between the Arab-dominated, largely Moslem Northern part of the country and the Negro-inhabited, non-Moslem South.⁴ Well-informed observers have sometimes found the North to be on the whole culturally homogeneous,⁵ but in how far this is true from the ideological point of view remains to be investigated.

The ideologies of the Sudanese are virtually uncharted land. Illuminating accounts of certain aspects of the ethics and Weltanschauung of certain tribes can be found in anthropological works like Evans-Pritchard's well-known studies of the Nuer and the Azande, explorers and civil servants have made scattered remarks which give clues for research, but intensive, detailed work in descriptive ethics has so far not been carried out in the Sudan.

In the absence of previous research in the field, the best way of approaching the subject of moral views in the Sudan would seem to be to make a number of rather detailed case-studies, on the basis of which more extensive investigations (e.g. of a statistical nature) can be carried out. The present investigation of some fragments of the ethical systems of a few individuals is intended as such an exploratory study which aims at leading up to hypotheses to be tested in further research. For the moral

philosopher, the selected individuals' ethical systems also have an inherent interest irrespective of their representativity as examples of possible and, for many of us, unfamiliar moral outlooks.

2. The informants

As a teacher of moral philosophy at the University of Khartoum, it was natural for me to use some of my students as informants. In October 1963, I approached three senior students whom I had then been teaching for more than two years and asked them if they were willing to co-operate in an investigation of the traditional Sudanese virtues. The students, whom I shall here refer to by the pseudonyms *Ali*, *Osman*, and *Ibrahim*, agreed to participate in the project, and we had a number of talks on the traditional Sudanese virtues from October 1963 to February 1964.

The choice of university students as informants had the advantage that the interviews could be conducted in English, and the fact that all three of them were philosophy students gave me the further advantage of having relatively clear, explicit and interested informants whom I could press for information even when they were somewhat reluctant to pursue a certain theme. This happened e.g. when political questions were touched upon, understandably enough, since the Sudan was then ruled by a military junta which allowed for little freedom of expression and other democratic institutions. Open criticism of the government easily led to imprisonment, as one of the informants knew from personal experience. That my informants volunteered so much information about their views, and even allowed me to taperecord the talks, is an indication of the extent of their good will and interest in the project, for which I am deeply grateful to them. I doubt that I could have found any other informants who would have been more cooperative in the circumstances.

The three informants were all from the central, riverain Sudan. Ali came from Atbara and belonged to the Bidayriyya tribe. Osman came from a village in the Wādi Sha'ir area (Blue Nile Province) and belonged to the Baṭāhīn tribe. His mother was of the Rufā'a tribe. Ibrahim, finally, came from a village in the Gezira (Blue Nile Province), and, like both his parents, belonged to the Kināna tribe. They were all about 25 years old, had all received the usual state education (elementary, intermediate,

and secondary schools for, in all, twelve years) before entering the university, and had all attended the traditional Koran schools (the *khalwa* schools)⁶ for shorter or longer periods. (Ali from the age of 5 to 7, Ibrahim for some time before he left his village to start the intermediate school. Osman continued to attend the *khalwa* as long as up to the secondary school stage.) All three were religiously minded. When invited to my house in the afternoon, at least two of them regularly went out at sunset to conduct their prayers. When asked whether they were Muslim Brothers,⁷ Ali wrote no, Osman yes, and Ibrahim protested that membership of the Muslim Brotherhood was secret and replied instead that he was a member of the "Islamic Front" (a party in the students' Union at the University of Khartoum, virtually identical with the Muslim Brothers; not to be confused with the nation-wide political organization which came into existence in the autumn of 1964). None of them filled in a line on a questionnaire asking for "political interests".

The informants included no representative of the active Communist group in the students' Union ("the Democrats"). It would have been interesting to know in how far the students' political affiliations (Muslim Brothers and Communists were the two main factions) were correlated with their moral outlooks.

The informants' background was in several respects typical of the majority of the students at the University of Khartoum in the mid-sixties. An analysis of data for all the students in the University who were listed as candidates for the March examinations in 1966 has shown that 75% of the students came from the three central, riverain provinces; that 78% of the first year students were 20 years old or under; and that an overwhelming majority of the students were recruited from state schools.⁸ A survey of the student population in 1962/63 showed that 26% of the students' fathers were farmers, like those of two of the informants. (The father of the third informant was a railway employee.) 18% were shop-keepers, and other occupational groups were all small.⁹ 86% of the respondents in that survey stated that they believed in God, 32% that they prayed regularly, and 64% that they fasted during Ramadan. (Cf. the informants' views on fasting in §§ 89 ff., 141 ff.) From this it does, of course, not follow that the informants were representative of the total student population in any statistical sense. I shall return to the problem of representativity towards the end of Part II (ch. 10).

3. The interviews

At the end of the first semester of the academic year 1963/64, i.e. at the end of October 1963, I interviewed each of the three informants separately for about 1½ hours about their views on the most important virtues. This was followed by a joint seminar. It then became apparent that a tape-recorder would be an invaluable aid for the project, and when the students came back after the November vacation, we proceeded to make recordings of a series of talks which took place in December 1963 and February 1964. Eight sessions were tape-recorded in all, extending over about 10½ hours, with the participation of one, two or three of the informants each time. Ali took part in six sessions, Osman in five, Ibrahim only in two joint interviews. The two main informants are therefore Ali and Osman. Ibrahim was on the whole less interested in the project than the others and was the only one who gave me the impression of deliberately trying to present the Sudanese and their ethics in an especially favourable light to the inquisitive outsider.

I made transcripts of the interviews as quickly as possible after each session to be able to base the following sessions on points which had come up in the discussions which seemed worth pursuing.

The interviews moved rather freely over a large number of topics which seemed to be able to illuminate the informants' ethics of virtue. Some attempts naturally turned out to be more rewarding than others. Most of the interviews are reproduced in Part III of this book, leaving out, however, many of the dead ends and irrelevant excursions.

The analysis of the traditional Sudanese virtues in the following chapters is based on the transcripts of the interviews supplemented with three short essays which the informants wrote in connection with the interviews. The interviews have been divided into numbered paragraphs for easy reference.

Some questions (e.g. in §§ 58 and 66) were suggested by points which came up in two tape-recorded interviews with two girl students, one of whom belonged to the Greek community in Khartoum, the other to the small Protestant community. These two interviews revealed a number of significant misunderstandings of the traditional Sudanese views and served to bring home the point that the different ethnic communities in the Three

Towns (Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman) are, to a considerable extent, closed communities with their own traditions and ideologies, which would require separate investigation. A few questions were also suggested by short essays written by girl students in a secondary school which were set and collected by my wife, and by written material from the informants and other university students (cf. ch. 10, sec. 2).

The external circumstances under which the interviews took place require some comments. At the end of the first semester of the academic year 1963/64, it became known that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which was then the governing body of the Sudan, had decided to implement a number of changes in the 1956 University Act with the aim of limiting the amount of independence the university had up to then enjoyed. This caused considerable unrest amongst both staff and students at the university. The Sudanese staff threatened to resign, and when the students came back from the November vacation, all of them except a few students of foreign origin went on a strike which lasted for about one month. The interviews in December 1963 could therefore not be included in the normal series of seminars, as originally planned; instead, the informants volunteered to come to my home on a number of occasions. The absence of Ibrahim from most of the interviews was probably partly due to his active engagement in the activities of the students' Union during this period of crisis. These events naturally formed the background for some of the discussions (see §§ 16, 79–80).

4. Aim and methodology

The aim of the present investigation was, first, to study some aspects of one type of moral system in some detail and, second, to provide a basis for more extensive investigations of Sudanese ethics. The investigation belongs to the first kind of ideological research distinguished in ch. 3, sec. 2: it is a strictly morphological, synchronic investigation. I am thus not here interested in the actual conduct of the informants. To study in how far the informants follow their professed moral principles in actual conduct would require another type of study. In the terminology of ch. 3, that would be a study of the operational efficacy of the

informants' moral views, which would be a piece of causal-functional research.

This distinction between strictly morphological research into ideologies and research of a causal-functional kind should help to dispel one of the more common misunderstandings of the value of arm-chair methods in descriptive ethics. The interview situation is of course not appropriate for e.g. a study of operational efficacy; for the morphological mapping of an ideology, it is, however, admirably suitable, as I have argued in Part I of this book, to which the reader is referred for a detailed description of the methodology which has been used in this study.

Two other possible sources of misunderstanding had better been dealt with before we proceed to the commentary on the interview texts. (a) It might be argued that the artificial interview situation helped to give a distorted picture of the informants' ethics. In particular, it could be argued that the teacher-student relation was bound to set the project on the wrong footing from the beginning, and that the students would endeavour to present their views in what they thought was the best light from the point of view of their teacher's expectations. This is of course quite possible. The students might e.g. have tried to present a Westernized version of their beliefs in the hope of appearing in a more favourable light. I have already indicated my reasons for believing that at least the two main informants, Ali and Osman, did not consciously try to do so (sec. 2). They gave me the impression throughout of being seriously interested in giving as correct a picture of their views as possible. Anyway, the question whether any distortion of this kind occurred or not is a question about the *stability* of the informants' ethical views (cf. ch. 3, sec. 1). To study the degree of stability of ethical views is one of the tasks of descriptive ethics, which would, however, fall outside the scope of a strictly synchronic study. Since the talks with the informants covered a period of more than three months, the interview texts might give some indication of the degree of stability in the informants' systems. I have found no signs of instability in the interviews. A study of the stability of the informants' ethics over a longer period would require a following-up of the present investigation at a later stage.

(b) The choice of English as the language for the interviews also requires some comments. It has sometimes been claimed that the analyst ought to be fluent in the language of the informants in

order to be able to carry out analyses of the present kind. Now, there are obviously great practical advantages of knowing the language to which the term one is interested in belongs: the interviews can be conducted at ease with no linguistic barriers for interviewer and interviewees, and the general knowledge that goes with mastering a language will suggest all sorts of clues and leads to the analyst. It is, however, by no means *necessary* to carry out an analysis of an ethical or any other concept with the help of the very same language which the informants normally use to express the concept. Concepts are normally expressed with the help of some language, but there is no necessary connection between any one concept and any one language. The concepts which form the subject of this investigation stand for personal qualities which are held to be valuable. In order to make an analysis of such concepts, one would have to find answers to questions like: To whom does this informant ascribe this quality and why? To whom does he refuse to ascribe it and why? Is there anything one can do to acquire the quality and, if so, what? Can one get more of it? Can one lose it and what should one do in that case? And so forth. If these are the questions to raise if one wants to find out about the meaning of "dignity", for instance, then it is obvious that it does not matter very much in which language the interrogation takes place, as long as the language is sufficiently well understood by both interviewer and interviewees.

One of the reasons behind the insistence on fluency in the native language seems to be an excessive reliance on intuition in semantics. It is sometimes assumed that if one knows a language well enough, one will somehow be able to "see" what the meaning of a certain term is. But that is a mistake. One advantage of the procedure adopted in this book is, indeed, that the analyst's semantical procedures are kept under better control than they normally are. Having a scanty knowledge of the language in question, the analyst will be forced to ask explicitly for information which he might otherwise – perhaps mistakenly – take for granted.

The exploration of the informants' moral concepts was thus carried out in English. Since the informants normally used Arabic terms to express their moral concepts, the Arabic terms or their "standard translations" adopted for the purpose of this study¹⁰ were used throughout as technical terms. In this way, it was

hoped to minimize the possible distorting influence of the foreign language medium. In how far this hope has been fulfilled only further research can decide.

5. Survey of the informants' ethics of virtue

I have defined an individual's ethics of virtue as that fragment of his ideology which consists of his conceptions of what one should be like in order to be a good man, a good woman, a good father, and so on (ch. 5, sec. 1). An individual's ethics of virtue is thus the sum total of his conceptions of what one should be and have and do in order to be good in the different roles one comes to play in life. A "virtue" is any trait or feature or characteristic which contributes to goodness in such a role. (The general meaning of 'virtue' in contemporary English is "good feature", "good trait" (cf. ch. 5, sec. 1). The corresponding word in Arabic, *faḍīla*, seems to be used only in the narrower senses of (1) moral goodness or moral excellence in general, (2) feature contributing to moral goodness or excellence.) A complete investigation of an individual's ethics of virtue would therefore have to consist of a mapping of all his views on goodness and excellence in all the social roles he distinguishes, explicitly or implicitly. Many virtues (and vices) are e.g. sex- and age-bound or status-tied, so that a full investigation of them would require a large-scale inquiry into the social structures to which the individual assumes he belongs.¹¹ (It is the social structures to which the individual assumes he belongs rather than the social structures to which he actually belongs which are directly relevant for an investigation of his ideology; cf. ch. 3 above.) The present exploratory study has a more limited aim, viz. to investigate a prominent, and presumably central, part of the informants' ethics of virtue which has to do with what one should be like in order to be a good man in general.

There were two reasons for selecting this particular fragment of the informants' ethics as the topic for an exploratory study of Sudanese ethics: (i) I had found in class-room discussion that there appeared to be some stereotyped conceptions of the good Sudanese which struck me as interesting and well worth closer scrutiny; (ii) the heuristic advantages of an agent-centered approach to ethics via the general conceptions of the good man

(see ch. 4, sec. 5). The stereotype of the good Sudanese, as conceived by the informants, formed the backbone of the talks. Round this central theme, a number of more or less closely related issues came up which in one way or the other shed light on the informants' ethics. The reason for the somewhat unsystematic, informal nature of the interviews was the desire to cross uncharted land in many directions in the hope of not missing important features of the topography.

The main components of the traditional Sudanese ethics of virtue as conceived by the informants are the ideas of courage, generosity and hospitality and a cluster of subtly interrelated notions of honour, dignity and self-respect: "most of them say that the [good] Sudanese is the man who is generous, courageous, honourable, respects himself, and so on" (Ali, § 84). (Paragraph numbers refer to the sections into which Part III has been divided.) A good Sudanese, according to the traditional views as presented to me by the informants as well as in the informants' own opinion, is thus a man who exemplifies these virtues to a high degree.

There are, however, differences of detail and emphasis between the three informants. In an essay on the traditional Arabic virtues, Ali dealt with generosity, courage, and the dignity — honour — self-respect cluster, and asserted that "Honour, whether personal or tribal, comes above all virtues". He structured his own ethics of virtue on the same pattern, with many modifications as to details, but would also give honesty an important place in his own system (§ 84). He tended to think that other virtues like co-operation, patience and strength of character can be included in the primary virtues (§§ 99-100, 103).

Osman considered courage and honour (in the sense of *sharaf*) as the two most important of the traditional virtues, and considered generosity, dignity (in the sense of *karāma*), self-respect, courtesy and amiability (*mujāmala*), and so on, as ancillary virtues (§ 146).

Ibrahim dealt in an essay on Sudanese virtues with what he called dignity (by which he seems to have meant *sharaf* rather than *karāma*)¹² and with self-respect, courage, generosity, hospitality and co-operation, and asserted that self-respect "nearly comes at the top of the scale . . . because it is gained by fulfilling other virtues like courage, hospitality, generosity, etc." He went on to say that "for a Sudanese, preserving one's dignity should

be dominant", one's dignity and self-respect being mainly dependant upon the sexual well-behaviour of one's *ḥarīm*, the female members of one's family. In the discussion of honesty, he added that to be honest, frank and trustworthy is as important as the other virtues (§ 84).

Disregarding differences of detail and emphasis and possible additions to the lists of virtues, it is clear that the ideas of courage, generosity – hospitality and the cluster of dignity – honour – self-respect are important features of the moral stereotype of the good man as conceived by the three informants. The next chapters will be devoted to a detailed examination of the informants' views on these virtues.

Chapter 7

Courage, Generosity and Hospitality

1. Courage as self-control

When one wants to investigate some individuals' views on a certain virtue, e.g. courage, one can proceed in two ways. In the first place, one can investigate in how far the individuals accept a given conception of the virtue, e.g. the investigator's own conception of it. In the second place, one can investigate the moral cluster (or clusters) in the individuals' own ideologies which correspond most closely to the kind of cluster usually referred to by the word 'courage' (cf. ch. 5, sec. 2). The present investigation is of the second type; it adopts the informants' point of view.

The first step in an investigation from the informants' point of view is to identify the cluster to be investigated, the second to investigate the cluster in detail. The identification of clusters which can without too much misleadingness be referred to as conceptions of "courage" presents no particular difficulties in our case: there is an Arabic word, *shajā'a*, which corresponds well to the English word 'courage' and its cognates.¹ The following pages give an analysis of the concept of *shajā'a* as conceived by the three informants, Ali, Osman and Ibrahim. I shall use 'courage' as a "standard translation" (ch. 5, sec. 2) of *shajā'a*.

It can be presumed that the informants used the English terms 'courage', 'generosity', 'hospitality', 'dignity', etc. as translations of the terms they would have used had the interviews been conducted in Arabic. That the interviews were actually conducted in English is, therefore, of no importance for the validity of the analysis of the informants' conceptions. (On the language problem, cf. ch. 6, sec. 4.)

In the discussions of courage, as in the discussions of the other virtues, I was interested in finding out both what the popular views were, according to the informants, and what the informants' own views were.

In the traditional idea of courage, there is, according to the informants, an emphasis on fortitude and endurance. A brave person is a person who (i) can stand pain without flinching, (ii) stands up against dangers of all sorts without being overwhelmed by fear, (iii) does not lose his self-control when faced with calamities. The informants gave several examples of situations of each of these types.

(i) The brave man must be able to stand pain without giving any signs of emotion:

I remember a story of torture which happened during the Mahdia to a man of the Shanabla Arab tribe of the Sudan. My grandmother told me that the man had a sentence of a thousand lashes. Before the sentence was carried out, the man was tortured — needles were drawn or stuck through his feet's fingers. He walked straight without a jerk or sign or gesture ... They called him courageous (Osman, essay).

Typical situations where courage of this kind can be displayed are when a boy or a girl is circumcised (§ 1), when a woman gives birth to a child (ibid.)², and when a leg or an arm has to be amputated in the traditional way. Osman gave a lively description of that situation:

The patient stretches out his leg or arm "to the native doctor who chops it off with a sword and immediately puts it in boiling oil, and the patient stands the test without even the twinkle or blink of an eye. If he even bites his lip or uttered an ach! or oh! so doing will be a shame of the whole family because this is sign of cowardice.

There are, or were, since these customs are now disappearing, certain tests by which a boy or man could prove his courage by showing off his ability to stand pain, viz. the practices of *shaṭāra*, *buṭān*, and cutting one's arm. *Shaṭāra*³ is the game referred to in §§ 3-4 and 75 of burning one's arm with e.g. pieces of durra cane or cigarettes. When the skin and flesh is burnt, "you have to keep silent and not give any kind of motion to show that you are not courageous" (Ibrahim, § 3). Ibrahim had about ten such marks on each arm. Ali's comrades in the city of Atbara also practiced *shaṭāra*, and he was considered a coward because he wouldn't partake in the game (§ 3). Osman said that he and his friends did not practice it themselves. He felt that *shaṭāra* was considered to be a proof of manliness rather than of courage: the small boys "just say that the big boys have such brands or

such bruises, and we must have ones. It shows that you are also a man" (§ 75). *Buṭān*, lashing, is another boys' game intended to test the ability to stand pain. *Buṭān*, as Osman knew it, was practiced by lashing each other alternately with whips made from tree roots (§ 74). Boys who did not play this game were considered to be cowards.⁴ The marriage festivities also give occasion for display of courage by being lashed (§§ 1-2, 74)⁵ or by cutting one's arm with a knife (§§ 1-2, 74, 81).

(ii) The brave man must master his fear whatever dangers he is faced with:

If you happen to meet a hundred men well-armed, you must not cower or show weakness or tendency to compromise. If you are alone in a wild place and was encountered by a lion, a tiger or a wolf, you should stand against the animal and you should not run away for cover or endeavour to save your life by hiding from it or climbing a tree; unless you intend to make a plan by which you can defeat your enemy (wrote Osman).

When four cattle-herders from the Baṭāhīn tribe successfully fought against three hundred members of another tribe, that showed real courage (Osman, § 76). When the police came, they immediately gave in, however, and that was no sign of cowardice (ibid.). When students demonstrating against the government run away because they are afraid to be hurt by the police's sticks and whips, that is a sign of cowardice (Osman, § 77). Ali and Ibrahim gave similar examples of courage displayed in the face of dangerous animals or enemies (§§ 12, 148). If one runs away in a quarrel, "the whole family of this coward will live in shame forever", according to Ibrahim.

To remain calm and undismayed in sudden alarms is, according to Aristotle, "a better proof of courage than to behave with equanimity when the danger has been foreseen; it is a better test of a man's normal reaction to danger when it has sprung upon him without warning."⁶ The same test is used in the rural areas of the Sudan, according to Ibrahim (§ 7). "A courageous person /wrote Osman/ never thinks of the consequences of his actions and makes accounts of the loss or gain that would accrue", just as Aristotle would not allow that "the sanguine" who choose the occasions suitable for the display of courage are brave.⁷

A paradigm case for the display of courage is when one is faced with physical danger in the form of a wild animal or an

enemy. (Cf. Osman § 79: "Here of course, there is no courage. You are not facing anyone face to face".) By extension, the man who overcomes temptation could be said to be courageous, as Ali reported "one of the religious men" to have said. Ali said he did not understand this use of the word, but Ibrahim thought that if the temptation is considered as a kind of danger, then this could be considered as a case of courage (§ 10). There seems to be little room for moral courage in the traditional views on courage. I shall return to this topic in section 3 below.

Is it necessary actually to experience fear or at least to realize that the situation is of a dangerous kind in order to be courageous in the full sense of the word? Ibrahim touched upon this question in § 11, where he declared that some or even most people would say that the man who fears nothing is courageous. Ibrahim himself thought that "the man who fears nothing is similar to the child, because the child or the baby also fears nothing. Because if you just pass to him say a snake or anything dangerous, he would hold it" (*ibid.*). So that for him being aware of the nature of the situation or actually experiencing fear – it is not clear which – would be a necessary condition for the ascription of courage. The other informants do not seem to have dealt with this question at all, which shows that whatever role the fear and awareness criteria of courage might play in their ethics, they are at least not prominent aspects of their conceptions of courage. (When Osman talked in § 78 about the family who "don't fear anything", he seems to have referred not to the absence of fear but to the absence of discretion in self-control.)

(iii) The third type of occasion suitable for the display of courage is when an individual meets with some calamity. The brave man does not break down if one of his beloved dies, he faces his difficulties and does not try to escape from them (§§ 5–7). To commit suicide is to escape from one's problems; a person who commits suicide is therefore "most cowardly" (§ 5). This Aristotelian view (The *Nichomachean Ethics*, Bk. 3, Ch. 7) seems to be common in the Sudan. Many other students expressed the same view in essays about suicide. The girls in some secondary school classes, with whom my wife discussed the question, felt the same. They had no compassion with e.g. those young girls who, unhappily married to elderly men, commit suicide by pouring kerosene over themselves and burn themselves to death.

It is permissible even for a man to cry when death befalls his

family, but the ideal is to control one's emotions also in such situations, according to Ali. "[M]ost of them nowadays they think that Mrs. Kennedy is very courageous because she did not cry . . ." (§ 8). He admitted, however, that some would disagree here. According to Ibrahim, weeping at somebody's death is not considered as a sign of cowardice (*ibid.*).

2. The reasonableness criterion of courage

The dominant feature of the traditional conception of courage, as presented by the informants, is the idea of self-control in situations which normally involve danger and fear, pain or emotional strains. The self-control criterion is the most important criterion of courage in the traditional views. Besides this criterion, one finds in the informants' discourse at least three other conditions of courage which are not so prominent: (i) the condition that fear must actually be experienced in order for a person to be said to be courageous; (ii) the condition that the brave man must be aware of the nature of the situation; (iii) the idea that courage involves not only self-control but also self-reliance. The self-reliance criterion was referred to only by Osman in an essay. Writing about the traditional views mainly in his own tribe, the Baṭāhīn, he said that the courageous man "never asks for help or looks for the aid of anybody not even that of god. Prayer in face of danger or difficulties is sheer cowardice". It would have been interesting to know whether this is a widespread idea and whether the informants consented to it or not.

Besides these criteria of courage which are not much emphasized by the informants, there is one criterion which plays a not unimportant part in the popular conception of courage, according to the informants, and a very important part in the informants' own ethics, viz. (iv) the condition that the exercise of self-control should be tempered by discretion; it should be reasonable.

Although Osman said at one occasion that the courageous man never thinks of the consequences of his actions, the traditional ideas do not call for a wild display of self-control at all costs. The family who practiced self-control to the extent of not running even if the rain started pouring down or if they saw their house on fire, for instance, were generally considered as going a bit far (§ 78), and at least the members of the Ja'aliyyin

tribe would say that the fact that Mak Nimr fled to Abyssinia instead of facing an overwhelming majority of enemies was no sign of cowardice (but others would blame him for cowardice as a way of insulting a Ja'ali) (§ 148). The traditional tests of courage, like lashing and cutting, are now rapidly disappearing, according to Ibrahim, because "people found other criteria for courage which are more reasonable than these".

While preserving the idea of courage as reasonable self-control, all three informants had come to consider many of the traditional manifestations of courage as incompatible with the demand on reasonableness. Thus, they all reacted against the traditional tests of fortitude, (§§ 2-4, 73-75, 81), and Ibrahim, who was the only one of the informants who had practiced *shaṭāra* himself, would now hinder boys from doing it if he happened to see it (§ 4). *Buṭān*, *shaṭāra*, wounding oneself, and so on, have come to be considered as signs of rashness rather than of courage (§ 2). "For an ordinary person (an Arab) there is no clear distinction between courage and rashness", according to Osman.

In their criticism of the popular morality, both Ali and Osman referred to the views of Islam. "There must be a good reason for a Moslem to expose himself to dangers or to run a risk", wrote Osman. "The Koran recommends the traditional virtues with their sub-divisions but it disapproves of the way in which they are manifested. Too little or too much of generosity, courage, honour is not good" (Ali). It is interesting to notice how both Ali and Osman contrasted the popular morality with the teachings of Islam in their essays and levelled the same kind of criticism against the popular morality of their own environment as Mohammed did against the tribal mores of his time.

The exercise of courage, as well as of the other virtues, is closely related to expectations of respect, reputation, shame and disgrace, as we shall see later (ch. 9). One of the informants used this connection between courage and respect — shame as the basis for his criticism of the popular conception of courage. Following Aristotle,⁸ he demanded that the motive of the agent must be "good" or "noble" for an action to be a proper manifestation of courage (§§ 10, 12), and considered self-show, fear of shame, and sheer respect for authority as bad motives. This way of formulating the criticism of the popular ethics might be seen as a variation on the reasonableness theme: certain motives have come to be considered unreasonable. It is, however, also possible that

the informant made a distinction between good motives and reasonableness.

The reasonableness criterion leaves much room for discretion in the application of the ideal of courage. Whether a proposed action will be classified as courageous or rash depends upon how the balance of advantages and disadvantages is calculated. A good illustration of this point can be found in the different opinions about the reasonableness of resigning in § 80. The students thought that the lecturers who did not fulfil their threat to resign were cowards. The lecturers themselves, however, estimated the situation differently and considered the students to be rash. A similar example occurs in § 77: is it a sign of cowardice for the students to run away when threatened by the police? Some students said that it is not, since running away enables you to gather again in another spot and so to prolong the demonstration; others said that running away is cowardly because it is a sign of fear. These examples illustrate the dangers of imputing one's own ideals and motives to others: the observers classify the agents as cowards in accordance with their own conceptions of courage, and if the agents deny that they are cowards, as they naturally do, the observers tend to take the moralistic attitude referred to above (ch. 3), and consider the agents as insincere or prompted by unworthy motives. The agents could, however, quite consistently and sincerely argue that the situation left no room for the display of courage since resigning or refusing to run away would not fulfil the reasonableness criterion, for example. Obviously, such an elastic criterion as the reasonableness criterion leaves room for deliberate fraud and rationalisation; but in the absence of obvious indications to the contrary, one had better abstain from adverse interpretations of the situation.

3. Moral courage

The man who follows and defends his principles regardless of other people's disapproval is courageous, according to one of the informants (Ali). In this view, he differs clearly from the traditional conception of courage (as conceived of by the informants), where standing up for one's principles may be appreciated, as Ibrahim pointed out (§ 15), but would hardly be considered as a sign of courage. In the reviews of traditional ideas in the inform-

ants' essays, physical courage is amply illustrated but moral courage never mentioned. And in the oral discussions, the idea of moral courage was certainly not prominent. When I was first raised the question about moral courage (§ 10), the example which first came to the informants' mind was a story about a religious man who said that one who overcomes temptation is courageous. The second time the question was raised, it transpired that the students felt that most of their relatives had little appreciation of their political strikes and that a Communist who had been sent to prison many times was often thought of as "good for nothing", whereas Ali, and probably also Ibrahim, would call him courageous (§§ 13-14). When I asked Osman whether it would be a sign of courage if the students went on with the strike in spite of threats from the government, his immediate response was that this is not a situation which is included in the range of courage, since "you are not facing anyone face to face", but after some reflection he admitted that bravery can also be displayed in thought and by not giving in when you believe that you are right (§ 79). None of the three informants had any hesitations about the duty of the students to strike and in other ways to oppose a government which they considered corrupt, but it is interesting to note how for at least one of them (Osman) the traditional conception of courage made it unnatural for him to put these duties in connection with courage. A similar tendency is noticeable in the case of generosity (cf. sec. 5 below).

That there seems to be little room for moral courage in the traditional conception of courage does not mean that there is no room at all for moral courage in the traditional system of virtues. The natural place for moral courage in the traditional system would seem to be under the heading of dignity rather than under the heading of courage.⁹ For, as we shall see (ch. 8, sec. 4), one of the ways in which one can preserve one's dignity (*karāma*) is by not giving in as the result of pressure from other people; an important element in the notion of dignity is self-assertion. To stand up for one's principles is a duty which would be regarded as belonging to the department of dignity rather than to the department of courage, if this interpretation of the traditional system is correct.

The hypothesis that moral courage is not included in the traditional conception of courage stands, of course, in need of further testing. The same applies to the question in how far the traditional

emphasis on physical courage has given way to considerations of moral courage. Osman's statement (in § 80) that most of the people in his village would say that the university lecturers are cowards because they did not resign seems somewhat surprising, and the informant might very well be mistaken here.

4. Generosity and hospitality

There is no sharp distinction between generosity and hospitality in the informants' ethics, and here they reflect a general tendency. (Hillelson's Sudan Arabic dictionary gives the word *karam* as a translation of both generosity and hospitality (§§ 126, 147). It also mentions *ḍiyāfa* as well as some other alternatives.) One of the informants (Ali) took up this point in his essay and pointed out that although generosity and hospitality are sometimes confused, one can and ought to make a distinction between them. The Arabic word for which I shall use 'generosity' as a standard translation is *karam*;¹⁰ the word for which I shall use 'hospitality' as a standard translation is *ḍiyāfa*.¹¹ The only informant who explicitly distinguished between generosity and hospitality considered *ḍiyāfa* as a kind of *karam*: *karam* is the genus, *ḍiyāfa* a species, he said.

The situations in which generosity can be displayed, according to the informants, can be arranged into three groups. First, and most important, there is the kind of generosity which a host can show towards his guests (*hospitality*). Second, there is the kind of generosity which is exercised by spending money freely and presenting others with gifts, which can be called *liberality*. Third, there is generosity in the form of help to the needy, which can be called *charity*. Hospitality seems to be far more prominent in the traditional conception of *karam* than liberality or charity.

(i) The laws of *hospitality* have got a high degree of stringency, and the obligations arising out of the host – guest relationship rest heavily upon both parties to the relation. It is the duty of the host to entertain the guest in the accepted ways by offering him drink and food and shelter, and it is the duty of the guest to accept the hospitality offered to him (see esp. the talk with Osman on hospitality, §§ 55–72). A guest arriving at Osman's little village would be taken to one's guest-room or to the special guest house (the *khalwa*) and treated with tea, coffee, lemon, or Pepsi-

Cola, and he would be urged to stay on for at least one meal. If the guest shows any signs of unwillingness to accept what he is offered, the host might take an oath to divorce his wife or at least abstain from all sexual relations with her for ever. To be prepared to take such an oath is considered a sure sign of real generosity, and the guest might provoke a situation where an oath should be taken in order to test his host for generosity (§§ 55-57). If there is not enough food available, the other villagers will make their contributions (Ibrahim), or, as in the story of the really generous man in § 69, the host will look around for an animal to kill, and if his own herd is not nearby, somebody else's ram or cow will do. (The owner would be compensated afterwards.) The welfare of the guest comes above one's own needs: the generous man never thinks of his family or his own needs (§ 62). In short, the generous man should be prepared to "sacrifice anything except his honour for his guests' comfort" (Osman).

The stringency of the duties incumbent upon the receiving party in the generosity relationship is nicely illustrated by the story about the student who was forced to marry his cousin whom he had never seen because his uncle presented the girl to his father as a gift: "My uncle said, She is a gift, and you have to accept the gift" (§ 32).

Accepting money from a grateful guest is of course out of question; a situation where payment is involved would be automatically excluded from the range of generosity (cf. § 63). To offer one's host monetary reward would be an insult (§ 60 f.), except in the kind of situation referred to in § 63. When a European tourist who had stayed with a sheikh in Abu Hamad for a fortnight and had a ram slaughtered for him every day asked on departure for the bill, "the sheikh felt as if he was stabbed in the back", according to Ali. This example brings out the close connection between hospitality and honour. The host should honour his guest, and the guest should presumably honour his host. Asking for the bill or offering money in exchange for hospitality seriously affects the honour of the host, and to get a reputation for not honouring one's guests properly is shameful (Ali).¹²

This kind of lavish treatment of guests presupposes, of course, that guests remain rather scarce; otherwise, the stringent demands on hospitality would soon lead to serious economic consequences for exploited hosts. With growing urbanisation and improved communications, traditional ideas about hospitality are

bound to undergo modifications.¹³ This development is clearly noticeable in the Three Towns (Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North), and some Sudanese look back at the old times with nostalgia. The most conservative of the three informants, Ibrahim, is an example: "The true, unbiased Sudanese traditions are to be found in the rural areas which have not yet come in touch with the evils of 20th century civilization" (essay). The two other informants present the urbanised attitude, critical of some of the traditional conceptions and aware of their inapplicability to the new conditions (§§ 46, 154 f.). Both Ali and Osman were aware of important changes in their ideas about hospitality, and had come to regard many of the traditional signs of generosity as manifestations of extravagance (§§ 23-25, 45, 70). Just as in the criticism of the popular conception of courage, Ali and Osman employ the reasonableness and good motive criteria in their criticism of traditional hospitality and support their views by reference to Koranic teachings. To treat e.g. a rich merchant who comes to the village to do business as a guest and not let him pay for anything he gets is going too far (§ 70). To disregard the needs of one's own family completely in favour of the guest irrespective of his needs or status is not reasonable (Osman, essay). It is wrong to practice generosity to the extent of completely neglecting the economical consequences for oneself (Ali, essay). The traditional obligations imposed on a host are also readily exploited by relatives and friends with little consideration for the host's welfare (§ 45 f.). Hospitality must have become a positive burden for the family who lived near the railway station in the capital, whose house was constantly filled with visitors coming to Khartoum for medical treatment or just to spend a holiday in the great city (§ 46). One has to be patient in order to be generous (§ 103). In this criticism, the informants found support in the teachings of Islam. The Prophet enjoined the believer in Allah to honour his guest, but also to exercise generosity with discretion: "And let not thy hand be fettered to thy neck, nor yet open it with all openness lest thou be made to sit in rebuke and beggary" (cf. § 45). The reasonableness and good motive criteria of hospitality (which were not clearly separated) were used by both Ali and Osman. A noble motive is a necessary condition of generosity, according to Ali. If somebody displays generosity merely because he is concerned with his reputation, as the Hadendowa sheikh who exclaimed that it would be a shame

for him if it became known that he did not honour his guest, then there is no real generosity, according to Ali. Similarly, Osman emphasized that a good motive is important for generosity according to Islam (§ 144), but not according to the popular view (§§ 72, 144).¹⁴

(ii) The second type of trait situation for generosity distinguished above comprises situations where *liberality* can be displayed by offering gifts or lavishly spending one's money. Gifts and money are, of course, exchanged in the host – guest situations already dealt with in (i), e.g. when somebody insists on paying the whole bill for a party at a café or restaurant (Ibrahim, essay), but we are now concerned with cases which would not naturally be classified as hospitality. Ibrahim gave one example which illustrates how liberality can be manifested: if you find a friend or acquaintance in a bus or one of the taxis which operate like buses on certain routes in the Three Towns, you should insist on paying his fare (essay; similarly Osman § 70). This applies especially to women: a man should always pay the fare for a woman he knows (Ibrahim). Osman gave some examples of how money can be spent ostentatiously to enhance one's reputation for generosity in the sense of liberality or lack of greed: by buying an expensive car with prestige value, by shopping in Khartoum instead of going to the cheaper local market, by buying things which you don't need or spending money on people who don't need it (§ 24; cf. also § 128).

Generosity in this sense is concerned with the distribution of money and material goods, but not all gifts would be considered as signs of generosity. When a ram is slaughtered at the occasion of the 'īd al-*ḍaḥīya* and meat is sent to friends and neighbours, this would not be a sign of generosity according to Osman (§ 66). The reason why he excluded this kind of situation from the range of generosity was that he considered this to be a purely religious duty which cannot be subsumed under the concept of generosity (ibid.). Like Ali, he seems to have made a distinction between purely religious duties which have nothing to do with ethics and those duties which are both enjoined by religious teachings and ethically relevant (cf. ch. 9, sec. 4). For some reason, he also excluded the collection of money for a couple at their marriage from the range of generosity (§§ 64, 145; Ali to the contrary, § 99). It is not quite clear from what he said why he did so. There are at least four possible explanations: (1) that

Osman mistakenly believed that such gifts are not usually counted as signs of generosity, because he himself did not think of them as manifestations of generosity; (2) because the person who gives the money reckons that he himself will one day be in the same position and get the money back, which is incompatible with generosity according to one of the other informants (Ali, essay); (3) because the gift might be regarded as payment for the food and drink one gets (§ 63); (4) because this custom is conventionally excluded from the range of generosity for no particular reason. The last possibility should not be a priori excluded. A conception of a virtue is a cluster of ideas about conduct and character, and there need not be more than family resemblances and conventional ties between the elements of the cluster. To assume that there is any other rationale for all conceptions of virtues and vices might lead to an overrationalisation of the informants' ethics.

(iii) Charity or "almsgiving" (*zakāt and ṣadaqa*) is one of the main duties incumbent upon the Muslim; it is one of the five "Pillars of the Faith". (The other four are praying, pilgrimage, fasting and the profession of faith in Allah and his Prophet.) According to the Koran, "Alms are only for the poor and needy, and those who work for them, and those whose hearts are reconciled, and those in captivity, and those in debt, and those who are on God's path, and for the wayfarer".¹⁵ None of the informants emphasized "almsgiving"; one of them even forgot to mention it when enumerating the pillars of Islam (§ 90). None of them volunteered e.g. an example about giving money to a beggar. Osman pointed out, however, that in his opinion, one shouldn't follow the practice of giving money to people who don't need it (§ 24), and that helping people in distress could be a sign of generosity (§ 67); and Ali endorsed the Koranic view that one should give away his wealth to the needy, to beggars, captives, and wayfarers (essay). One reason for this lack of emphasis on charity is probably that there is little occasion for the exercise of this virtue in the traditional set-up, except in the form of hospitality. Almsgiving in the context of the rural village is naturally exercised within the framework of the host-guest relationship. Considering the external circumstances, it is not surprising that the host - guest situation has become a paradigm of generosity.

This concludes our review of situations which according to the

informants belong to the range of generosity. It will be illuminating to add to this a brief consideration of items which are not included in their conceptions of generosity but which, in other ethical systems, are included under the heading 'generosity'. The items which are excluded from the informants' conception of generosity can be divided into two groups. First, there are those items which are not included because they don't belong to their ethics at all. Sexual hospitality, for instance, is incompatible with the ideas of honour and decency, at least as far as the members of one's own family are concerned. From a Greek student, I had heard a story about a guest being offered the daughter of the host as entertainment for the night. When I mentioned this to one of the informants, he was most indignant and emphatically asserted that this could never happen (§ 58). (In all probability, the original story-teller, from whom the Greek student had heard it, had misinterpreted the situation and missed the all-important difference between a concubine or servant ("slave") or prostitute and a member of the host's own family). Second, there are ideas which form part of the informants' ethics but which for some reason are not considered as part of the generosity cluster. In his world-wide review of views on "Charity and Generosity" in *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, Westermarck considers, in fact, any kind of assistance to the needy: the mother's duty to rear her children, the father's duty to protect and support his family, the children's duty to support their aged parents, the duty to assist one's brothers and sisters and more distant relatives, the duty to support the old, infirm and sick, the duty to protect those in danger; any sort of mutual assistance, altruism, or kindness of heart.¹⁶ The informants' ethics include duties of these kinds, but they are not considered as belonging to the department of generosity. Supplying a fellow student with lecture notes or helping him to catch up with a course when he has been ill, for instance, would be an act of co-operation and friendliness but not a sign of generosity, according to Osman (§ 68). Similarly, Ibrahim stressed the importance of co-operation (helpfulness), e.g. in the form of assistance to old villagers, but did not include this under the heading of generosity (essay). Ali thought that certain forms of co-operation like financial assistance could be included in generosity, but acts of kindness and compassion would be excluded (§ 99). The duties towards one's relatives are of overriding importance, but are not connected with

generosity or charity in any way. In so far as there is any clear rationale behind the inclusion and exclusion of items in the informants' conceptions of generosity – and there need not be any – it seems to be that the field of generosity is limited, on the whole, to the exchange of material goods, especially money, food and drink. Time is not considered to have any value in itself, and so it could not be a sign of generosity to spend one's time on assisting a friend or relative.

Chapter 8

Honour and Dignity

1. Introduction

The ideas of honour and dignity form a cluster in the sense that they are closely related to each other, often confused with each other, yet not identical with each other (cf. e.g. §§ 26–27, 104, 109–110). Translations of the Arabic terminology are, therefore, apt to be much more misleading in the case of the conceptions which form the subject of this chapter than in the case of the ideas treated in the foregoing chapter, and on the whole I tried to use the Arabic terms in the interviews to avoid semantical confusions. The operative words here are *‘ird*, *sharaf*, and *karāma*. To get an idea of their ranges of meaning one can consult Wehr-Cowan's dictionary which gives the following information:

- ‘ird*: "honor, good repute; dignity" (p. 604);
sharaf: 1) "elevated place"; (2) "high rank, nobility, distinction, eminence, dignity; honor, glory" (p. 467);
karāma: "nobility; high-mindedness, noble-heartedness, generosity, magnanimity; liberality, munificence; honor, dignity; respect, esteem, standing, prestige; mark of honor, token of esteem, favor; ... miracle (worked by a saint)" (p. 822).

These passages, vague though they are, are not a bad précis of an important aspect of Arab ethics. The close relations between the notions of *‘ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma* are clearly brought out; the important connection between honour and dignity on the one hand and good repute, respect and prestige on the other hand is also clearly indicated; and the importance of the virtue of generosity for one's moral status is at least hinted at. But the dictionary does little to differentiate between the three notions, and one cannot assume that the informants' usage is identical with the usage reported in a dictionary covering modern literary Arabic rather than Sudanese colloquial Arabic. Similarly, one can expect some similarities between the classical

meanings of the words '*ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma* and their modern usage, e.g. in the informants' discourse, as well as important differences. A comparison between the informants' conceptions and the classical ones would be extremely interesting, but there does not seem to be much material available for such comparisons at the present (cf. ch. 10, sec. 3).

On the whole, it would seem wise to keep the Arabic terms as technical terms and avoid translations in the case of '*ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma*. But it is sometimes convenient to use translations. I adopt the convention that the standard translations, for the purpose of this book, of '*ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma* shall be "decency", "honour" and "dignity", respectively. The reader will have to decide for himself in how far these translations are misleading.

2. Honour (*sharaf*)

The informants found the notion of *sharaf* a tricky one to explain. There is a good deal more information in the interviews on the closely related notion of *karāma*; and since the words '*sharaf*' and '*karāma*' are used synonymously in most contexts, as the informants emphasized, the information about *sharaf* could be supplemented with what is said of *karāma*: most, but not all, of the statements which apply to *karāma* could probably safely be taken to apply to *sharaf* as well, unless there is an explicit disclaimer to the contrary. In this section, we are, however, primarily interested in *sharaf* in the sense in which it is distinct from *karāma*.

Sharaf, like *karāma*, is a quality which anybody has by nature, as it were, which one can easily lose, and which can hardly be regained once it has been lost. All men, women and children have *sharaf* unless they themselves or any of their relatives have done something which has caused the family to lose its *sharaf* (§§ 121-124). *Sharaf* is thus not a merely personal matter. One's *sharaf* depends on one's relatives' behaviour as well as on one's own deeds. The responsibility for protecting the *sharaf* of the family is shared by all its grown-up members but rests mainly with the men, since women are considered to be too weak to be entrusted with such heavy responsibilities as the protection of '*ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma* (cf. sec. 3 below). The consequences of neglecting the *sharaf* of the

family extend even to the children who were not yet born when the crucial event took place (§§ 109, 121–122). The descendants of slaves – still often referred to as slaves (§§ 81–83) – have no *sharaf* and no *karāma* (§§ 123). (The slave-trade was criminalized after the reconquest of the Sudan in 1898, and in 1912 Kitchener reported that “slave-trading on a large scale is clearly a thing of the past” (quoted from Holt 1963, p. 124). Domestic slavery continued much longer, however. In Osman’s opinion, slave-trading disappeared only thirty or forty years ago, and his grandfather took part in it (§ 82).)

There is a strong connection between *sharaf* and sexual well-behaviour. One’s own *sharaf* and the *sharaf* of the family depend mainly on the conduct of the members of the family in sexual matters, and especially on the conduct of the female members of the family: “preserving one’s dignity is very strongly correlated with preserving one’s *ḥarīm* – sisters, daughters, etc” (Ibrahim, essay). One always regards the *sharaf* and *karāma* of one’s wife, sisters, mother, and so on, as one’s own (Osman, § 109). The preservation of the women’s decency (*ird*) should perhaps be regarded as necessary condition for the preservation of the family’s *sharaf*.

If one raises the question whether *ird* is also a sufficient condition of *sharaf*, one will find no clear answer in the interviews and essays. When asked about this point, Osman could not think of anything else besides “adultery” which could affect one’s *sharaf* and *karāma* (§ 110), and he may have been right here as far as his own conception of *sharaf* is concerned. When asked whether killing, stealing, breaking solemn promises, and not being generous affects one’s *sharaf* or not, Osman involved himself in a series of rather confused explanations like “it may not affect neither *sharaf* nor *karāma*” (§ 118; cf. §§ 111, 117, 127), but the upshot seems to be that *sharaf* is not affected by e.g. killing, stealing, breaking promises, accepting bribes, or not fasting (§§ 110 f., 117 f., 120, 127, 141). Ali, on the other hand, clearly held that killing, stealing and other bad misdeeds on the part of any family member would reflect upon the family’s *sharaf*, but, as he immediately went on to point out, in this case *sharaf* would be the same as *karāma* (§ 104). Taking one’s wife to the cinema is not *comme il faut* outside the Three Towns at least, but breaking this prohibition would have no effect on one’s *sharaf*, according to Ali (§ 47); but when asked about some other kinds of situa-

tion, he wavered or avoided to give any direct answer (§§ 9, 28). It seems reasonable to conclude from all this that the notion of *sharaf* has got an "open texture" (ch. 2, sec. 2) for the three informants, so that the correct use of the word cannot be specified by listing the conditions which are necessary and sufficient for the correct application of the word. As with other open-textured terms, the uses of 'sharaf' can be grouped round a hard core of paradigmatic uses; other uses would be non-paradigmatic, deviant or unusual but would not be felt to be incorrect. The paradigm case for the protection of *sharaf* is clearly the protection of one's female relatives' *'ird*, but it would not be a misuse of the word 'sharaf' to apply it to other situations as well. Open-texturedness, when not recognized for what it is, is a common source of confusion. That the informants wavered or avoided direct answers when asked whether 'sharaf' could be applied to various types of situations which are unrelated to sexual decency seems a good indication of the open texture of *sharaf*, and their somewhat unclear answers may be explained by a desire to improvise more definite answers than the questions really allowed for.

3. Decency ('ird)

'Ird is the department of duty which treats of sexual matters. To preserve the *'ird* of the women, and also of the men, of the family is the moral aim as far as sexual behaviour is concerned.

The preservation of *'ird* is mainly the responsibility of the men in the family, since women are held to be too weak to be able to protect the virtues of *sharaf*, *'ird*, and *karāma* (§ 137; cf. 96, 153). Ibrahim even asserted that any Sudanese man is considered to be the guardian of any Sudanese woman. Whether this ideal is widespread or not and, if so, whether it is operationally efficient or not remains to be investigated.

To preserve the *'ird* of one's female relatives means above all to protect them from extramarital sexual intercourse. Virginity is much valued, and various precautions are taken to preserve it, for, as the saying goes, virginity is like a match: "once you strike it, it is of no use" (§ 40). The most drastic of the measures intended to secure the girls' virginity is circumcision. There are two forms of female circumcision in the Northern Sudan, in-

fibulation or "Pharaonic" circumcision and clitoridectomy or "Sunna" circumcision.¹ Practically every girl is circumcised, usually by infibulation. "A very small number" are said to undergo clitoridectomies.² Those two of my informants who discussed the matter were both against Pharaonic circumcision which they considered as very cruel, and in favour of clitoridectomy (§§ 107, 132). Both of them referred to the belief that Pharaonic circumcision is a way of protecting the girls (§ 132 and essay), and one of them also presented protection of the girl as the rationale for clitoridectomy (Ali, § 107), while the other informants thought that the Sunna operation was just a religious custom which cannot be rationally justified (Osman, § 132).³

Lack of virginity and adultery, when discovered, leads to serious consequences. A girl who loses her '*ird*' may not be killed by her relatives nowadays, but she will not easily find a husband, and if she does, she is likely to be divorced very soon (§§ 41, 116-117, cf. 154). According to a tradition mentioned by Osman, an adulteress could be subjected to ordeal of fire, and if she did not pass the test, she would be killed (§ 116).⁴ The seducer would traditionally also be killed by the woman's relatives: "They have to wash shame with blood", to quote Ali. The honourable omda ("*umda*, "mayor") referred to in § 26 was so sensitive to the virtue of '*ird*' that he shot down a man who tried only to cast a glance over the wall to the women's compartment. The consequences for the wrongdoer's relatives are almost equally serious: if one of one's female relatives goes astray and commits adultery or has doubtful relations with a man, "then the whole of one's dignity and self-respect has gone forever and nothing would set the matter right again. The woman will be considered as an outcast and her family is no more respected", according to Ibrahim.

To preserve the women's '*ird*' they must be protected from the dangers which meeting strangers and, generally, men from outside the close family circle brings with it. For "it is believed that whenever a man and a woman meet, the devil is the third" (Ali). Women should spend most of their time at home; if they have to go out, they should wear a tobe (*thawb*), a garment made of about nine metres of cloth which is draped round the body and head (§ 106); they would not usually be allowed to go to the cinema, at least not outside the Three Towns (§ 47); if one invites friends or colleagues for a meal, one's wife would normally

not be present (§ 155); old-fashioned parents would not allow their daughters to go to school, because that would be "shameful", wrote Ali; the omda who shot down the man who glanced over the wall – who admittedly went rather far to protect the family's honour – would not allow his women to go out by day at all, and at night he would personally provide escort for them by walking in front of them (§ 26); during the Mahdia, some people killed their wives and daughters for fear that they would be attacked by soldiers from the Khalifa's army who were considered as slaves (§ 135). In short, people are prepared to go to great lengths to protect the *'ird* of their *ḥarīm*.

Marriages between cousins, which naturally tend to be frequent in a society where the girls are so secluded, are also viewed as a way of protecting the girls of the family: "you have to cover your own pots first" (§ 33).

The informants seemed to agree that the protection of *'ird* is very important, but at least two of them (Ali and Osman) had come to make modifications in the traditional views. The third informant (Ibrahim) made a general defence of the traditional views on this subject without going into details and wrote gloomily about those women "who are infected by the dark side of modern civilization". As we have seen, the two less traditional informants advocated the milder form of circumcision; they were not prepared to kill in order to protect the family's honour (§§ 134, 136); but because of the pressure from the environment, they predicted that they would not always allow their wives to take part in meals with guests (§ 155); they insisted that Sudanese girls should wear tobes when going out (§§ 107, 130). At least one of them disagreed with the Islamic view that capital punishment is justified in the case of adultery.

The family's honour depends mainly upon the decency of its women; usually, one talks, therefore, of the *'ird* of the women of the family. The word '*ird*' may, however, also be applied to men, according to one of the informants (Ali § 40; Osman to the contrary, § 135). In the first place, a man's honour depends upon his female relatives' *'ird*. If it becomes known that a man's wife has committed adultery, he will lose his honour as well, for "her decency is his decency of course" (Ali in untaped interview). In the second place, homosexuality is disapproved of, according to the same informant: "homosexuality is against nature, religion and morality"; and a boy or man who practices it or

helps to arrange meetings for the purpose acquires a bad reputation and is said to have no *'ird* (§ 42).

4. Dignity (*karāma*)

The conception of *karāma* plays a crucial role in the informants' ethics, and it will be justified to investigate it in some detail. In this section, I shall first consider the question to whom *karāma* is ascribed (i), then the questions how *karāma* is affected (ii) and in how far the informants are aware of differences between the traditional views and their own views (iii), and finally the question how *karāma* resembles and differs from *sharaf* and *'ird* (iv). I shall then make a comparison between *karāma* and the Roman concept of *dignitas* in order to bring out some of the peculiarities of *karāma* more clearly (sec. 5), and finally I shall characterize the role of *karāma* in the system of virtues (sec. 6).

(i) *Karāma* is ascribed to individual persons (a), families (b), and, at one occasion in the interviews, also to a group of people who do not belong to the same family (c).

(a) *Karāma* is primarily ascribed to grown-up Sudanese men. Any Sudanese adult who is not a slave or for some reason has been deprived of his *karāma* has *karāma*, irrespective of social status (§§ 96 f., 121, 123 f.). The man in the street considers himself equal to the president of the country in this respect (§ 97). It seems reasonable to assume that the question whether non-Sudanese have *karāma* or not is usually left open, although two of the informants, when explicitly asked about this point, affirmed that all human beings, except the outcasts, have *karāma*, irrespective of nationality (§§ 96, 124). *Karāma* is ascribed to women in several places (e.g. § 109 f.), but because of their inherent weakness, they cannot be assumed to carry the responsibility for their own *karāma* which, like *sharaf*, is always in the hands of their male relatives (§ 137). A woman does, accordingly, not behave like a man would do in a *karāma*-affecting situation, and so people come to think that a woman's *karāma* is not of the same class as a man's (§ 96). Children are not usually said to have *karāma* (§§ 96, 138). On reflection, Ali thought that children should be said to have *karāma*, although they usually don't show any signs of having it (§ 96). *Karāma* has perhaps got an open texture with regard to the application to children; the question whether children have

or lack *karāma* does perhaps not usually arise. 'Karāma' is also vague with regard to the application to children, since one cannot state exactly what age a person should be in order to be said to have *karāma*. Although children would not normally be said to have or lack *karāma* in their personal capacity, they can be treated as without *karāma* because they belong to a family which is known to have no *karāma* (§ 121 f.). In this case, 'karāma' seems to be a more synonym of 'sharaf' (cf. §§ 121 f., 138).

(b) *Karāma* is sometimes ascribed to families, e.g. in § 35 where a girl is said to wound her family's *karāma* if she goes out alone (and secretly meets a boy), and in § 138. The extension of *karāma* to the whole family is natural since the responsibility for the *karāma* of each member of the family is shared by the grown-up males of the family who are responsible especially for the *karāma* of their wives, sisters, daughters and other dependants (see, besides the passages previously referred to, § 104 f.). When pressed on the point, one informant somewhat hesitantly said that *sharaf* is a family matter and *karāma* a personal matter, though the words are often used synonymously (§ 138). To clarify the situation, it seems reasonable to distinguish between two senses of 'karāma': (1) the sense in which 'karāma' is attributable to families, (2) the sense in which 'karāma' is a personal matter. To mark the distinction, one could talk of 'karāma' in the sense of "personal dignity" and 'karama' in the sense of "family status". The family's status is, of course, dependant upon the conduct of the individual members of the family, and one's personal dignity depends to a certain extent on one's family's status. There does not seem to be enough material in the interviews to warrant any definite statements on the interrelations between family status and personal dignity.

(c) In § 16, *karāma* is ascribed to another kind of collective, the government of the country: if the government did not go back at its decision by itself but instead referred the question to the Central Council on the assumption that the Council would change the previous decision, "their *karāma* is not wounded", "they have their *karāma*". This attribution of *karāma* to a group may be just a convenient way of referring to the *karāma* of each member of the group, but it is perhaps better to interpret it on the same lines as ascriptions of *karāma* to families: the members of the government share the responsibility for what the government does, and so each member's *karāma* depends upon the other mem-

bers' *karāma*, just as an individual's personal dignity depends upon his family's status.

(ii) *Karāma* is a quality which adults normally have, which can be affected ("wounded", "injured", "touched") by various kinds of misdemeanour or even lost (§§ 7, 16, 28, 32, 46, 51, and so on); when lost, it cannot be regained, although one can hope that people will forget about it after some time (§ 98). There is thus little one can do to *add to* one's personal dignity – personal dignity is something which has to be *preserved* by not letting it get wounded or lost. One's *karāma* can be affected by both (a) improper conduct, and (b) improper treatment.

(a) If one oneself or any member of one's family breaks any of the norms for sexual behaviour, then one's *karāma* is affected. The preservation of *sharaf* and *'ird* seems to be a necessary condition for the preservation of *karāma* (cf. §§ 26, 35, 109, 116, 121, 123). If, for example, one's wife commits adultery, that would be an injury to one's *karāma* (§ 109). Other examples of how one's *karāma* can be affected by one's own behaviour to be found in the interviews are: for a male student to cry if he does not pass an examination (§ 8); for a student to fail after having worked hard (§ 51) – in order to avoid exposing himself to loss of dignity, a student would therefore either not work much or else at least not let the other students know that he studies much (§ 53 f.); to repeat in a school would be a shame, whereas repeating once in the university is considered to be acceptable (§ 52); repeating two years in the university is, however, "very difficult" (ibid.) and would presumably reflect upon the student's *karāma*, although the informant did not say so explicitly; to change an important decision as the result of pressure from other people (§ 16); to go to a relative's wedding without having been invited – the informant said that he, unlike his father, thought it would be undignified to go in such a case (§ 38); to have been in prison (§ 98). In all such cases, it does not, however, seem to be the act itself which is considered undignified; rather, one's dignity is affected by the unfavourable reactions on the part of other people which one's behaviour provokes. A man should e.g. show strength of character, and if he gives evidence of weakness, for instance by crying or giving in as the result of pressure from others, he exposes himself to unfavourable treatment. This applies particularly to cases where one's conduct is directly offensive to others (like drinking whisky in public in a village or ostensibly breaking the fast by

eating in public): if one does not show due respect for one's fellow human beings, they will try to "oppress" one's dignity (§ 95). Personal dignity seems to be entirely dependant upon other people's attitudes and actions. My hypothesis is, in other words, that *karāma* is entirely "other-determined" (cf. ch. 4, sec. 4). The available data do of course not give anything resembling conclusive proof of the correctness of this hypothesis even as far as the main informants' ethics is concerned.

(b) There is, however, abundant evidence in favour of the hypothesis that the main informants' conceptions of *karāma* are *predominantly* other-determined. One's personal dignity is very sensitive to improper treatment, and to protect one's *karāma* means above all to see to it that one is treated with due respect. If this interpretation is correct, any action which is liable to give rise to adverse reactions in other people is a potential threat to one's *karāma*; and any deviation from the norms regulating the personal relations between human beings is likely to be interpreted as an offence to one's *karāma*. A complete account of *karāma* would, therefore, amount to a complete description of all the norms governing personal relations. A dozen interviews are not enough to reconstruct the whole system, but the interviews do at least present clues for the investigation of the system. Non-conformist behaviour is liable to give offence; it will be interpreted as an insult. The word 'insult' is a key word in the interviews, and its frequency is a measure of the importance of the preservation of *karāma*. The student who was unjustifiedly accused of cheating during the examinations felt so deeply insulted that he tried to commit suicide in spite of the strong norm against suicide (7); being accused of flattery is a bad insult which deeply upset the student concerned (§ 27); to refuse to accept a gift is an insult (§ 32); if you want to marry a girl and ask her father for her hand and he refuses, you will take that as an insult – your *karāma* is wounded (§ 32); ironical remarks or mere blame from a teacher are liable to be interpreted as insults rather than as justified admonitions (§ 36); public blame is, generally, an unjustifiable insult, irrespective of whether it is deserved or not (see e.g. §§ 27, 36 f., 50, 152); the parents of a student who married secretly abroad and didn't tell his parents of his marriage felt insulted (§ 49); if a junior man is promoted, his senior might take that as an insult and even resign from his job (§ 149); not to be greeted by somebody who is supposed to greet you

first is an insult (§ 150); the District Commissioner who sent for a tribal chief rather than coming to see him personally insulted the chief by doing so (§ 151); if you don't show the required hospitality and friendliness towards your relatives and friends when they come to visit you, they will feel insulted (§ 46); and so forth. To look for possible insults is thus a good way of finding the socially important norms in this ethical system, and the seriousness of the insult is a measure of the stringency of the corresponding norm.

One such norm which is of special importance in connection with personal dignity is the norm of equality. All men are on principle equal; there is no difference between a servant and a president with regard to their personal dignity (§§ 50, 97). But this equality in principle is in practice tempered by considerations of status. The servant – master relationship, for instance, gives rise to modifications in what is considered to be proper treatment: you can demand things of your servant which you cannot demand from others without insulting them (see § 50). Status seems to be mainly determined by age: one expects equal treatment from those who are of the same age as oneself, and more respect from one's juniors than from others (§§ 126, 151 f.). People should show mutual respect for each other, but an older man should be treated with special respect. If one is insulted by one's father, one should not treat him in the same way, for example, although there is no need to accept his insult (§ 27). An insult from a drunkard, a younger boy, and perhaps also from a foreigner can be disregarded because they are not regarded as equals; their behaviour cannot affect one's *karāma* (§§ 112, 114; but cf. § 50, where an insult from a foreigner is said to be even worse). Women are, of course, not considered as equal to men – they are weak and have to be protected (see e.g. §§ 96, 106 f., 129 f., 137, 153–155).

To preserve one's *karāma* when insulted, one must show that one does not “accept” the insult; one must “rebel” or “revolt” (e.g. §§ 27, 112 f., 123). It is because women and children don't “rebel” that it is difficult to tell whether they have *karāma* or not (§ 96). The “slaves” show that they have no *karāma* by not revolting when insulted or abused (§ 123).

(iii) The informants were less aware of changes in their views on honour and dignity than in their views on courage and generosity, where they explicitly rejected what they held to be wide-

spread views. On the whole, they accepted the traditional ideas about 'ird, *sharaf* and *karāma*. The modifications they were aware of were on the whole concerned with 'ird but not with *sharaf* and *karāma*, except in so far as *sharaf* and *karāma* are dependant upon 'ird (§§ 25 f., 47, 50, 134-136, 146). Osman said at one occasion that people have mistaken beliefs about *karāma*: "they call something their *karāma* which is not, in fact, their *karāma*" (§ 149). But, on the other hand, he did not think e.g. that people put too much emphasis on the value of personal dignity; on the contrary, people nowadays sometimes accept things which really affect their dignity; they sometimes accept insults when they shouldn't do so (§ 152).

(iv) The relations between the notions of 'ird, *sharaf* and *karāma*, which seem confused to start with, can perhaps be seen more clearly now. 'Ird, *sharaf* and *karāma* overlap to a large extent, the words are often used as synonyms or near-synonyms, but what could be called their hard cores of meaning or central meanings differ. Each of the words tends to acquire a specialized role within the common field of application. 'Ird' is predominantly applied to women, 'sharaf' to the family, 'karāma' to adult men. Paradigm cases for the loss of 'ird and *sharaf* are adultery and loss of virginity; the paradigmatical way of affecting somebody's *karāma* is by insulting him. Personal insults do, in fact, effectively differentiate between *sharaf* and *karāma*. There are two passages (§§ 28 and 112) where the informants recognized that an insult would affect one's *karāma* but not one's *sharaf*.

The relations between 'ird, *sharaf* and *karāma* do perhaps not admit of very precise statements because of the loose organization within the honour-and-dignity cluster. To say that 'ird is a necessary condition for *sharaf* and *sharaf* a necessary condition for *karāma* is probably overprecise; yet, it might be illuminating as a rough approximation and useful as a working hypothesis.

5. *Karāma* and *dignitas*

A comparison between the Roman concept of *dignitas* and the informants' notion of *karāma* might help to shed light on some of the peculiarities of *karāma*.⁵

The concept of *dignitas*, according to Prof. Wistrand, "signifies the position of a Roman in the state, his status and prestige.

Dignitas is based upon birth (*genus*) and personal merit (*virtus*), which expresses itself in deeds (*res gestae*) and in gained marks of honour, particularly honorific offices (*honores*). *Dignitas* is, however, not only something which one is in possession of. The word can, in accordance with its etymology, also signify that one is worthy of something, deserves to have something; in other words, *dignitas* can also – and that is remarkable – imply a demand”. Caesar thought, for instance, that his *dignitas* gave him the right to special treatment.⁶

This concept of dignity differs in important respects from the informants’ concept of *karāma*.

(i) *Dignitas* is based on birth. The concept is tied up with a class society with a feudal order.⁷ The Sudanese informants do not distinguish between different social classes, on the whole; and, accordingly, everybody is said to have *karāma*, irrespective of birth. This statement must, however, immediately be qualified to account for the special attitudes towards the “slaves”. The slaves or outcasts have, by birth, no *sharaf* and no *karāma*. Lack of *sharaf* and *karāma* is like a disease – it is inherited by the children from their outcast parents (§§ 122–123). One can thus distinguish between two social classes which are morally relevant: the slaves and the non-slaves. Honour and dignity is the prerogative of those who are not slaves.

(ii) *Karāma* as well as *dignitas* is related to virtuous behaviour, but it is a striking feature of the informants’ ethics that one can do nothing to add to one’s honour and dignity except for showing zeal in the preservation of one’s own and one’s family’s honour and dignity. One can lose one’s *sharaf* and *karāma*, and one has to protect it by abstaining from bad deeds, but one cannot by one’s efforts regain it once it has been lost. The aim as far as honour and dignity are concerned is the preservation of the status quo. *Res gestae* and *honores* do not influence one’s *karāma*. To preserve one’s honour and dignity one has to conform to the highly stringent norms of obligation (like the norms about ‘*ird*’), violations of which would be considered as positively bad; but supererogatory works are of no avail as far as honour and dignity are concerned, it seems. Whether one is generous or not, for instance, is immaterial to one’s dignity (Osman §§ 71, 127). Lying, breaking promises, stealing may have no effect on one’s *karāma*, provided that one is still able to get on with people. But if you go too far, you will no longer be respected by other people, and

"if nobody respects you, there is no dignity left to you" (§ 117 f.). One's *karāma* depends upon how one is treated by other people rather than upon one's own deeds; one's *karāma*, as well as one's *sharaf*, is other-determined rather than self-determined. (I shall develop this theme in more detail in the next chapter).

(iii) *Karāma*, like *dignitas*, entitles to special treatment, but since all adult Sudanese men have *karāma* (unless they have failed to preserve it), everybody will in principle be entitled to equal treatment. Women, children and slaves who do not have *karāma*, at least not in the same way and to the same extent as others, are not treated as equals (cf. sec. 4).

6. The role of *karāma*

The notion of *karāma* holds a key position in the informants' ethical systems. *Karāma* is closely related to the highly stringent norms of *sharaf* and *'ird*, as we have seen, and it is also related, in a more indirect way, to the virtues of courage, generosity and hospitality, and so on. For in order to be said to have dignity, one must be respected by other people, and to command the respect of others, one must conform to a high degree to at least the more important of the moral norms which are generally accepted. To get on in the Sudanese society, one has to preserve one's *karāma*.

The importance of the conceptions of *karāma* and *sharaf* for the regulation of behaviour can be clearly seen from the passage on what happens to those who are born without *karāma* and *sharaf*: "the slaves themselves ... believe that they have no *sharaf*, have no *karāma*. And so they plunge into vice from the beginning. From the early childhood. They go and drink and the girls commit adultery and they become professional prostitutes and so on" (§ 123). If one has no honour and dignity, there is nothing to protect one from evil.

Chapter 9

The Ethics of Respect and Self-Respect

1. Respect and self-respect

'Respect' (*iḥtirām*) and 'self-respect' (*iḥtirām al-naḥs*, *iḥtirām al-dhāt*) are frequently recurring words in the interviews. The 'respect'-terminology is used to express moral approval and disapproval: a man who conforms to the accepted moral norms is respected; if one violates the norms, one will no longer be respected. If, for instance, it was discovered that a student attempted to cheat during an examination, Ali would not respect him (§ 9); people who are generous are respected, misers are not respected (§ 19); fathers and sons should show mutual respect for each other (§ 27), and if the son breaks a norm regulating their relations (like the norm that the son should not smoke in his father's presence), the father would interpret that as a sign of disrespect (§ 40); the honest man is usually respected, the dishonest man is not respected (§§ 84–85, 115); promises should be respected (§§ 86, 118); and so forth. Showing respect and withholding respect are thus the generally accepted ways of expressing moral approval and disapproval, and the informants are no exception to the rule (cf. e.g. §§ 9, 87, 140, 142, et passim).

Showing respect is not only a way of expressing one's approval. There is also an explicit injunction that other people should be respected, unless they have done something which justifies one in not showing them respect (see e.g. §§ 28, 50, 95, 115, 125 f.). The norm that other people should be respected could be said to sum up all the norms which regulate interpersonal relations.

There is also an injunction that one should respect himself. To preserve one's self-respect is one of the major moral aims, along with preservation of honour and dignity and the exercise of courage, generosity, honesty and so on (§§ 84, 139, 146). The notion of self-respect belongs to the same cluster as the notions of *'ird*, *sharaf* and *karāma* in the sense that there are close con-

nections between the notions and in the sense that self-respect is not always clearly distinguished from the related notions (cf. e.g. §§ 108, 117, 120, 126).

The informants formulated somewhat different opinions about the relative importance of self-respect. Ibrahim wrote that self-respect comes nearly at the top of the scale of virtues; Osman expressed the view that for him self-respect is a minor virtue (§ 146); Ali wrote that the self-respect – *‘ird* – *karāma* complex, which he referred to as “honour”, comes above all virtues, according to the popular view; it is not quite clear whether he would agree himself with this view. In order to bring out in how far these differences between the informants seem to reflect genuine disagreements and in how far their disagreements are on the verbal plane, I shall first outline what the position of self-respect in the popular, traditional ethics seems to be according to the informants’ presentation of the traditional ethics, and then describe how the informants seem to have changed the traditional views with regard to self-respect.

My hypothesis is that the popular notion of self-respect sums up the whole popular ethics of virtue. For in order to have self-respect, one must command the respect of others (§§ 115, 118 f., 140, 146); and in order to command the respect of others, one must conform to a high degree to the ordinarily accepted norms. To have self-respect one must live up to one’s moral standards, and in a conformist society, one’s moral standards are largely identical with the generally accepted standards. To respect oneself means, in short, to be morally good (§ 102). The notion of self-respect caps the conceptual edifice of the popular Sudanese ethics of virtue, if this interpretation is correct.

The views of the most conservative of the three informants agree well with the proposed interpretation of the traditional views. Self-respect, according to this informant, “is gained by fulfilling other virtues like courage, hospitality, generosity, etc.” Self-respect, he said, “comes near the top of the scale of the Sudanese /virtues/”; and since he immediately went on to say that “dignity should be dominant” and expressed the view that loss of dignity and self-respect go together, it would seem justified to say that self-respect, for this informant, comes right at the top of the scale of the virtues.

If the notion of self-respect has come to be used in this way to sum up the whole of the popular ethics, it is understandable

that the two less conservative informants felt reluctant to accord such a prominent place to self-respect as Ibrahim did. The demotion of self-respect from its high rank to a more humble place in the system can be taken as an expression of their deviation from the traditional views. The traditional notion of self-respect is such that whether one has self-respect or not is entirely dependent upon how one is treated by other people; and how one is treated by other people, depends upon how one oneself treats them. To have self-respect, in the traditional sense, one has, therefore, to treat people according to their expectations; one has to conform to the generally accepted norms. Self-respect is something which must be *developed* in one's relations with other people over a period of time (§ 146). To respect oneself one has to build up a network of respect from others. A notion of self-respect which has these implications is easily acceptable to a highly traditional, conformist individual. A more individualistic person who is not prepared to go to such lengths with regard to conformity, would either have to remould the traditional concept of self-respect or else attach less importance to it than the traditionalist. At least one of the less tradition-bound informants chose the latter alternative (§ 146).

If self-respect depends upon respect from others, and if respect from others depends upon conformity to the generally accepted norms, then self-respect will be much more vulnerable than e.g. *sharaf* and *karāma* which are affected by more narrow ranges of actions. Any violation of an important norm can lead to loss of self-respect. There are some passages in the interviews where the informants hesitated or refused to say that their *karāma* would be affected but affirmed that one's self-respect would be affected or that the action in point would lead to loss of respect (§§ 9, 117 f.).

There is also one passage (§ 149) which indicates that one's *karāma* can be affected while one's self-respect remains unaffected. This passage can, however, hardly be taken as conclusive evidence that *karāma* is not included in self-respect in the informants' systems of virtues, since one of the informants immediately pointed out that people are sometimes, and presumably in this case, mistaken in their views about *karāma*. The relations between *karāma* and *sharaf*, on the one hand, and self-respect, on the other hand, do, on the whole, remain rather unclear. The available data do not seem sufficient to decide whether the

uncertainty depends upon uncertainty in the concepts themselves (vagueness and open texture) or merely upon gaps in the data.

In the foregoing chapter (sec. 5), we drew attention to the fact that one cannot do anything to add to one's *sharaf* and *karāma*, according to the informants. To preserve one's *sharaf* and *karāma* means to abstain from wrong actions. One of the informants maintained that the same applies to self-respect (§ 102). This does not seem quite correct if self-respect depends upon respect from others, and respect from others is gained by conformity to the generally accepted norms about generosity, hospitality and so on. (The informant need not be mistaken, however. There may be a genuine difference between his concept of self-respect and e.g. Ibrahim's.) But it seems plausible to assume that there is at least an emphasis on prohibitions rather than on positive injunctions in the informants' own ethics as well as in the popular ethics. To be morally good seems to mean primarily to abstain from bad deeds (§ 102).

2. Self-determination and other-determination

An ethical system which emphasizes the importance of being respected by other people is clearly "other-determined" in the sense in which term was introduced in ch. 4, sec. 4: an individual's moral status depends largely upon other people's beliefs, actions, attitudes, and so on. That self-respect also plays an important role in the popular ethics cannot be taken to show that there is an element of self-determination in the popular ethics, since, as we have seen, self-respect in the popular ethics seems to be entirely dependant upon respect from others. If it is true that self-respect sums up the whole of the popular ethics, as we suggested above, then the popular ethics is entirely other-determined. Irrespective of whether this strong hypothesis can be vindicated or not, it is undisputable that there is a strong streak of other-determination in the popular ethics as presented by the informants. To lose one's *ird*, for instance, means to lose one's reputation (§ 42). If one loses one's *karāma*, one will feel ashamed (§ 116). There is a strong element of showing-off in the conceptions of courage, generosity and hospitality. A man has to impress especially the girls with his ability to stand pain, etc. (cf. ch. 7, sec. 1). If a man proves a coward, the girls might ridicule

him in songs and he will "live in shame forever" (Ibrahim). Guests are sometimes honoured for fear of a bad reputation: "Do you want the other tribes to say that sheikh Hassan does not honour his guest? What a shame." (Ali).¹ Avoiding shame and building up a good reputation are common motives for the exercise of courage, generosity, hospitality and so on (§ 72, 87, 89, 144 f.). The popular Sudanese ethics seems to be clearly shame-oriented.²

At least two of the informants reacted against this feature of the popular ethics. "The man who follows and defends his principles regardless of other people's disapproval is courageous," according to Ali, who emphasized the importance of having good motives for one's actions. Fear of shame and the wish to build up a good reputation are not good motives (Ali).

A crucial question which clearly differentiates between other-determination and self-determination in ethics is whether it would make any difference to the morality of an act if it is done in public or in private. (The story of Gyges' ring in Plato's *Republic* is the *locus classicus* for the use of this device). With reference to the teachings of Islam,³ Ali stated that he would prefer to give alms in private (§ 88). Similarly, Osman said, with reference to Islam, that a person who is hospitable just because he does not want to get a bad reputation is not generous at all (§ 144), although this admittedly is a common ground for the display of hospitality and other virtues: "A generous man seeks fame in the first place", he wrote. But, in his own view, "one shouldn't seek reputation from others" (§ 144).

The informants did, however, by no means make a whole-sale rejection of other-determination. They stressed the importance of the other-determined notions of *'ird sharaf* and *karāma*, for instance, and agreed that it is important to be respected by other people in order to get on in life (see e.g. § 119). There seems to be a conflict in the informants' ethics between self-determined elements derived from Islam and the other-determined elements derived from the popular ethics. A striking illustration of the mixture of other-determined and self-determined elements in their ethics can be found in Ali's reasoning about the relative value of acts performed in private and acts performed in public. Immediately after having backed his view that alms-giving in private is better by reference to Islamic teachings, he went on to say that breaking the fast in public is worse than doing so in private

on the ground that you should not display your disobedience to God in public, "just as a country doesn't want to show what is bad in the country to the outside world" (§ 89), which is clearly a piece of other-determined reasoning.

Two other cases which might serve to differentiate between self-determination and other-determination have given rise to a good deal of discussion in recent moral philosophy: secret promises and the possibility for a Robinson Crusoe-like person on an isolated island to have any ethics. If one gives a promise to a dying man in the absence of witnesses, then it would seem inconsistent for a clearly other-determined person to keep the promise, if he does not wish to and provided that there is no chance of anybody discovering that such a promise has been given. In one of the joint interviews, the informants maintained that such promises are well respected in the Sudan and agreed that it would be right to keep such promises, though admittedly not everybody would keep to the straight path (§ 86). The question whether a man alone on an island could have any ethics was put to one of the informants only (Ali), who first answered the question in the negative on the ground that "ethics deals with the relations between human beings", so that for instance man's relations to God and to animals would fall outside the scope of any ethics. On reflection, he changed his mind, however, and said that also a man alone on an island could be morally bad (§§ 93-94). Both these test cases thus elicited evidence of the existence of self-determined traits in the informants' ethics of virtue.

To sum up: there seems to be a conflict between other-determined and self-determined elements in the informants' ethics which is a potential source of tension. Situations are bound to occur where the individual will have to weigh the values of conformity to the other-determined, generally accepted ethics against the values of following the self-determined ethics which seems to be derived from religious teachings. (Cf. the discussion on pretending in § 101. The informant found it difficult to decide whether one should sometimes be insincere in order not to upset one's family.)

3. Conformity and tolerance

Peck and Havighurst have distinguished five types of moral character: (1) the *amoral* type with no internalized moral principles

who follows his whims and shows no signs of responsibility; (2) the *expedient* type who is "primarily self-centered, and considers other people's welfare and reactions only in order to gain his personal ends"; (3) the *conforming* type who above all wants to conform to accepted standards of behaviour and feels ashamed if other find him violating the norms; (4) the *irrational-conscientious* type who acts according to internalised principles irrespective of whether people around him approve or not; (5) the *rational-altruistic* type who "objectively assesses the results of an act in a given situation, and approves it on the grounds of whether or not it serves others as well as himself".⁴

From the interviews, one gets a strong impression that the informants combine features from the third and fifth of these types. They seem to accept the ethics of their environment to a high degree. None of them had come to break away completely from the ethics of their considerably less educated relatives; the modifications in the system concerned details rather than deep-lying features. They were sometimes prepared to accept moral norms for no other reason than that they are generally accepted. They were sensitive to the sanctions of shame and respect and willing to conform to a high degree to get on in life (cf. e.g. §§ 23, 25 f., 119, 129 ff., 154 f.). They were, however, not prepared to accept all the usually accepted norms and patterns of behaviour. There seem to be two reasons for this. One is a rational scrutiny of the effects of following the norms, which can be seen at work e.g. in the emphasis on the reasonableness criterion of courage and in the criticism of the usual manifestations of generosity and hospitality. The other reason why the informants rejected certain commonly accepted norms is the incompatibility of the norms with religious teachings. Of these two forces, the second seems to have been the more important one for the informants. Their criticism of the popular ethics seems, on the whole, to be based not so much on rational-altruistic considerations as on considerations of the compatibility of the popular ethics with Islam. The informants seem to have been under the influence of two partly incompatible systems of ethics, the popular ethics and the ethics of Islam as presented to them by e.g. their religious teachers in the *khalwa* schools, and their choices of norms in cases where inconsistencies occur seem, on the whole, to be based less on rational considerations than on considerations of the relative importance of the authorities they are confronted with.

My impression is thus that the informants are predominantly conforming. This is, of course, what can be expected for individuals whose ethics is strongly other-determined. An other-determined ethics which relies on sanctions like shame, ridicule, and reputation rather than on guilt presupposes a high degree of shared norms in the society. (This point is born out by the fact that one's *karāma* and self-respect, which are clearly other-determined, cannot be affected by how one is treated by foreigners who cannot be supposed to share or even know about one's moral norms (§ 60 f.).) An ethics which depends mainly or exclusively on the reactions of other people upon one's actions cannot function properly in a diversified society simply because there will be no uniform reactions.

In a moral community which consists of conforming individuals with shared norms one can hardly expect a high degree of tolerance with regard to deviant behaviour. In this connection, the informants' views on punishment are instructive. Ali and Osman were both in favour of capital punishment (which is part of the legal system of the Sudan) for murder and perhaps also treason. Ali did not accept the Islamic view that capital punishment is justified in case of adultery, whereas Osman found it difficult to express an opinion which would contradict one of the Islamic teachings. Osman defended lashing and flogging as punitive measures, and Ali seemed to agree with some reservations. Both informants thought that a husband would be justified to beat his wife in the last resort: if she did anything wrong, one should not talk to her at first, then not go to bed with her, and, if there is no other remedy, beat her. They were not prepared to accept torture as a form of punishment. Their views on punishment thus amounted to a defence of the status quo.

4. Inward-orientation and outward-orientation

The ethics of virtue which emerges from the interviews is clearly outward-oriented. The trait manifestations which are mentioned in connection with the popular conceptions are overt actions. Motives, intentions, feelings, attitudes are of no importance as long as one's outward behaviour conforms to expectations. The following example is a good illustration of this point:

I know so many people, when guests come and do visit them, they receive them but they are not happy about it. They are not pleased. But they can't dismiss guests ... They are afraid of public opinion (§ 72; cf. § 46).

Conforming behaviour is generally approved, irrespective of the motive behind it. Osman backed this opinion with the view that one cannot know what is really going on in people's minds:

people always judge the behaviour of people from what they appear to them (§ 72). You can't discover what is going on in people's minds. If they just appear to be so, we take them as so (§ 143; cf. §§ 20, 72).

Even if a person was reported to behave in a way which is incompatible with his professed beliefs, e.g. if a Muslim were reported to drink and frequent prostitutes and gamble, the informant was prepared to show faith in the person rather than in the rumour: "we say, Oh, you may be mistaken. You may have seen somebody else" (§ 143).

There is, however, also a strain of inward-orientation in the informants' ethics. With reference to Islam, both Ali and Osman emphasized the importance of having good motives for one's actions (§§ 87, 101, 144). To seek reputation or to be moved by considerations of authority and opinion, is not a good motive (§ 144). But the inward-oriented elements do not seem to be well integrated with the rest of the informants' ethics, as Osman's reluctance to apply the good motive-criterion in practice shows. This observation applies generally to the role of religion in the informants' ethics. The three main informants had all been under long influence from religious teachers, and they often referred explicitly to the teachings of the Koran and the Tradition. But except in the cases where the religious doctrines are clearly related to the popular ethics, as in the criticism of generosity and courage, the influence from Islam does not seem to have led to any thorough revision of the popular outward-oriented and other-determined ethics.

One way of avoiding a direct confrontation between the two partly incompatible systems of the popular ethics and the religious ethics, assuming that the hypothesis that there is such a conflict is correct, is to make a sharp distinction between public ethics and private ethics and regard religious matters as strictly personal. This move is particularly noticeable in Ali's ideology. Ali did,

in fact, make a sharp distinction between ethical and religious duties: "ethics deals with the relations between human beings" (§ 93), and religious duties like fasting and pilgrimage are private matters which concern only the individual himself and God (§ 91-93). On reflection, he was prepared to admit that a wider definition of 'ethics' which would allow also for considerations of religious matters, the treatment of animals and man's duties to himself would be better (§ 94), but this admission was obviously a step towards integration which he had not contemplated before.

5. Concluding remarks on the informants' ethics of virtue

To conclude the analysis of the informants' ethics of virtue, I shall characterize their ethics with regard to six general factors.

(i) *Other-determination v. self-determination.* Their systems of virtues are predominantly other-determined with signs of self-determination.

(ii) *Outward-orientation v. inward-orientation.* Their systems of virtues are predominantly outward-oriented with signs of inward-orientation.

(iii) *Consistency.* The systems seem to have a high degree of internal consistency. There seem to be no outright contradictions in the views of the same informant. This impression may, however, be due partly at least to the unclarity which often exists as to what the exact relations are between the different concepts which together make up the informants' ethics of virtue. Also, there are tensions in their ethics between inward-oriented and outward-oriented elements and between other-determined and self-determined elements, which have not been fully integrated.

(iv) *Stability.* The views of the informants seem to have been highly stable over the period of interviewing (which lasted for more than three months, if the first, unrecorded interviews are included).

(v) *Comprehensiveness.* The systems have a high degree of comprehensiveness in the sense that the systems can easily accommodate other virtues besides the major virtues which were the main object of investigation. (There are some illustrations of this point to be found in the interviews. Honesty (§ 84 f.), co-operation

(§ 99), strength of character (§ 100), and patience (§ 103), could be said to be included in the other virtues. Self-respect is, of course, particularly flexible in this respect).

(vi) *Conformity*. The informants showed willingness to conform to prevalent standards to a high degree. Their conforming tendencies were to some extent matched by rational-altruistic tendencies, but in most cases where they proved unwilling to conform to prevalent standards, the reason was that they regarded another set of standards – derived from religious sources – as more stringent.

Disregarding individual differences between the informants' ethics and taking their views as variations of the same system, one could say, compactly, that the ethical system which is the subject of this book is a predominantly other-determined and outward-oriented, internally consistent, comprehensive system centering round the notions of courage, generosity, honour, dignity and self-respect.

Further Problems

1. Morphological and functional problems

It is the purpose of an exploratory study to raise more problems than it solves, and this study is no exception to the rule. From the interviews and essays a picture emerges of the informants' conceptions of courage, generosity, honour, dignity, and so on, but many questions remain to be answered. How satisfactory the present exposition of the informants' ethics will be considered to be depends upon what interests one has got, what aims one has in mind. The level of precision and particularity of our analysis may be perfectly adequate for some practical purposes, e.g. as an introduction to one important aspect of Sudanese mentality for foreigners coming into contact with Sudanese, assuming that the analysis I have given is representative of widespread views, as there are reasons to believe it is (cf. the next section). One can also think of contexts where the given account would be over-precise and would have to be popularized to suit the aims one has in mind. But from the point of view of an ideological specialist who aims at giving a detailed picture of an ideology, many interesting problems remain to be investigated. One of the main purposes of Part I was to demonstrate the need for very detailed investigations in ideological research. Ideological systems are not normally like deductive systems where a complete specification of the system can be given in a few lines by enumerating the axioms and the rules governing the formation of formulae and the derivation of formulae from other formulae. Ideological systems must be studied as wholes, we argued; casuistry is an essential part of ethics, for the general rules are rendered determinate in meaning by the ranges of cases which are subsumed under the rules. The deductive ideal of ethics breaks down and should be replaced by a "particularistic" approach (ch. 2). The specialist would therefore like to have fuller specifications of the ranges of application of the informants' notions of courage, generosity, hospitality, honour, and so on. That would perhaps

also enable him to give a more precise account of the relations between the particular virtues which remain unclear in several respects. The relations between such virtues as courage, generosity and hospitality, on the one hand, and honour, on the other hand, do not emerge quite clearly from the given data, to take one example. And the hypotheses about the relations between decency, honour, dignity and self-respect stand in need of further testing, to take another example. The unclarities may be due to unclarities in the informants' systems of virtues; they may be due to the fact that the available data are insufficient to give a more precise account; or they may be due to faults in the given analysis. Only further investigations could decide which of these alternatives is right.

Apart from gaps with regard to such details, the account of the informants' ethics is incomplete in other ways. The investigation did not aim at giving a complete picture of the whole of the informants' ethics of virtue. We have concentrated on some prominent and presumably central aspects of their ethics of virtue, viz. the most important general virtues which a good Sudanese man should have according to the informants. Some other virtues like co-operation, strength of character and patience were touched upon very briefly, and many other virtues of minor importance were no doubt completely missed out. Courage, dignity and self-respect are virtues which apply primarily to men (cf. § 153 f.) – there is not so much in the collected data on the virtues expected in women. Nor was any attempt made to explore in detail those virtues which are tied to specific roles and social positions. The methodological requirements which were formulated in Part I made it advisable to make relatively detailed investigations of a few spots of the informants' ethics rather than to cover a larger area in a less intensive manner. It remains for future research to give a more detailed and broader picture of the Sudanese ethics of virtue and to relate this fragment of the ideology to the rest of the system of beliefs, norms and values.

Apart from such morphological problems, there is a set of problems about the analysed ethics which has not been explored at all, viz. the problems about the relations between the ethical systems and the systems of personality and behaviour. Such studies, including studies of the operational efficacy of the investigated conceptions, would require quite different techniques from those which have been employed in the present study.

2. The problem of representativity

An analysis of a few informants' ethics may be of interest for the specialists, but does it have any general interest? Yes, provided that the informants are representative of widespread views, because a proper understanding of people's behaviour often presupposes familiarity with the norms and ideals which govern their conduct. This applies particularly to situations where one deliberately sets out to introduce change, as in education and development programmes.

The Republic of the Sudan is a diversified society, and one would expect a good deal of variety in ethical outlooks. We are strictly speaking not yet in a position to give any answer to the question whether the three informants are representative of widespread views or not. My hypothesis is, however, that the informants are highly representative of a large moral community in the Northern Sudan, the exact borders of which remain to be investigated. Pending the results of future studies of this kind, we can only back our hypothesis with reference to qualitative data of a more or less unsystematic nature. Well-informed observers like Trimmingham and Saad ed Din Fawzi have expressed similar hypotheses (see references to ch. 6, sec. 1), and the scattered remarks on ethical matters in the literature on the Northern Sudan seem to indicate a high degree of uniformity in moral outlook. My own observations during some years in the Sudan point in the same direction. Views identical with or similar to the three main informants' views on e.g. honour, dignity and self-respect have been expressed by a great number of students. A series of quotations from students' essays on such topics will, I think, help to give some plausibility to the uniformity hypothesis, though it will not prove it.

(i) Eight senior students of philosophy, with Arabic names and so presumably from the Northern part of the country, writing about "the traditional Sudanese virtues" some years ago, all dealt with courage and generosity – hospitality. Five of them dealt with dignity and honour, five with self-respect and respect for others, four with temperance, modesty, self-control, four with honesty, truthfulness, mutual trust, and two with equality – justice. The only other virtues referred to were friendship (one) and helpfulness – co-operation (one). Here are some excerpts from the essays:

Student 1: Such traditional virtues as courage, dignity, hospitality, honesty, generosity, and so on, are the most important ones ... For the Beja, the question of courage is so important that in many cases it approaches rashness ... everyone knows that if he shows his fear or hesitation in any occasion, it would bring shame to that branch of the tribe to which he belongs ... The virtue of dignity is also one of the most important traditional virtues. By 'dignity' I mean that moral feature which makes you react against any action which shows in one way or another that you have been looked down upon. This moral characteristic is a little bit exaggerated among the Beja. If you try to make fun of, or insult, anyone, he would try to avenge on you by any means, because he would say that his dignity has been injured. It does necessarily be the case that he is insulted in front of others, because in all cases he would react against your procedure ... this keenness is very much exaggerated if one is insulted in front of a woman; any margin for discussion or consideration in your favour would disappear, and he would sometimes go to the extent of killing ... One can say that *some* Sudanese people look at the virtues of hospitality and generosity as symbols of social prestige, while others consider it as shameful not to welcome passing-by travellers and help the needy people.

Student 2: These traditional virtues consist of generosity, courage, dignity, modesty and many others that follow. The first and most prominent virtue is generosity ... Any person is ready to give food and shelter to the passer guest ... [P]eople ... used to compete and rival against each other, each trying to make himself more generous than the others ... courage is admired and exercised to a degree beyond belief. Marriage ceremonies show us an example of what young men might do in order to prove their courage. It is customary in such situations that those who have courage should whip each other violently on their naked backs while the girls are singing. There is no motive or justification for this extraordinary action except to prove their talent of enduring and thereby proving their courage. There is yet another traditional virtue and that is dignity. It is very much interesting to note that this "dignity" is always coupled by a somewhat near-to-opposite quality, and that is modesty. It is always noticed that a modest person is also a very dignified person. This person holds a great respect for others who in turn pay the same respect ... It is because, generally, ... everyone respects himself others should respect him also.

Student 3: Honour is a very large word that our people hold to. It may mean the good behaviour of your females, it may mean self-respect or dignity. Sudanese generally are very sensitive in any thing concerning their females. It is quite an everyday talk to hear that someone killed another for suspecting an affair between and one of his

female relatives. People in the Sudan want to be dignified all the time, they certainly respect others in order others may respect them. Some of them think that those who laugh often are not in the least dignified, they are making themselves childish.

Student 4: The most striking virtue we notice is the virtue of self-respect. The people have a natural pride. They also have a natural contempt and resentment against humiliation. They are good people, but they don't know any kind of forgiveness when their pride is hurt ... Another virtue we can detect is the virtue of friendship. This is due to the fact that they have self-respect and if you respect yourself, you should respect other so that they will respect you. That is why the people are very friendly. But it is not only respect. You should have faith in them and trust them in order that there will be mutual trust between each of you and this leads to the virtue of faithfulness ... [H]onour ... is an attribute of both family, respect and self-respect. The people are very sensitive in matters concerning their honour as husbands or fathers or brothers. Any kind of sacrifice means nothing to them when their honour is involved. This is also a sign of courage.

(ii) Other students' views on honour (*sharaf*) and dignity (*karāma*) agree well with the views expressed in the interviews. Many of the students emphasized that it is not easy to distinguish between honour and dignity but that there is some difference between the two notions. The relations with respect and self-respect were often pointed out. The predominantly negative character of honour and dignity comes out clearly: honour and dignity have to be *preserved* and are mainly affected by performing *wrong* actions. But it is worth noticing that at least honour is not entirely negative, according to some authors: one can add to one's honour by the performance of good deeds. The other-determination of honour and dignity comes out clearly, and the examples of actions which can affect honour and dignity illustrate tendencies well-known to the reader of the interviews. Here are some quotations:

Student 5 (a girl): Commonly speaking one finds it very difficult to differentiate between honour and dignity ... In fact honour deals with reputation and conduct ... Some people think that honour is connected with the history of the family and that to be honourable is to be a descendant of a noble family; but in fact the case is that to be honourable, one must consider his own behaviour and not that of his ancestors. An honourable man always chose the clear way and the plain one for his deeds are always right and accepted ...

[B]y dignity is meant a claim to be respected and important. Some people think that it is dignity to express their opinions and have what they want without being opposed. This is not the right dignity. Dignity is to have a strong effective personality that would make your opinion respected everywhere ... A dignified person would never allow his opinion to be disregarded and would never allow himself to be changeable. He would never change his opinion even if he found it is wrong ...

Student 6: According to Arab societies, including the Northern Sudan, the 'honour' of a father, his pride, lies in the chastity of his daughters until they are sent to their bridegrooms. To defend this 'honour', Sudanese girls are circumcised in such a way /as to/ make sexual intercourse difficult before marriage. Again the honour of the father lies in that his sons should not commit any scandal which shames him ... But dignity is our sense of manliness, of our own value, of our worthiness ... It is lurking within us. A dignified person respects himself ...

Student 7: Dignity depends upon what people say about you ... dignity depends not only on what I do /but/ also on what others think or say about me.

Student 8: To be honourable means to have a good behaviour; that is to say not to be thief, not to tell lies, etc. To us in the Sudan, I don't know whether it is so in other countries, the honour of the man is measured not only by his behaviour but also by the behaviour of his close relative specially those who are women ... Dignity differs from honour in that it is measured according to you only, it does not include other relatives or the behaviour of your family.

Student 9: Life without honour and dignity is a life of shame, and a shameful life is always degrading and humiliating.

Student 10: The 'dignity' is something in ourselves, something we possess, something in our hands, and if we want it we have to take care of it so as to be kept clean. It is like a glass when it breaks it will never be mended at all. It is so sensitive, only one foolish action will destroy it ... Honour is something different ... it is something which I can adopt or have as a result of doing a certain work. It is not in me but something I can get. The honour is like a pride given to you when doing a certain work.

(iii) A glance at the essays on moral questions by university students gives the impression that there is a high degree of uniformity at least within the community of university students. Some essays by girls in a secondary school in Omdurman (collected by my wife) agree substantially with the university students' views. E.g.:

Student 11: Most of the Sudanese are brave, courage[ous], honest, and the most important thing to them is the honour. They prefer death than any bad news about their honour which is mainly women and other possessions as they see it.

Student 12: Second to generosity we have the dignity which is very important in the life of the Sudanese. This includes the protection of the family's reputation. The Sudanese man doesn't like to hear anything bad about his family and he prefers to die to that. So he always try to let the reputation of his family as good as possible, and this by preventing his daughter or his sister to go to the cinema with her fiancé or any strange man. He also doesn't like his friends to meet the women of his family. These qualities are very good and I hope the Sudanese keeps them always, although other people think it as a backward system.

There are strong resemblances between the views which have been quoted and those of the main informants. I conclude that the hypothesis that the three informants' ethics are highly representative of widespread views has a high degree of initial plausibility and that it would be well worth testing it by means of further case-studies and questionnaires distributed to larger samples.¹

3. Historical and comparative problems

(i) There are striking similarities between the investigated ethics of virtue and moral views reported from other parts of the Arab world in works like Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, Dickson's *The Arab of the Desert*, and Musil's *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins*.² The dominant theme is the importance of honour and respect; the virtues which are emphasized seem always to include courage and hospitality; family loyalties play an important role; and round this core one finds a number of virtues like kindness, truthfulness, modesty, self-reliance, prudence, wisdom, patience, cunning, justice. Such reports as those of Doughty, Dickson and Musil are, however, not detailed and well-documented enough to make detailed comparisons possible – they leave only a general impression of the tenor of the ethics referred to. Much the same applies, unfortunately, to the available accounts of the ethics of Arab tribes in earlier times. And the mediaeval Arabic dictionaries contain clues for semantical

research rather than results acceptable according to the standards required for comparisons in descriptive ethics. When reading accounts of pre-Islamic ethics in Arabia, one gets a strong impression of the continuity in the ethical tradition in the Arabic-speaking world. Compare e.g. the informants' ethics with the following description of tribal ethics before the advent of Islam:

The place of law and of the abstract idea of right and wrong is to some extent taken by the conception of honour, the honour first of the tribe and then of the individual. Being hospitable and keeping trusts were signs of one's honourable condition; lack of generosity or bravery was a mark of dishonour. The custodian and registrar of honour was public opinion.³

This kind of ethics which Watt refers to as "tribal humanism" has been summed up in the notion of *murūwa* (manliness).⁴ (It might be worth noticing in passing that when one of the informants was asked about the meaning and importance of *murūwa*, he gave the interpretation "supererogatory generosity" and took it to be included in generosity; he would not give *murūwa* any prominent place in his own system of virtues.) Watt's views on the changes which the ethics of *murūwa* underwent at the advent of Islam could perhaps be summed up by saying that there was a shift from tribalism to individualism, from the honour-motive to the religious motive, from shame to guilt, from collective responsibility to individual responsibility, from outward-orientation to inward-orientation. It would be extremely interesting to see the results of an investigation of how deeply the pre-Islamic ethics was affected by Islam and how much of tribal humanism has survived through the ages. The tension in the informants' ethics between inward-oriented and outward-oriented elements and the strong shame-domination (other-determination) suggest that a surprisingly large amount of pre-Islamic components have been incorporated into Islam or continued to linger on besides the official teachings of Islam. Comparative and historical research on Arab ethics should be a fascinating field. The history of the notions of *'irḍ* and *karāma* would be well worth investigating in detail, to take one example. The standard dictionary *al-Lisān al-'Arab* indicates that *'irḍ* was used in a much wider sense ("noble inheritance, good personal qualities, good character") in classical times than in the Sudan nowadays, to take one example.⁵ It would be interesting to follow the semantical development

of the word and to know whether the development is a local phenomenon to be found only in the Sudan or also elsewhere.⁶ It seems specially noteworthy that though *sharaf* and also 'ird are referred to in the literature on Arabia, there is no mention of *karāma* (as far as I know). It would be interesting to know whether this is a mere slip, just as *karāma* has not been treated before in the literature on the Sudan, or whether there are genuine differences between the Sudanese conceptions of honour and dignity and the views to be found in other parts of the Arab world.

(ii) Moral systems where conceptions of honour and respect play a dominant part are, of course, also to be found outside the Arab world. The systems described in Pitt-Rivers's *The People of the Sierra* (Spain) and Campbell's *Honour, Family and Patronage* (Greece),⁷ for instance, are in many ways similar to Arab ethics. There seem indeed to be certain basic values in common to the societies round the Mediterranean which testify to "the continuity and persistence of Mediterranean modes of thought."⁸ It remains, on the whole, for future research to explore the details of the ethics of this Mediterranean community and to trace its connections with the ethical systems in the Arab world.

Part III

The Interviews

The main basis for the analysis of the traditional Sudanese virtues presented in this book consists of eight interviews with three main informants. The interviews lasted for about $10^{1/2}$ hours altogether, and ranged over a number of subjects more or less closely connected with the traditional personality ideals. About two thirds of the interviews are reproduced here, leaving out most of the dead ends and irrelevant excursions. The interviews do not only give a picture of the informants' ideal of the good man; they also give some idea of their backgrounds, aspirations and general moral outlook. Thus the interviews also help to place the fragment of ethics which has been analysed in this book in the wider context of the informants' ideals of life.

Throughout, the names of the informants have been replaced by their pseudonyms, and at some occasions personal references and other information of a confidential nature have been omitted. Otherwise, no changes have been made in the material. (Linguistic mistakes, e.g., have not been corrected.)

The sign /?/ indicates that the tape was difficult to interpret and that the chosen interpretation is tentative.

Two dashes (--) indicate that a passage was too blurred for me to find any plausible interpretation of it.

Three dots (...) indicate a pause.

Three dashes (---) indicate that the passage has been abridged.

The editor's comments are included in parentheses.

The interviewer is referred to by the initials *TN*.

The interviews have been divided into paragraphs for convenient reference.

On the informants and the circumstances under which the interviews took place, see chapter 6.

1. Interview with Ali and Ibrahim, December 4, 1963

§ 1

Ali: People give different examples of courage. The people think that a man who is lashed in the marriage ceremony is the bravest

man. You see, this man takes off his clothes, with his upper part naked, and stands like a statue /?/, and the bridegroom or one of his friends takes a whip and lashes him. His skin whitens, and drops of blood appear, join each other, flow /?/ into his clothes and go down to earth --. This is an example of courage.

TN: Is this during the marriage ceremony?

Ali: Yes.

TN: At which day? In the beginning, before the wedding or --?

Ali: After the wedding. When there is a play, and dancing and singing and so on. Another example: when it was a marriage ceremony, a man takes out a sharp knife and begins to cut his arm with this knife. This is also a kind of courage, they say.

Ali: You see, this is, people say, also to prove his courage to the girls. And Hassan Najila considers both these examples of the man who insists on being lashed and cuts his hand as a kind of generosity as well as courage. (Reference to Hassan Najila, *Dhik-rayāti fi al-bādiya* (Reminiscences from the desert), Beirut 1963.) And he thinks that the friend offers the bridegroom some gift. And offers him his courage. And other examples people give of courage: a boy who -- or a girl -- who doesn't cry when circumcised is courageous; a woman who does not cry when giving birth to a child. All these are examples of courage. -- The marriage lasts usually for seven days, five days. -- The friend who cuts his arm is unmarried or married. Anybody.

TN: And who does he want to impress? Everybody?

Ali: Everybody. But perhaps the girls, the women.

Ibrahim: Even old men, very old man, do this.

TN: Does everybody in your village cut his arm?

Ibrahim: No, not everybody.

§ 2

TN: Do you know of any students who have done it?

Ali: No, you see, now most students think this is a kind of rashness, not courage. Personally I think so. It is not courage at all.

TN: So you wouldn't like to do it?

Ali: No.

TN: What do you think, Ibrahim?

Ibrahim: Well, now, of course, I would not be inclined to do it. But I think that one day it happened that I did try to do it, when I was in the Intermediate School. I believe I did enter the

circle and taken off my clothes, but somebody interfered. And they took me outside the circle again.

TN: Why?

Ibrahim: Oh, I was too young.

TN: How old should the boy be?

Ibrahim: Well, it is usually done at the age of eighteen, nineteen.

TN: Oh, so they should be old enough to marry?

Ibrahim: Yes, old enough to marry.

Ibrahim: But then they used to do certain things which I think are similar to this. But not so serious as lashing and wounding hands. It is this kind of burns. (Shows the marks on his arm.)

TN: At what age did you do that?

Ibrahim: Well, I think at ten years.

TN: How did you do it?

Ibrahim: We used fire.

Ali: Sometimes they use a cigarette.

TN: At what occasion did you do that? Was it at a village festival or something?

Ibrahim: No, it is normally when we were playing we do this.

TN: Have you done it also?

Ali: No, I didn't.

TN: Why not? Didn't they do it in your village?

Ibrahim: He came from Atbara.

Ali: Yes, I came from Atbara . . . Yes, they do it.

TN: Did your comrades, did your friends do it?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Why didn't you do it? Because it would hurt you or -?

Ali: I didn't think it was courage. It seems to me strange.

TN: Did it hurt you very much when you did it?

Ibrahim: Yes, it did of course.

TN: What did you do then?

Ibrahim: Well, of course, you have to keep silent and not to give any kind of motion to show that you are not courageous. You have to keep silent and even motionless till the last moments.

§ 4

TN: Do you think this custom is widespread all over the Sudan?

Ibrahim: I think in most rural areas.

TN: Do you think they do it in Khartoum?

Ibrahim: Nowadays? No, they do not do it.

TN: Do they do it in your village nowadays?

Ibrahim: I think it is vanishing.

TN: Have you seen any boy who has done it recently?

Ibrahim: If I see him doing it, of course I will stop him.

TN: What about the lashing – would you like to partake in that?

Ibrahim: You mean now? I don't think.

TN: But they still have it in your village?

Ibrahim: Yes, they still have it.

Ali: In some parts, I believe, they have it.

Ibrahim: But I think it is diminishing.

§ 5

TN: What is considered as courage nowadays? What should one do in order to prove one's courage?

Ali: People think that the one who controls his fears when he faces danger is considered to be courageous.

TN: Could you think of any student who has shown great courage? Any student in this university? Some real story?

Ali: One of the students – his whole family was in one car. An accident happened, and his father was hurt, and one of his sisters, one of them passed away, and he could bear the tragedy. That is why I consider him to be courageous.

TN: And how did he show his courage?

Ali: This is what is courage. To me it is courage. To be in such a calamity.

TN: To be able to bear it?

Ali: Yes, to bear it.

TN: If he had not had courage, what would he have done instead?

Ali: Well, be too miserable. He may commit suicide. It is very difficult. And personally I consider one who commits suicide as most cowardly.

§ 6

TN: What do you think, Ibrahim, is it a sign of cowardice to commit suicide?

Ibrahim: It is a sign of cowardice, yes.

TN: In what way?

Ibrahim: Because one is supposed to face his difficulties and problems in the normal way, not to try to escape. When one commits suicide, he shows that he is really –, he doesn't want to face his difficulties.

TN: Does it happen that students commit suicide?

Ali: Yes, last vacation one of them committed suicide. One of the students in the faculty of medicine. He lived in Medani.

TN: Why did he do it?

Ali: I don't know the reason.

Ibrahim: But there must be problems. He failed to solve his problems. Some say that he loved a certain girl, and the girl was suddenly taken by another, was married to another man ... So at the very night of the celebration of the wedding itself, he committed suicide ... I think it is rather extraordinary ... He hadn't got any financial problems.

§ 7

TN: Has it happened that any student has committed suicide because he failed his exams, or do you think that that couldn't happen?

Ali: Someone tried. But he was saved.

TN: Do you think it was wrong of him to try to commit suicide?

Ali: Personally, yes. I think it was wrong.

TN: Why?

Ali: I mean ... This is not a reason. Whatever the difficulties may be, he has to face them and solve them. And to fail the examinations is not enough. It is not a strong reason. He has another chance to sit the exam again.

Ibrahim: But I think the case from last year is rather interesting because really the boy, he tried to commit suicide not because he failed the exams but because he was put in a rather critical position. I think that the Dean of the faculty of X, they found a paper in his desk just before entering the examination and they think that he tried to cheat. And the boy he doesn't really mean it. It happened that by accident he had forgotten the paper under his desk ... just the night before. And so they think that he tried to cheat. And I think this incident provoked him ... The Dean is not supposed to say this. So he left the examination altogether. And went to the hostel, and then to an hotel in the market and had a lot of tablets. They say that he is nearly about to die. But he was saved in the last minute. He was sleeping very deep for three days. At last I think they gave him the chance to sit for the exam in July and I believe that now he is working ... I think it is interesting from the point that he is really

... he was led to this because he thinks that his dignity, *karāma*, was really touched.

TN: So he felt insulted?

Ibrahim: Yes, he felt insulted. ---

§ 8

Ali: It is not a sign of cowardice to cry -. But it is better not to cry.

TN: But the women always cry when somebody dies, don't they?

Ali: Yes, they always cry.

TN: But the men shouldn't cry? Do the men cry when somebody dies?

Ali: Some of them usually do it. Others say it is courage not to cry, to control their emotions. You see, most of them nowadays they think that Mrs. Kennedy is very courageous because she did not cry ...

Ibrahim: Weeping in the usual as when somebody dies is not considered as a sign of cowardice. But - e.g. if somebody has been stricken say with a stick - and cries it is considered as a serious sign of cowardice.

(The girls sometimes cry, if they fail an exam. And the boys laugh at her. Or if a girl finds a paper difficult, she might start crying. Ibrahim said that if a boy cries because he failed an exam, that shows that he is ambitious - concerned about his future. But still, it would be undignified to cry in such a case.)

§ 9

TN: What do the students think about cheating?

Ali: I think most of them do not cheat. They consider that as something dishonourable.

TN: Does it affect one's *sharaf* or one's *karāma*, or what happens if one cheats?

Ali: If it was discovered that he was cheating, personally I would not respect him ...

§ 10

TN: Is there any other way in which a person can show courage?

Ali: I think if he masters his fears and if his motive is a good one, then he is courageous ...

TN: All these situations which you have mentioned now have to do with physical courage. - Could you show courage in any

other kind of situation where it is not a question of enduring pain and such things?

Ali: Yes, I remember one of the religious men, he gave me an example and said that the man or woman who has overcome a temptation to sin is courageous -. And I confess I do not understand his meaning.

TN: What is the word for courage here?

Ali: It is *shajā'a*.

TN: That is the usual word, isn't it?

Ali: Yes.

TN: You don't think he shows courage?

Ali: No.

Ibrahim: I think it could be considered as courage, if we consider the temptation itself as a kind of danger . . .

TN: Can one show courage if one does not feel any fear?

Ibrahim: As for the case of the man who fears nothing, I think it is still found in the Sudanese society. Some people, or most of them, think that the man who fears nothing . . . is considered as courageous, not as some people say he is foolhardy or rash . . . He is considered as courageous.

TN: But you disagree?

Ibrahim: Yes, I really disagree, because I think that the man who fears nothing is similar to the child, because the child or the baby also fears nothing. Because if you just pass to him, say, a snake or anything dangerous, he would hold it . . . And the same case, I think, applies to the man who fears nothing . . .

§ 12

(Story about a man who killed a "tiger" (leopard) and lost three fingers.)

TN: What do you think about it yourselves?

Ibrahim: He is courageous, I think.

Ali: His motive was noble. His motive was to protect the village and so it is courage.

§ 13

TN: Can one show courage in opposing the government or in a situation which does not involve any physical danger?

Ali: If one follows and defends his principles -- is courageous. -- I know a man in Atbara, a worker -- but he is a Communist --

and he was sent to prison many times, but he is still praised /?/ as a courageous man. Though people do not always think of him as a courageous man. They say that he is – good for nothing. But I think he is courageous.

TN: But people don't think that?

Ali: Yes.

Ibrahim: I think the Sudanese have not yet reached the stage to appreciate what principles are, what one means by saying that a man should stand firmly besides his principles, and so on. ---

§ 14

TN: What do the families think of the students' strikes?

Ibrahim: Well, as I said, most of the Sudanese families, at least those who are living in the rural areas, do not understand these things. They think we do not differentiate between what is called political and nonpolitical issues. They think that if you just keep going on in the future with the study course and so on, this is better.

(Most people do not understand what is meant by 'academic freedom' and so on. But Ali's and Ibrahim's fathers would accept their decision to go on strike.)

Ibrahim: In most cases this is really the standpoint which every Sudanese families hold: that every student should keep to his job as a student, if he finishes his study-course and so on ... But I think there are some families who understand the problem – I mean those who are a bit enlightened, who have education and so on, they understand the problem. And so I think the students who belong to such families would not find much trouble in convincing the family -- But in most cases people are convinced. Because not only this – they do respect what you say. Because they think that you are a well-grown-up man, you have enough education. So they give you support in this sense. But they may be not convinced.

§ 15

TN: The kind of courage which is appreciated is physical courage, not moral courage, not courage in defending principles?

Ali: Yes.

Ibrahim: I don't think that I agree with that, because -- people standing behind their principles. If they live in a village, they do stick to certain principles. For example, keeping one's family

within limits of behaviour, not to let one of his family members misbehave. This is a principle, and they do stand behind it, very strongly. This is besides other principles: generosity, and hospitality, and so on. They do this to the extent that they will do everything to safeguard this.

2. Interview with Ali and Osman, December 11, 1963

§ 16

(Ali said that the conflict between the university and the government over the constitution of the university (see ch., 6, sec. 3) could be solved if the government referred the question to the Central Council.)

Ali: And there it may fail. So they – by this way their *karāma* is not wounded. I mean – they still – they have their *karāma*. They themselves, they do not withdraw the decision. But they say that – you see this is freedom /?/ – and so this is not passed by the Central Council; O. K. then, we leave it. I heard that is the rumour – I am not quite sure. – – –

§ 17

TN: Do you think that it would be against your *karāma* to work on the fields?

Osman: No.

TN: Why don't you do it then?

Ali: Some of them –.

Osman: We try. Usually when we go home we – we show our wish to go and work with the people there on the farms. But personally, my father tells me that it is not – it is none of your business. You go and read. You have your work, and we also have our work. I have no right to interfere. So I don't go and work on farms.

Ali: But I believe that most of them don't like manual work. They don't want to work with their hands. And they prefer to work in the offices instead.

TN: What's wrong with manual work?

Ali: There is a common –. I mean –.

Osman: They just think it is tedious – it is hard. They are – – When a person goes to the farm and work from seven to eleven and he comes back. He has his breakfast, he can do nothing. He just goes to sleep and – and awake about two o'clock and have

his lunch, wait until it is four and goes back to the farm and comes at sunset and he can do nothing. He can't read. If he wants to read. He will be tired and he will just stay awake up to eight o'clock, and then goes asleep. ---

§ 18

Osman: I think what is important is money. If you can get a good amount of money, you may work, you may do manual work, if you are paid for that. But if you are not paid, you won't accept, because most of the students they say that we don't get any help from our parents, and so we should work during the vacation and get some money to buy our clothes and some money to -- during our course in the university.

§ 19

TN: Are people respected because they are wealthy?

Ali: Yes. From ancient times, this is the truth /?/. - People are respected for their wealth.

Osman: I don't think it is true. Because a person who - is respected for his wealth is the one who spend this - his money - on things which --. I mean if he can give his money to everybody who is need of the money. This may have people's respect. But the miser - the miser is not respected at all. And even if he is in need of help, nobody will go and help him.

§ 20

TN: What kinds of jobs do the students want to get when they leave the university? What are the best jobs? (It depends upon which faculty they come from. As for the faculty of Arts:)

Ali: From the students I talked to, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seems to be most attractive. - And the Ministry of Interior. Local Government.

TN: Why are those most popular?

Ali: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives a good chance to go abroad. To know different people, to change views. And this will help the student /?/ to judge his own country.

TN: And what is the advantage of Local Government?

Ali: People who go to Local Government /?/ will be transferred to other towns, small towns, not around Khartoum. And you have a house and a car and - authority.

TN: But don't the students want to live in Khartoum rather than in a small town?

Osman: They prefer that. And with regard to what the student wants to do when he leaves the university, I think the students may be classified into two categories. I think some of them are people who think they have a cause or have some end to further, which they are aiming at. And these of course will go to the departments where they can serve the cause which they are aiming at. And the other categories are those who only want to have a great amount of money, and buy a car and a house, and enjoy /?/ themselves. And these will go to the governmental departments where they can -- and they may not work with the government. They go to the companies, because there they get high salaries.

TN: Are there many students who are more interested in a cause than in earning money?

Osman: No, not very many. Not very many. This what appears to me. But I don't know what is really going in their minds, whether they just pretend to have or to look as if they serving certain causes.

§ 21

TN: What would you like to do yourself when you leave the university?

Osman: I prefer to go and -- to go and teach.

TN: Yes. In a secondary school?

Osman: Secondary schools.

TN: In the Three Towns or --?

Osman: Anywhere. -- It doesn't matter where I live. And I think that I can go and teach.

TN: Why do you want to teach?

Osman: In fact, in every governmental department you go, there is a corruption. There is corruption. And a graduate like ourselves when he goes, he had to work under people who may impose upon him things which he does not accept, and he should agree to that because it is his seniors' orders. And I think in the Ministry of Education such things do not happen. And so I -- we hear that if you go for example to the Ministry of -- Local Government -- the corruption there is too prominent or too great. And you have to accept bribes and if you don't accept, you may be transferred or all the people with whom you are working may be against you.

TN: What kind of corruption is there?

Osman: Bribes and you should join people in what they do. Of course, if they do drink or gamble or anything which you don't accept or you don't believe in.

TN: Who gives bribes?

Osman: People. Contractors, and customers.

TN: All these tenders which are advertised?

Osman: Yes. Yes.

TN: Do you think that there are bribes in connection with those tenders?

Osman: Yes. Really, they are. And so, I think, I – I am a Muslim and I don't accept that. And so I go to the Ministry of Education where nobody can bribe me and nobody can interfere. And I can read also /?/.

§ 22

TN: But you think that most of the students wouldn't mind taking bribes?

Osman: No, they wouldn't. And some people are preparing for it, from now.

TN: In what ways can they prepare for it?

Osman: Well, they have relatives there in the Ministry of Local Affairs or Local Government, and we go and be appointed and we have two drawers: a drawer for the government, and a drawer for ourselves (laughter), in which we can put what people give us. I heard that from the students.

TN: Do many government officials become rich in this way?

Osman: Yes.

Ali: They have houses and cars and –.

TN: They build big houses –.

(Laughter.)

Ali and Osman: Yes.

Ali: It is even the minister who says that they take bribes /?/.

TN: And they couldn't build those big houses on their salaries, I suppose?

Ali: Yes. – – –

§ 23

TN: Do you think that your moral ideas have changed very much since you came to the university? During these years which you have spent in the university? Have you noticed any changes

in your outlook? Or do you think that your ideas are rather the same as five years ago?

Osman: I don't think there is any change, but I think I have come to understand what I just received as a dogma from my teachers in the secondary schools and what I also received from my parents, and I have come to understand my moral beliefs more clearly and – vigourously /?/.

TN: Is there anything you have come to disagree with of the traditional beliefs?

Osman: No, there is no complete disagreement with what I believe -- But there may be disagreement to what people think. These Muslims /?/. People in the rural areas, for instance.

TN: Could you mention some examples where you disagree with those popular beliefs?

Osman: For example, what we have discussing with you now, and what I have written on – that essay which I handed to you. For example, generosity and courage. Even when I were in the secondary schools, I believed what people in the rural areas believe in these virtues, courage and generosity, and I also mixed generosity and courage with extravagance and rashness. But here I begin to know that there is a great difference between generosity and extravagance and rashness and courage.

§ 24

TN: What do the people do which you would consider as extravagant?

Osman: For example, if you just spend your money on things which are not necessary for your living or if you give money to people who not need them and if you just spend money because you want people to say that you are generous.

TN: Do people do that?

Osman: Yes.

TN: What do people buy then which is not necessary?

Osman: For example, if I have a Morris Minor, for motor-car, and this will do the work for me, and is in good condition, there is no need to go and buy a Taunus motor-car or a Zephyr motor-car. I think it is not necessary.

TN: They spend too much money on cars?

Osman: Yes. And, for example, if I can buy things from a nearby market, there is no need to come to Khartoum and buy my things and say that I just brought this from Khartoum and

bought such-and-such from Khartoum. And I think this is not necessary.

§ 25

Ail: During these five years, my moral views /?/ are changed. What is the use of education if they are not changed? I mean, the student /?/ knows more than he knew before. So there must be a change.

TN: Yes, but have you changed your ideas about right and wrong? You may get a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the moral rules, as you said, but have you actually changed your moral outlook? Have you noticed that you disagree with your father, for instance? Or with your family? Or with the people in your town or village on any particular points? On what is right and wrong, on what is good and bad? Or do you always agree with your father?

Ali: Of course, I don't. He is not from my generation. Of course, the concept of right and wrong, of good and bad, differs from one generation to another. But Osman mentioned that about generosity and courage. And there may be a difference about honour.

§ 26

TN: In what ways does the conception of honour differ?

Ali: You see, honour, when it is confined to women, for example. I remember in the – I wrote a story about it in my essay also – One of the friends of my father described an omda ('*umda*) of the Ja'aliyya tribe as an honourable man. And when asked for the reason, he said that this omda once noticed that the man who was on a ladder repairing his house – the omda's house – tried to glance over toward the women. And the omda took his gun and shot the man down.

TN: And that was honourable?

Ali: Yes.

TN: What is the Arabic word?

Ali: Of course, there are /?/ differences, but here you can say it is concerned with the '*ird*.

TN: Yes. Not with the *sharaf* or *karâma*?

Ali: It is also, because, you see, this honour, the subdivisions of honour, the *karâma*, it is difficult to differentiate between them, because sometimes the honour, honour is used for '*ird* and '*ird*

for honour, and so on. And that this omda does not allow his women to go by day. If they, the women who want to go to some relatives, they go by the night and he goes in front of them.

TN: And you disagree with this?

Ali: Yes. You don't think it is honourable.

3. Interview with Ali, December 16, 1963

527 Ali: The first example I will give you about *karāma* happened to me last year. You see, when people are accused of flattering other people to get something from them, people say that he has no *karāma*. Now, this story, I didn't tell – I mean, just my friends, my close friends – but I am going to tell you this as an example. (The story is left out here for confidential reasons.) ---

TN: Do you think that he accused you of flattery in front of somebody else with the deliberate intention of insulting you?

Ali: In front of the other person. Of course, I wouldn't accept his insult even if I was alone. But it was worse to be in front of another person. ---

(Ali thought that the reason why Y wanted to insult him was that Y himself felt that Ali had insulted him.)

TN: So *he* felt insulted?

Ali: He felt insulted.

TN: And so he wanted to insult you?

Ali: Yes. – I couldn't forget, I mean, the story, but – so I – I went to X and told him the story. --- (Details left out here.)

TN: What did he advise you?

Ali: "You see, you have to treat him like your father, and that if your father insulted you, I mean, you are not going to insult him". I said, I didn't insult him. But I wouldn't even accept my father's insult. You see, I have to respect my father, and he has to respect me. (Some further details omitted.)

§ 28

TN: Would you say that this affected your *karāma* or your *sharaf*?

Ali: As I told you, the meanings of the words is not definite.

TN: But if you would describe it to somebody in Arabic, would you say that –.

Ali: Yes, I would say that – *karāma*, not *sharaf*. Yes, I would say that my *karāma* is wounded.

§ 29

TN: Do you think Y could have apologized to you?

Ali: To have apologized to me?

TN: Yes.

Ali: No, I don't think. I don't expect that, because he is older, and also, it will affect his *karāma* if he comes to apologize to me. Even if he is wrong. The older people – the old people – even if there are clashes between two brothers, it is expected that even that the older brother is wrong, that the younger one should come and apologize to the older one.

TN: So your father would never apologize to you for having insulted you?

Ali: No, I don't think.

TN: Would you apologize to him, for having insulted him?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Has that happened to you?

Ali: Between me and my mother, but not my father. Sometimes, she didn't see – she misunderstands me or something like that so I – I apologize.

§ 30

TN: Do you remember any incident which you could tell about? Of such a clash occurring between you and your mother?

Ali: In fact, one of them, you see, concerns marriage. And – I mean – usually parents, as you know, in this country decide everything for their son, even the wife, which is very strange. So – the mother says to the son, "You see, I have a bride for you". And she begins to describe this bride, and the bride may be his cousin's daughter, I mean, his uncle's daughter or so – or his aunt's daughter. But once I told her that I wouldn't marry this girl. You see, I –.

TN: So your mother planned to marry you to somebody?

Ali: Yes.

TN: But not your father?

Ali: Not my father, yes. You see, my father, he seems to me not like all other fathers because other fathers force their sons to marry. But my father – he told me, I mean, you can marry any girl. I am not going to force to. But still my mother was planning something. So I have to stop her, I mean, from the beginning. I am not to marry this girl. I am going to choose my own wife in

my own way. I am not going to marry as my father married or as my grandfather married. And so she was very angry.

TN: What did she say?

Ali: I mean, what is the difference between you and other sons? That son and that son accept it. There is no difference between you and them.

TN: Did you apologize to her afterwards?

Ali: Yes, I have to apologize, of course, because, you see, she was angry, and I know that even if I explain to her all these things that – that the concept of marriage change from generation to generation. But she wouldn't understand that. I mean, I have to marry like all others. – – –

§ 31

TN: Do the students usually object when their parents plan a marriage for them, or do you think that most students would accept it?

Ali: You see, in fact, I don't blame the parents. I blame the chaps, I mean, the sons. Because he accepts that. And, last – last September, I heard a very strange story. You see, one of the students here was going abroad to proceed with his lectures – with his studies, and he was taken by the university. And he went to – he is a relative, by the way, to Z – he went to the relatives there, to say good-bye, because he is leaving. "So", he say, "you are leaving. So you have to marry. That's your wife". They prepared the whole thing, they decided the whole thing, without asking him, without asking the girl, and he has just to go to his wife. And he accepted that. He didn't say anything.

TN: Why did he accept it?

Ali: You see, he said that I don't protest against my father since I was a little boy, and so I have to accept everything he says. Even in these matters. I means, it is not easy to – – people. I mean, you are going to live your whole life with this wife. You don't know her, you don't – you don't know anything about her. So why did you accept that? "It is what I have to do", he said. "I have to accept". He left her here, and he left for London.

§ 32

Ali: – Another story, interesting to me also: One of the students told me that his uncle wrote a letter to the student's father, and he said that, "Now the daughter, my daughter, is young, I mean,

and so, she is a gift – a gift! – to your son Hassan”. And when the father asked the student Hassan, I mean “Do you accept that? Do you marry her?” he said yes.

TN: Without having seen her?

Ali: He didn't see her. Never, I mean. Never in his life. You see. And he doesn't know anything about her, whether she is ugly, beautiful, had education, I mean, everything which concerns her. He doesn't know anything.

TN: Why did he accept?

Ali: He said, “My uncle said, ‘She is a *gift*, and you have to accept the gift”.

TN: What would have happened if he had not accepted?

Ali: Most probably, his uncle would be very angry.

TN: Would he feel insulted? Would his *karāma* be affected?

Ali: Yes, yes. You see, if you – if one – if a person wants to marry a girl, and he goes to her family asking for her hand, everything also is decided for the girl, although the whole thing concerns the girl, but she is not asked or anything. Everything is decided by her father. If the father refused, then the chap will feel that his *karāma* is wounded.

TN: Would the girl feel wounded too?

Ali: The girl? Not the girl. The one who comes to ask her.

TN: If everything was arranged and the boy refused, what would the girl say?

Ali: I think – I think, also her *karāma* would be wounded. But of course, she doesn't tell anybody, except her nearest friends or – “Why did he refuse to marry me?” And so on.

§ 33

TN: Is this the usual thing for the students that the parents marry the sons and daughters?

Ali: Yes. Mostly, I think.

TN: Have you got any friends who have married on their own?

Ali: Yes, I have one. You see, I have got one. And he is the only one. In fact, I mean, all my relatives they are --. But what people think about them: My relatives, I mean, they don't like that. I mean, you have, what they say, you have to cover your own pot not to go and cover other people's pots. You understand that? I mean, the girl is considered as the other pot. I mean, if you don't marry her, she may lose her *'ird* or behave badly or so. So you have to protect her – I mean, you have to protect the

girls of the family. . . . I mean, covering pots, as I said, you have to marry the girls from your family. That is better.

TN: It is better to marry somebody from your own family than –?

Ali: And not to go outside. Yes.

TN: And this is what they mean by covering your own pot?

Ali: Covering your own pot, yes. Before covering other people's pots.

TN: Yes. Why is it better?

Ali: I mean, who is going to marry you – if – most people think this is the right thing – I mean, this family thinks that it is better to marry from their' own family – who is going to marry the girls in your family? And how they expect you to marry from your own family!

§ 34

TN: Are you going to do that?

Ali: No, I am not going to do that.

TN: Why not?

Ali: You see, all the – or most of the girls from my family are unmarried, most of them, and those who are not yet married are very young. And even if they are ready for marriage, I am not going to marry from them, because – I mean – I think that the girl should have completed her secondary education and education standard and – and other things, I mean, I demand many things, which is not easy to find in my family. But again, you see, the difficulty is that – I won't know – and this is the difficulty of most – I mean – educated people in this country – they don't want to marry as their fathers married or their grandfathers married – to leave the whole thing, I mean, for their families to decide. They want to know the girl they are going to marry, to know her manners, her interests, to know her personally, to be in touch with her. And this is not easy, because, I mean, of course, that is easy in the family circle, and you can go to your uncle, you talk with the girls and so on. But it is not easy to find a girl outside the family, because, you see, you are not allowed to go in and talk to them.

§ 35

TN: What happens if the girl goes out on her own?

Ali: If they discover that, they may not allow her to go again. They may punish her for that. By lashing her – and some of the

girls – you see, for in that way, she is wounding her family's *karāma*. And it is generally believed that whenever a man and a woman meet, the Devil is the third. Something bad is going to happen.

TN: How do you meet a girl to marry, then?

Ali: I said, that is the difficulty.

TN: Somebody in the university perhaps?

Ali: Yes.

TN: That is the easiest way /?/.

Ali: That is the easiest way, yes. Or a friend.

§ 36

TN: Do you know of any occasion when a student has been insulted by a lecturer in the university?

Ali: Yes, I remember, in the classroom, that the lecturer was lecturing and I remember Abdulla, he was sitting and he didn't write anything, he was just sitting, listening, and the lecturer came and said, "Have you a secretary to write to you? Why don't you take notes?" And Abdulla felt that he was insulted. So he left the room. And when the same lecturer – one of the boys came late, and the lecturer said to him – it was in the morning – and he said, "Would you like coffee or tea?"

TN: Did he look sleepy or –?

Ali: He just came late. – And so the student left the room.

TN: Was this an Arabic lecturer?

Ali: Yes.

Ali: Yes. To be insulted in front of the boys, and the girls.

§ 37

Ali: And even a worker is ready to sacrifice his work. In the Sudan Railways, a station-master, he was on duty, and his senior told him to do something. He was busy, and told another man to do it, because he was busy. And it seemed that the other man didn't do it. So this senior came, and in front of the people said the station-master, "Didn't I tell to do that thing?" He said, "I was busy, and I told somebody to do it. And he didn't." So the senior was angry and began to insult him: "You are not seeing your work – You are not – You are not –". The station-master got angry too. And he said, "What are you going to do? I said, I told somebody to do it, and he didn't, I was busy. Do

anything you like. Dismiss me, or do anything you like to do.” And in the morning – This station-master told me that in the morning the senior called for him and apologized.

TN: Because he insulted him in front of the other people?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Would he have apologized to him if he had said it to him privately?

Ali: I don't think so. If he did it privately, I don't think he would apologize. – To insult him privately? He wouldn't accept that, but to insult him in front of people, it is worse.

§ 38

TN: Do have the same ideas about *karāma* as your father and mother have? Or have you noticed sometimes that you have different ideas about *karāma*?

Ali: In some cases, I think yes. You see, in the marriage ceremony, if the bridegroom is your relative and he didn't invite you to come, you will not go. My father may excuse him for that and say, “Because I am his relative, he didn't invite me”, and he goes. But I don't think I go.

TN: Why wouldn't you go?

Ali: Because I am not invited.

TN: Would it be undignified to go anyway?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Any other point where you have noticed a difference?

Ali: You see, it is difficult to remember some examples.

§ 39

TN: Do you feel that you agree generally with your parents on moral questions?

Ali: ... Take an example – of cigarettes. My father considers it as impolite to smoke in front of him. And even my older brother, he doesn't smoke in front of my father. And certain relatives. I mean – it seems to me strange not to smoke in front of a father.

TN: Yes. Do you do it?

Ali: I don't do it, but inside I feel, I mean, it has nothing to do with respect. It seems to me strange.

TN: Have you tried to explain it to him?

Ali: To my father?

TN: Yes.

Ali: No, I didn't. But he knows I smoke, I mean. And he knows that my brother also smokes.

§ 40

TN: You said before that 'ird, decency, applies mainly to women.

Ali: Yes.

TN: Why is that?

Ali: It may be applied to men, but mainly it is applied to women. Because they think that – most people think that virginity is very important. And you find that also in the essay that virginity is described as the match-wood: "once you strike it, it is no use". If the girl commits adultery --.

§ 41

TN: I have read somewhere about an old traveller's report – a German who came to the Sudan – I think, in the 17th century. And one day, his host – a man – killed his sister because she had been indecent, immoral. Do you think this could happen nowadays?

Ali: In towns, I don't think it will happen. But in villages and countryside, it does happen. And the one who commits – this is what they call the criminal – the moral crime of the girl – is also sometimes killed. By the relatives of the girl. And in most cases in – one who is going to marry – he doesn't marry a girl who lost her 'ird. And if he discovers that she is not virgin in his first night with the girl when they are married, he will divorce her.

TN: So 'ird for women means mainly virginity?

Ali: Mainly virginity. But if she is a girl, also, her conduct was not good, and it is also said that she has no 'ird.

TN: And this is not important for boys?

Ali: In case of homosexuality.

TN: Does a boy get a bad reputation →

Ali: Of course, he does. And the middle man – I don't know the English word for it – who prepares for the meeting with the girl and boys, or boys and boys, it is also said that he has no 'ird.

TN: Are there people who do this?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Do they get money for it?

Ali: Of course, they get some money for it.

§ 43

TN: I am not clear about when a person is said to be *muhadhdhab*. What does the word *muhadhdhab* mean?

TN: It is considered to be very important to be *muhadhdhab*?

Ali: I mean – to behave politely, to be – of course.

TN: In what ways can one be not – *muhadhdhab*?

Ali: Just to do bad things and to behave badly. – The boy who insults the older people is said not to be polite, not *muhadhdhab*. It has to do with good manners, mainly.

TN: One interesting point which Ibrahim mentioned is that one shouldn't do anything unnecessarily. One shouldn't talk too much, one shouldn't go about too much – unless one has some definite purpose. Do you agree with this?

Ali: You see, in one of the newspapers, when one wrote about this point, they think he is right to some extent because he – people in this country talk too much and even – you noticed that in their *salām* (greeting). It takes about five minutes or six minutes, greeting each other. And I have a cousin who goes on for about a quarter of an hour, greeting you all the time. Chattering and then greeting, chattering and greeting. . . .

TN: But talking much is not generally disapproved of, is it?

Ali: No. I don't think.

TN: What do people think of one who talks very much?

Ali: Of course, they consider that as a disadvantage. They talk about him, and they gossip about him. They say, "He talks too much". And so on.

TN: What does it mean not to do anything unnecessarily?

Ali: I don't know what Ibrahim means by this. ---

§ 45

TN: In what ways have your ideas about generosity changed during your university years?

Ali: I mean, I disagree with this – too much courage. You see, people in this country, when they are generous, they don't think about economics at all. And it is true that the Koran recommends generosity. But not in the way in which it is manifested. The statement from the Koran says, "And don't let thy hands be fettered to thy neck. Open it with all openness lest you sit in rebuke and beggary". Another point is that one of the bad consequences of this – too much generosity – is that it leads to idleness. In the – I mean – you see – in a *khalwa* (guesthouse) in

the villages, you find these crazy devotees who depend on the living on the generosity of the people. I mean, they don't work, they don't do anything.

TN: What do the villagers think about that?

Ali: Oh, they think that is good. And if you go to a village to one of your relatives there, and you get up in the morning, you find that most of the people, they come with their teas. And you have to drink from each tea.

TN: They come to the *khalwa*?

Ali: No, to the person you are staying with.

TN: Yes. But don't they, the people in the village, object to having people living with them all the time without doing anything? Don't they grumble about it?

Ali: You see, even here in the towns you find some of the relatives staying with the relatives here that don't do anything. They eat and drink and – go about.

TN: And that is accepted by everybody?

Ali: Sometimes, they accept that.

TN: So it is not considered bad not to have a job?

Ali: Of course, it is considered bad. But – I mean – they are not going to talk to this man who is staying with them and say, “Go and search for work”, and anything like that. But they don't like that.

§ 46

TN: Would your relatives come and stay with you if you get a house in Khartoum?

Ali: Most of the people who come here to town are – I mean, they come from outside, I mean, from the villages. And of course, they don't think that life here is more complicated and – they think, the same. So they, they just take it easy, without knowing what will happen to his family. And some of my relatives here, they are living in a house near the station, the railway-station, and whenever I go to them, I find visitors. They stay with them for seven days, fifteen days. The others come to, just to go about town and spend their vacation here. Or they come for medical treatment, and so on. And though the family, this family, they always complain. But they don't say anything to the visitors. If they say anything, of course, the visitor will feel that his *karāma* is wounded.

TN: Yes. But have you changed your views on this topic?

Ali: Yes, I said that I disapprove of this, too much generosity.

§ 47

TN: What about *karāma*, dignity, have you changed your views about that too?

Ali: No, I don't think I –.

TN: So you think the changes are about courage and generosity?

Ali: Generosity, yes. Honour, in the sense of '*ird*', also. Of course, I think that people in this country are being too hard on women. They are extremist in this point. They are to give the girl some freedom. You see, in Atbara, if you take your wife to the cinema or the theatre – there is no theatre there – but if you take your wife to the cinema – you see, in the morning, all people will talk about you.

TN: So you can't take her to the cinema?

Ali: Yes. Yes.

TN: But in Khartoum, you can, can't you?

Ali: In Khartoum, you can, yes. And people who come from Atbara to Khartoum with their wives, they take them to gardens, to the cinema, to the theatre. There is a collection –. The town consists of many tribes, and no-one cares about it.

TN: So there are only men in the cinemas in Atbara? Or are there any women at all?

Ali: There are some who take their women. But, I mean, not as here in Khartoum. And even my brother, my cousin, they don't take them to the cinema.

TN: Because it would affect their *sharaf* or –?

Ali: Not the *sharaf*, but, you see, people – they say, he takes his wife to the cinema, and they begin to gossip about him. And about his wife. They don't like that. And one of my relatives who get married – who got married last September, he was protesting against this. And he says to them, "Why don't you take them, their wives?" And they don't think he will now, when he is married. I wrote a letter to him. I said, "You will not find it easy there, but it is easier in Khartoum".

§ 48

TN: What would your family say if you went to Britain and married a British girl?

Ali: Of course, they don't like that. As I told you before, even

if you go to marry outside the family, a Sudanese girl outside the family, they disapprove of that. What would be the case if you go outside the contry and marry a foreigner! And they think that if you marry a woman -. Of course, they think of many disadvantages of this marriage. They say, "What will happen to the children? Are they going to be Christians or Muslims? And this girl you marry, she has a different traditions, different customs."

TN: What if you marry an Egyptian girl or a Lebanese girl who is Muslim? Would the family be more ready to accept such a marriage?

Ali: You see, this is what my mother says when she is joking with me. This is what mother says. You can marry an Arab girl, a Muslim girl. But this *naṣrāni* -. To be -. I mean, you know the meaning of *naṣrāni*? Christian.

TN: You mean, she should not be *naṣrāni*?

Ali: Yes.

TN: But does this have anything to do with *karāma* or *sharaf*?

Ali: If you take it - in the view /?/ - to marry the girls of the family - to cover her pots - to protect them - in this sense it would be concerned with *ʿird*, and *sharaf*. But of course, the marriage of a foreigner has, I mean, disadvantages I told you about.

§ 49

Ali: The brother of one of the students here in Khartoum was going to Britain and came back. He left his wife there. In London, yes. And when he came back, he didn't tell his parents /?/ about his marriage. And his mother - he was the older son, his mother was very proud in that she goes on talking to the women, that Mohammad is going to marry, and I found him a very beautiful girl, and so on. Of course, she didn't know that he is already married. When he wants to leave and come to Khartoum again, he called his sister and told her that he is married. And his parents were very angry indeed. Now they don't visit him, he doesn't visit them. And everything is finished between them.

TN: Did they feel insulted?

Ali: Of course. Because, you see, he didn't tell them. If I go and marry some - a girl - without telling them, they will be - they will feel they have been insulted.

TN: Why didn't he tell them?

Ali: I don't know.

TN: It would have been much better if he had told them, wouldn't it?

Ali: Personally, yes. To tell them personally, not to tell his sister. And even if he tell them personally, I mean, they won't accept that, of course. Because when he married, he married by himself, he didn't talk to them, he didn't --. He is their son.

§ 50

TN: It seems to me that people are easily insulted in this country. Do you have that feeling?

Ali: ... Easily insulted? But I don't know what you mean by that.

TN: That they often feel insulted.

Ali: ... It seems to me that the kind - acute sensitivity - they are /?/ very sensitive, and he respect other people, and he expect other people to respect him. Not to treat him as an inferior.

TN: People are very much aware of this, aren't they? They are sensitive, aren't they?

Ali: They are sensitive, yes. - And it would be worse, of course, if they are insulted by a foreigner. - You see, last year, some of the students were leaning on the car of Mr. A. And then Mr. A. came, and he found some dirt on the - on his car, and he asked the students, angrily, to bring a bucket of water and wash it. The student said, "I didn't do that". And was very angry. They nearly quarrelled. Mr. A. asked for the name, "What's your name? What's your faculty?" He said, "So and so, in the faculty of medicine. Go anywhere, tell anybody. I didn't do that. I am not ready to bring a bucket of water to wash it. I am not your servant". He didn't accept that, the student.

TN: If one of the Sudanese lecturers would have said that, would it have been different?

Ali: I don't think a Sudanese lecturer would say that. He wouldn't ask him to bring a bucket of water to wash the car. And the student said that he didn't do it. ---

§ 51

TN: Do the students consider it wrong not to work during the year? They don't work very much. They don't read very much, do they?

Ali: Yes, they don't read very much.

TN: Do they have a bad conscience for that?

Ali: Of course, they have, but you see, even if one reads too much, I mean, he doesn't say that I read too much – I don't read. If he passes and -- the student, you see, he told me, he don't read notes, and he passed. If he fails, he will be /?/ excused, you see, he didn't read.

TN: Is this a way of preserving the *karāma*?

Ali: It may –. I am not quite sure. It may be considered –.

TN: Yes. If one fails, does that affect one's *karāma*? Or do they just say *ma'laysh*?

Ali: Of course, they do. They say to each other, "Bad luck". Or "Hard luck".

TN: But they don't feel that their *karāma* suffers from it?

Ali: If he reads too much and fails, they will say the *karāma* is affected. So I know one of the students who – he reads too much, and when he entered the examination he – in the final result, he found himself dismissed. He didn't repeat the year, he didn't try to go abroad, he – but he got a job. And another student who repeated the preliminary year, then passed the intermediate, and it happened that in the third year he also, he has to repeat, he finds it too difficult, I mean, to attend lectures and –.

§ 52

TN: What do you think about repeating a year? Is that a shame for a student or –?

Ali: In the university it is not considered as a shame, but in secondary schools, and intermediate schools, it is, yes. But if he is asked to repeat, I mean, the preliminary year and the third year, it is too difficult for him. --- You see, if you have to repeat once, then it is all right. But twice, it is very difficult. ---

TN: Do they make fun of these who repeat /?/?

Ali: They don't, but when you are absent, of course, the students gossip about you. He repeated the preliminary, and now he is repeating the --.

TN: Yes. What do they say about him?

Ali: Of course, they say that he don't work too much and so on. So he has to repeat the year.

TN: So that is considered to be a bad thing after all?

Ali: To repeat twice, yes.

TN: And if a person doesn't do enough in order to pass, that is also bad, isn't it?

Ali: That is also bad, yes.

§ 53

TN: What if the student works very much, is that considered bad?

Ali: Of course, they make fun of him also.

TN: What do they say?

Ali: They say – the Arabic word is *kabbāb*. That is bookish.

TN: What should one do instead of studying too much?

Ali: As I told you that if you – you – you are not to show that you are working too much. Because if you pass, then what the students will say, they say that, “You see, he doesn’t work too much, and he passes. He is intelligent”. If he didn’t pass, if he failed, they would say, they would find an excuse for him. So the student thinks that it is a safe-guard not to show them that he is working too much.

§ 54

TN: What should the students do instead in the afternoons? If they don’t read, what should they do? What are they expected to do, by their comrades?

Ali: To go to the club, to the cinema. And if you go to work in the library between five and eight and then after supper up to ten and a half – they don’t think it is – of course, inside they think, “That is good”. But – you have to go, after supper, to the cinema and do other things. You see, in the intermediate, I was – we were two in one room. And it happened that for two or three days, my partner doesn’t see my face, I don’t see his face. After lunch, he goes around the rooms talking and so, I come to my room to take some rest, and then, at five, I go to the library. And after five, he comes to the room. In supper, we don’t usually meet, because we are sitting at different tables. After supper, I go to the library, and I don’t know where he goes. Sometimes he goes to the cinema and sometimes he /?/ goes to some bar. And, by the way, fifty percent of the students, they go to bar, they drink, and so on. When I come at ten, I sleep. He comes and finds me sleeping. In the morning I get up, I found him sleeping, I go to the lecture, and he is still asleep. He doesn’t go to the lectures from seven to ten, he doesn’t go at all. And at the end, he failed, and he has to repeat the year. He passed, and I hear that he also failed again. In his third year, and he was dismissed. So he was making fun of me, you see. I don’t meet him for three days and five days. – – –

4. Interview with Osman, December 23, 1963

§ 55

TN: Well, let us start with generosity and hospitality.

Osman: All right.

TN: How would a stranger be received if he came to your village?

Osman: A stranger – he may know someone in the village and go straight to him or he may just come to the first house he arrives at. And the owner of the house will receive him and will take him to what they call *khalwa* or house usually situated a bit further from the family house where they receive guests.

TN: Has every family got a *khalwa*?

Osman: Yes. But today they just join the *khalwa* to the family house, but they make what we call a *hawsh* which separates the guest house from the family house. The guest first – if the guest came by motor-car or any other means of transport, of course, he will be given – usually, they – they – they give him first water – *sharbāt*, for example, just lemon, lemon – or they give him Pepsi-Cola, if they – if the village is a bit modern. And after that they, they bring in tea or coffee. In villages, usually they bring both tea and coffee. They don't ask the guest whether he likes coffee or tea. They bring first tea, and then they bring coffee.

TN: And is the guest expected to drink both?

Osman: Yes. And they don't bring just what is sufficient for the guest – all the people present or the members of the house or the family who come to receive the guest, they usually come and chatter or – with him, and they all drink with him both tea and coffee. And if the guest came in the morning, they will bring breakfast after that, and also after breakfast they bring both tea and coffee. When the guest says that he wants to leave because he is on business, sometimes they say, "No, you must wait and have lunch here, and then go and do your business". If they are reasonable, they may, of course, excuse him and let him go. But sometimes they may swear and – they swear in *ṭalāq* (divorce).

§ 56

TN: What does it mean?

Osman: If a person says '*alay al-ṭalāq* (I swear to divorce my wife) –

'alay al-ṭalāq – this means that if you didn't obey him or give his demand or such thing, his wife will be divorced.

TN: Has it happened in your village that anybody has divorced his wife for this reason?

Osman: No – when – a person may swear upon you to – by God or by the Prophet or by any other thing, and you may say, “I can't stay”. But if he says *'alay al-ṭalāq*, you must stay. You can't –.

TN: Has anybody actually divorced his wife?

Osman: No. For this reason – I don't know. But even in Sharia the Mohammedans' traditions, if a person – a person cannot divorce his wife in such a way. Divorce is not easy. Unless you bring two witnesses, one the wife herself, and you say, “Please, witness, I – I divorce my wife”. But in such way they –.

TN: So it is just a way of expressing one's feelings?

Osman: Yes.

TN: They don't intend to do it?

Osman: No.

TN: Could they say *ḥarām* (It is forbidden)?

Osman: Yes, *ḥarām*, and *ṭalāq* also. It is the same. But you see, in *sharī'a*, this is not a divorce at all. Both of them, *ḥarām* and *ṭalāq*. And the difference between *ṭalāq*: *ṭalāq* is just divorce, but *ḥarām* it means that if somebody says that – swears that he would abstain from something for ever; this means *ḥarām*. And this is the difference. If he says *ḥaram*, or *'alay al-ḥarām*, *zay* (=like) *'alay al-ṭalāq*, *'alay al-ṭalāq* means divorce. *'alay al-ḥarām* means I will withstay from going to the house or be with my wife for ever. If you don't stay. For example. This is the difference.

TN: Do you think that this is real hospitality when they force the guests to do things like this?

Osman: No. Of cour – I myself don't think that it is real hospitality. And I do – when I go home and my father wants to say *'alay al-ḥarām* or *'alay al-ṭalāq* to a guest, I say “No, please. Of course, the guest knows that he has a business and knows what is in his interest. So you can't compel him or – to stay by saying *'alay al-ṭalāq* or *'alay al-ḥarām*”. But, you see, the old type, we call them the old type, or the people in our fathers' age – sometimes they – when they have no business, they say, “Oh, I have a business, I can't stay”, because I want to examine whether this man is hospitable or not. Or generous or not. He may – you may invite him to – to some tea. And he may stay.

And when you bring the tea, he said, "Oh, I don't have tea; I don't drink tea". And he just wants to examine you, or to examine your hospitality. And you say, "Oh, please, do, do drink". He say, "No, I don't drink tea". And he swear to him by God or by any other — and he refuses. But when he *'alay al-ṭalāq* or *'alay al-ḥarām*, he drinks. I say, "Why didn't you say it from the start?"

§ 58

TN: I have heard the following story. Somebody arrived at a village near Wad Medani at night. He was a stranger. And he was very well received, and he was given a house to stay in overnight. And then the host he was staying with sent him his daughter to entertain him during the night. Have you heard of anything like that?

Osman: Never. And this would not happen at all. I don't believe think. This does not happen at all. And even if the guest tried to do anything or to enter to the family's quarters, he will be beaten and driven away in the middle of the night.

TN: But he didn't try to enter the family's quarters. The girl was sent to him.

Osman: No, no, no, no. This would never happen. This would never happen at all. At least, I didn't hear of it in the whole of my life. And all the people would not agree with that if they hear —. And if the person who told you this story himself had been heard by any old man, he may call him by names or strike him or beat him. This never happens at all. So I —. No, it is not true at all. No, no, this would not happen at all. This would not happen. Unless the host is keeping a house for such a mean.

§ 59

TN: If you are offered tea and coffee, and you refuse the tea, for instance, would the host be insulted?

Osman: No, not at all. For example, some people — people in the — in the Buṭāna, they usually drink coffee, they don't drink tea at all. And so when they come as guests to any person they say, "Please, do coffee. I am not interested in tea". And they do coffee. Sometimes the host may say, "Oh, let also tea be made", and the people present will have tea. And you have coffee.

TN: What if the stranger refuses to have luncheon or anything

because he does not have time? Would that be considered as an insult?

Osman: If he a person who usually comes to that family or to that host, and he usually used to say so, of course, this will be an insult, and they will say, "Oh, this person is not generous himself; he refuses to eat or to have tea or coffee with people because he – he does not want people to come and have tea or lunch with him when they come by his village or they come to his house". But if he is really busy, they – they won't – it will not be an insult to the host.

TN: Would he think that you are superior or haughty or something if you refuse to come to him; if you say that you are tired and want to have a sleep?

Osman: Of course, this will be –. They can't make such a judgement unless they have noticed your behaviour, all your behaviour, in the course of your life, you –. If they do see you frequently or so, of course, they may so if you are – if you usually – if you are in the habit or your behaviour implies that you are haughty or snobbery or so /?/.

§ 60

TN: Suppose that a European tourist comes to your village and is given food and so on, and when he goes, he wants to give them two pounds?

Osman: The won't receive it. They won't take the money from him.

TN: Why not?

Osman: They say – of course – when we received you, we received you as a guest. And we never take money from guests or take the cost of what he eat or drink or slept upon.

TN: Would this be an insult?

Osman: Yes. It is an insult.

TN: Does it affect one's *karāma* or *sharaf* or what?

Osman: No, it does not affect – it affects neither – it does not affect any of both, because a person who pays for his food when he comes as a guest, they just may regard him as a person who – especially the European – they regard him as a person who – they may say that Europeans are in the habit of doing this. And, of course, he ignores our customs, so they – it does not affect any *karāma* or *sharaf*.

§ 61

TN: What about the *iḥtirām al-nafs* (self-respect)?

Osman: *Iḥtirām al-nafs*? With regard to this?

TN: Yes. Would it be hurt?

Osman: No. Since the doer of the action or the man who offers the money or gives the money does not know the habits of the people, it will not affect any. But if he is a person from the village or from the near-by villages or from the country, of course, it will affect the – the *karāma* of the host. They say, “We are not –”. They usually say, “We are not gypsies”. We don’t sell our food for money. We just opened these houses or built these houses for guests. They come and have rest and have lunch and have tea and have beds for their – while they are staying – and we don’t charge them any money.

§ 62

TN: Does every house have a guest-house, a *khalwa*?

Osman: Every house?

TN: Yes.

Osman: If you go in the Buṭāna yes. In the Buṭāna every house has a *khalwa*.

TN: Yes. Where is the Buṭāna?

Osman: Between Khartoum and Gedaref and Kassala. In this area. When you have a village, every house has a *khalwa*. Because they are people – you feel as if they are competing on generosity or hospitality. So you can’t come to a person and say, “I am a guest”, and he says, “I haven’t got a *khalwa*. Can I take you to *flān*’s (so-and-so’s) or somebody else’s *khalwa*?” He receives him in his own *khalwa* or house. Sometimes if a person has not got a *khalwa* he may receive you in the family house and drive away the family and say to the – his wife and children, “Please go and stay with the guests – with the neighbour’s family. We must receive this guest”. – – –

§ 63

TN: When people make big marriage-feasts and invite a lot of people, is that because they want to be generous or why do they do that?

Osman: No. These are very strange habit. They do invite them to have money. Yes, that is true.

TN: How?

Osman: Here in – when you – when a person marries, he makes a big feast and invites all the people he knows. And when they come, they do enjoy themselves. Of course, they – they have food and drink. They may stay for a whole day or just for a few hours. And when they want to go or to leave for their homes, they do pay him some money. Yes. Because they say, “Marriage is expensive and this is a kind of help”.

TN: But certainly it is more expensive to give a marriage-feast – ?

Osman: Yes. Sometimes people give the bride-groom or his father a great amount of money.

TN: But certainly you don’t earn money on a marriage? Certainly you lose money, don’t you?

Osman: Yes. You lose. But some people, when they invite – when they marry and make a big feast, they don’t take money from people. They say, “Oh – just we want you to be present and to attend the marriage ceremony, and that is all – we don’t want money”.

TN: Yes. Is it considered as a sign of generosity to give a big feast?

Osman: No. Since you receive money, it is not generosity at all.

§ 64

TN: Do you always receive money in your village?

Osman: Yes.

TN: From the guests at a marriage?

Osman: Yes. And the guests of course prepare for that. They do bring money and say, “Oh, somebody or that person invited us and we must go and attend that feast”. They come and they do chat with the bride-groom and his father and his relatives. And usually they meet all the people they know from the near-by villages or the far villages. And they do chat and discuss something which may be of interest.

TN: But in Khartoum, you do not get gifts from the guests, do you? At a marriage?

Osman: In Khartoum, when they make a tea-party, they don’t take money. But if they make a lunch or a dinner or such, they – of course, you – you do give the money – they – they don’t ask you. If you do come and went without giving any any money, they don’t ask you that you didn’t give money. But you see, when

you yourself make a feast, a marriage-feast, and invite that person to whom you did not give any money, he may come and – and also attend that ceremony, and he may not give you any money. Because you haven't given him. There is no generosity in this.

§ 65

TN: It is very expensive to have a marriage, isn't it?

Osman: In the villages, it is not expensive as in Khartoum. Of course, in Khartoum, there are many things which the – may be needed for marriage which are not recognized in the villages. And so, when you come to marry in the village, you just buy two or three oxen and then seven or six lambs, and just give them for the feast, and that is all.

TN: How many would you invite for a marriage in your village?

Osman: Oh, they will invite, they will invite all the people they know, whether they are in the near-by villages or Khartoum or –.

TN: How many people would usually come to a marriage in your village? A hundred or two hundred or five hundred or –?

Osman: Oh, they – they may be about four or six hundreds. But they don't come at the time /?/. They say, for example, "On Saturday, we invite the people of that or – and that and that village. On Sunday, we invite people of that and that village". And so, at the time, they may come about hundred, hundred and fifty, eighty or ninety.

TN: Yes. Do you think you will do it in the same way when you will marry?

Osman: Yes. My father will insist –. But I just will invite my friends and my colleagues in the university, of course. But my father will invite from the villages.

§ 66

TN: When you give people gifts at the 'īd al-ḍaḥīya (= The Feast of Immolation), is that a sign of generosity?

Osman: Who says that we give gifts –?

TN: Well – what do you do at the 'īd al-ḍaḥīya?

Osman: Oh – every person who is able to buy a ram or – he may buy it and kill that ram and make a small feast. He just invite people. Because it is –. Of course, the story of ḍaḥīya itself, it is a religious story. Do you hear the story? (How Ibrahim was ordered by God to slay his son Ismā'īl; omitted here.) – – –

Osman: And the story runs that if it happened that Ibrahim slayed his son, it will be incumbent upon every Moslem to slay one of his sons on each *ḍaḥīya* day. So this is the *fidā'* (ransom, price, sacrifice). This ram, which is killed on '*īd al-ḍaḥīya*'s day, is the *fidā'*. And so it is not a matter of generosity or – just they are making the *fidā'*. Instead of killing their sons, they are killing a ram. And so they make a small feast and visit people to come and have lunch or have breakfast or such.

TN: So this is a religious duty.

Osman: Yes, it is. Not everybody should kill a ram on '*īd al-ḍaḥīya*'s day – those who can manage to buy one. A religious duty on those who can manage to buy one. So this is the story.

TN: Somebody told me that if you kill a ram, you can send parts of it to your neighbours or friends.

Osman: If your friends could not – or can not manage to buy one, they are poor or such, you do send some of the meat to them.

TN: Is that not a sign of generosity either?

Osman: They may thank you. They may thank you. But they say, "This ram which everybody kills, the meat should not be kept in the house or eaten by the family only. It should be given to the neighbours, and the people who could not manage to buy one or slay one." So it's – it also has something to do with the event of killing the ram itself. Religious also. So there is no generosity here, I think. But also the neighbours may come and thank you.

§ 67

TN: Is there any other way in which one could show one's generosity except by receiving guests and treating them well?

Osman: You just – you show generosity by helping people. . . .

TN: Is generosity the same as hospitality?

Osman: Yes. As far as I – I know it, But I don't know whether are any other sense of generosity. You may help me if you can give some questions which may lead to the answer.

TN: When there was an earthquake at Skoplje in Yugoslavia, people in Sweden started raising money to help those people. Would you regard that as a sign of generosity?

Osman: Yes. Because someone who needs help or in distress, you should help him. If you are generous, you will help him. ---

§ 68

TN: If you have missed a lecture and ask another student to see his lecture notes and he gives you the notes, do you think that that is generous?

Osman: No, I don't know whether this can be called generosity or not. But I – when I speak of him with another friend, I said – I may say, he is co-operating. He is a co-operative friend – he is co-operating with friends. I called him a good friend.

TN: Or if you have been ill for two months and one of your fellow students teaches you what has been done during that time, do you think that he is generous?

Osman: No, he is also co-operating, he is a good friend. I cannot call him generous. Although, of course, he must be called generous if we – – that he gave something.

TN: Well, he gives away quite a lot of time.

Osman: Yes, yes. But you see, I – still, I keep the sense of generosity that I learned from my family –.

TN: Where it is connected with –.

Osman: Yes, with giving money and with hospitality.

§ 69

TN: Do you think that the Baṭāhīn put a greater emphasis on generosity and hospitality than other tribes?

Osman: We – I heard so many people in other tribes being generous. But my father and the people of the tribe – of the Baṭāhīn tribe – will never believe that there are people who can be more generous. That they are – They do say so. Because they say, "We can – even a person can give – anything, to a guest, or to help another". Even he can just be without – without something to eat or something. And they do mention the – the incident of a Baṭāhīn omda – he is living now just –.

TN: What is his name?

Osman: He is called Tāhā.

TN: Yes. Where did he come from?

Osman: He lives in a village – he is now living – he lives in a village called 'Abraq, in the Buṭāna here, north of Khartoum.

TN: Yes. And what is the story about him?

Osman: The story about him – they say – when he receives a guest – he usually – whenever he receives a guest, he do kill a ram for him. If we came together, and we arrived at different

dates, for each one of us – whenever each of one us comes, he kills a ram for him. And they say, once a motor-car, a lorry, was carrying some rams which are not owned by that omda, owned by another – by a passenger. And some people came, and that village – the village where this omda lives – happened to be a station. And when he received his guests, he looked for something to kill for them, a ram or a cow or anything, he didn't find. He went to the market and found this car with rams in it. He just pulled one and brought it and just killed it. When the owner came, he said, "Oh, don't argue. On your way, you might find my – my herd of sheep. You – you can take two or one or three or what you like – I have guests". And another story about him: they say once there came a man who is in need – who needs some money. He came, he stayed for two days and on the third, all around, he didn't find enough money to give him, to give to that man. Here is a horse. The – – when he goes around the place to see if there is no trouble. And he just said " *'alay al-ṭalāq*, take this horse and go and sell it and have some money". And so they say in any tribe, you can't find a man who can give anything – they can just give some of their – of what they have, and they keep enough for their families.

§ 70

TN: Do you think that the people in your village are too generous sometimes? Do they go too far?

Osman: Too generous comes when the – when there comes a guest who is a rich man himself, who is a rich man himself. And they – they used – when – when a person comes there – if he comes on business – a business in the village itself – they don't let him at all pay for anything he wants to do. So I think this – this extravagance is not generosity. The person comes on business and brings his money with him for that business. Why don't you let him for his – for the expenses of his business? So they prevent him, and they do pay for him, for all that business costs. So I think, this – this they are too far – they – they go too far. And another thing I think: when – if you – if you are a relative of mine and come in the village and I have no money, I can't ask, although I know that you have money, and it is nothing to ask you and say, "Oh, please, will you give me five pounds – lend me five pounds, and I – I want to buy so and so and I

will return them when I get some money'. They don't do that. They won't – even if you are my brother – if you are my brother and come as a guest, and I can't ask you to give me some money and go and buy some things. But here in the university, I remember when one of my relatives comes here and I have no money, I say, "Oh, I have no money. So you – you have to pay all the expenses of our travelling through the town and our lunch if we dine outside the university and cinema and such". They see, there is – there is –.

TN: What did he say?

Osman: To him?

TN: No, what did he say?

Osman: He – he – he says nothing. He says, "It is all right. I am quite pleased with you. Because you are frank with me and I want it that way". But there – you can't – you can't do that, in the village. ---

§ 71

TN: If one is not generous, does that affect one's *karāma*? Would you say that a person who is not generous has no *karāma*?

Osman: No, you can't say so.

TN: What would you say about him?

Osman: I – I – I don't know the exact antonym of generosity. They just call him *bakhīl* (greedy).

TN: *Bakhīl*?

Osman: Yes. A person who cannot spend his money except on his own needs.

TN: But you would not say that he has no –?

Osman: No, no, no. It does not affect the other virtues. But if they – if anything – if he – if he does anything good, they can say – they can say, "Oh, he is just pretending. He is just pretending – he is not doing it as a habit", or that he is in the habit of doing such thing because he – his is not generous – he can't do that.

§ 72

TN: If somebody entertains a guest just because he doesn't want other people to talk badly about him, would you say that he is being generous?

Osman: Entertain the guest in what way?

TN: Well, he receives the guest, and he gives him food and tea and coffee and so on. But he does it merely because his neighbours would talk badly of him if he didn't do it.

Osman: (Laughter.) Of course, people always judge the behaviour of people from what they appear to them. They can't recognize that he is afraid of people. Afraid of what people would say about him. Since he receives his guest – who – who would thank him? The guest would thank him. And of course, if you are more generous than me, of course, I – I may not like you.

TN: So the motive doesn't –?

Osman: No, the motive does – does not influence the virtue itself. Because the people do not know that – do not know – they do not know our – they cannot know the motive behind what a person does. But sometimes when they, they note – of course, they – they can discover it, and they can say that he is just a hypocrite.

TN: Yes, yes – . . . Does that matter?

Osman: Yes. If a person just pretends to be generous, people may take him to be – to pretend to – for – for all things, he may say, "Oh, don't believe him, he just pretend, in all that he does or says. If he pretends to be generous".

TN: Yes. Do you know of anybody who behaves in this way?

Osman: (Laughter.) -- I – don't know exactly somebody who pretends to be generous, but I know so many people, when guests come and do visit them, they receive them but they – they are not happy about it. They are not pleased. But they can't dismiss guests. They can't say to the guests that we can't give you food and we can't allow you to stay in our house.

TN: Why not?

Osman: Oh, they can't. They are afraid of public opinion or – the opinion of the people.

TN: Do you think that is the main reason why people are generous?

Osman: (Laughter.) Why – why some people are generous. Not why all people are generous. Some people are generous because the guest may go and tell other people in the village or may tell his family, his family, his wife – always wives go and – his wife may go and tell her neighbour, and the neighbour the other one, and it will spread in all the area. And say that somebody – that man dismissed their guest.

§ 73

TN: The Baṭāhīn are famous for being courageous, aren't they?

Osman: Courageous, yes, they are.

TN: How can one prove oneself courageous?

Osman: If – there may be in the rural areas – there may be so many instances on which one can prove his courage, or prove that he is courageous. Sometimes they – I stated that in the – in that small essay – I said, courage – there is no difference between courage and rashness. Sometimes, the situation itself does not need the display of such a courage and people, they do display.

TN: Yes. For instance?

Osman: If there is a fierce ox or bull, which you can just hit with a big stick and throw /?/ or which you can just catch it with a rope, two people may catch it with a rope, a Baṭāhīn may not do that. He may go and just face the bull. And even he – either he catches it from – by the tail and tries to throw it on the ground, and if the bull comes by its head, he may catch the horns of the bull and tries to throw it on the ground. And he may – hey may be hurt in that way. But he will never let go the bull. Even he – if he is hurt. Unless he is unconscious. And if he is unconscious, they may also say to him. “You were not unconscious, but you are – you were afraid”. He just pretend to be unconscious. And so there is no – I see, there is no courage in this. You can be courageous with people, for example. If you are encount – if somebody met you on the way and he just insulted you and wants to fight you and if you say, “Oh, I don't want to fight you, you are a good man, and I have nothing to do with what you are saying about me”, and just tend to leave him or to go away from him, and also he just stood in front of you and said, “No, you must fight me”. Of course, if you just fight that man and beat him, you may be courageous. But you – you go and fight animals, there is no courage in this, according to my opinion.

§ 74

TN: Do you have these marriage practices which Ali told me about? In marriage, one young man lashes another in order to prove that he is courageous.

Osman: Yes, but –.

TN: Do you have this in your village?

Osman: Yes, we have it, but not – not so often. Baṭāhīn young men do not – do not practice this – they call it *buṭān* (lashing, whipping). But they don't practice it.

TN: Yes. What does it mean to call it *buṭān*?

Osman: *Buṭān* means – it is – it is – to the verb is *yubaṭin* – but of course, this is more difficult – *yubaṭin* mean to – to lash or to hit.

TN: Oh, so it is the lashing itself –.

Osman: It is called *buṭān*, yes. So the Baṭāhīn young men do not practice *buṭān*.

TN: Have you seen it in your village?

Osman: Yes. When we were young, we used to practice it ourselves.

TN: Yes . . .

Osman: We just go and – to dig the roots of the tree – oh, it is very, very, very, very difficult. It is very harsh. We don't do – we are afraid of it, but there – the people who are just older than us, the lads and all our seniors, they say, "Oh, you must – if you don't practice *buṭān* with that – with that fellow, you are a coward". Then we go and each bring his, and we just lash each other.

TN: What do you do with the roots of the tree?

Osman: We lash ourselves.

TN: With the roots?

Osman: Yes, we dig the roots. Because they say, the roots will not – will not break or will not wear away soon. And so we bring the root, and we do --. Of course, sometimes, when one gets – gets home, goes home, he may cry and tells his father or his mother that somebody told me or my older brother – my elder – told me to go and practice *buṭān* with that fellow.

TN: How do you practice it?

Osman: They just stand – of course, each at a time. Of course, they say, "You begin first". And just we stand as far as we are sitting. You stand and – with – you take off your clothes, and your – your back bare and the man just hits or lashes him. And of course, the – the rest of the – of the – of the whip will follow in the back. He may give you two or three, and when he finishes, you also give him the same amount.

TN: Does it give you wounds?

Osman: Yes. It may make a wound sometimes which may last. It may give trouble.

TN: Yes. What do you say if a boy can stand this? Do you say that he is *shāṭīr* (brave) or –?

Osman: They – they usually forbear it. They – they don't – they don't cry. So there is no courage in it, I think.

TN: But they think there is?

Osman: Yes, they think they are courageous.

§ 75

TN: Yes. Are there any other practices of a similar sort? – Do you ever burn your arms, for instance?

Osman: Yes, they do – they do practice it. But this is – this is only practiced by the – by the young people, the small children. When we were at elementary schools and –.

TN: Yes. What do you call that?

Osman: *Shaṭāra* (lit. slyness, skill, cleverness, smartness).

TN: *Shaṭāra*. Is it also a proof of courage?

Osman: No, they just say that big boys have such brands or such bruises and we must have ones. It shows that – that you are also a man. Because if you – if you feel that it hurts you or that it is very severe, you can leave it. Nobody witnesses you, and you do it alone. So there is no courage in it or –.

TN: Can they do it together?

Osman: Sometimes. Sometimes we may call each other and say, “We come to practice”. You may refuse, nobody will call you – will call you a coward.

TN: Does this practice still exist?

Osman: No. We ourselves did not practice it.

TN: You haven't got any such marks?

Osman: No.

TN: Ibrahim has got a lot of them.

§ 76

Osman: Yes. – I remember one story which shows – I have just been told this story. And the heroes of the story are still alive. Three chaps of the Baṭāhīn tribe defeated three hundred persons. And this is true. The – the four chaps have a herd of cows who went to the fields of some tribe who are called –. And when they went to bring the cows, they – they – they took an ass from a woman on the – in a – in a village, who live at a village on the way. And they said, “Let this ass helps us to carry our water. To put our water”. And – they have their swords, of

course. They are shepherds, their swords, and a shield, with sticks upon it. When they – when they heard /?/, the – – refused to give them their cattle. They found the cattle in – in one village, not in –, and the population of that village may amount to about fifty persons or – They just began to – to beat the people. And the people gave way. They took the cattle and went away. These people of the village went round and told all the nearby villages who are inhabited by the same tribe, or by the same member, by members of the same tribe. They came, about the population of seven villages who they said amounted to about three hundred persons. Armed. Those four chaps could have – could have escaped them, but the ass was very lazy. It couldn't – it couldn't go. And they said, "Oh, we took this ass from that woman. How can we leave it? To be taken by those people. What should we say to her; Of course, this -- sheer cowardice". So they just went slow, and when the people came, they ordered one of them – they are all brothers – the four last /?/ are brothers – they ordered one of them to take the ass and drive the cattle, and they began to fight.

TN: With their swords?

Osman: With swords. And they could prevent the people from moving forward. And one of them – Of course, when the people couldn't fight them with swords and – and with spears, of course, they – they – they – they are very good at playing with – with their swords, and so they began to throw them with stones. So they – they broke their teeth. And one of the three had his arm broken. When he – his arm was broken, he didn' – he didn't flie away. He just stayed there and began to sing for them, to encourage them to fight. And so they could stand against these three hundred persons. They are still living, the four chaps.

TN: How did they escape eventually?

Osman: Pardon?

TN: How did this incident end?

Osman: Oh! When they – they – the people – the people of the – or the people of the -- tribe sent for the police. Until the police came, they gave in, of course, when the police came. And so it ends.

TN: Do you think that this is real courage?

Osman: Yes. This is real courage. And of course, they say, any – any person who is not courageous of course can not stand against such a number.

§ 77

TN: Do you think that the students are cowards when they run away from the police? ---

Osman: From the police in the demonstrations? Yes, we do.

TN: Do all the students think so?

Osman: No. They don't. Of course, we heard from some of them that a person should run because it is a tactic. You ran because you - you don't want the demonstration to end soon. You run to collect in - at another corner or at another place and resume the demonstration. But we said, "Oh, we can't believe in that. You don't run at all, because you are running because you are afraid of the - the stick or the whip or the lash of the police". And so I - sometimes I go. And when I go, I do run. But that friend of mine, he - he goes and he does not run at all. And once he has been hit by the police, and he was terribly injured. He stayed in hospital for about fifteen days. And so their - his friends and we told him, "You should not go. All - all - you just run as other peoples do".

§ 78

Osman: This friend of mine - his - his family, for certain, his family has - special custom, or has special customs. They do - they don't - they don't fear anything. This is what they usually do. If they are speaking to the minister, to a police, to a governor, to a commissioner or to -, they just say what they want to say. So they - they think that even to run - if you - you don't run whether from - from a man, from an animal, from rain, from anything else. You don't run.

TN: Do you think this is going too far?

Osman: Yes. And of course, I see if it is a matter of - if there is rain, and you are afraid that you may have cold, you can run. They say no. When you run, you just practice your ---. They don't run at all. Even if you see your house on fire, you don't run. You just go on and when you arrive there, you can save what you can save. So this is what they think about running. But I think Baṭāhāni - Of course, the - the descendants of the tribe began to think differently on that custom /?/.

§ 79

TN: If the students are threatened by the government and still go on with the strike, for instance, do you think that that would show that they are courageous?

Osman: Here of course, there is no – no courage. You are not facing anyone /?/ face to face, of course. Here – all the students do is built on reason or is built on – they are defending something with the means they have in their hands. Of course, there may come certain stage, when they can – they can not use such a means to – or such a means may be futile or useless or –.

TN: Suppose that the student faces the following dilemma. Either he has to go to prison or else he has to go back to the university. If he chooses to go to prison, do you think that shows that he is a brave man?

Osman: Yes, I think also bravery in thought, or bravery in thought also – in thought – when you think about something and you – you don't give in when you believe that this is right. And of course, I think the student – the students may go to prison. I say, "You can't, because we are not struggling to ensure academic freedom or freedom of the university for ourselves. We may go this year, or may graduate this year or the next year – But for the generations to come –. So we can't – we can't go the university and we must sacrifice – for –".

TN: This is what one could call moral courage.

Osman: Yes, moral courage.

§ 80

TN: Do you think that the Sudanese staff lack moral courage because they didn't resign?

Osman: Of course they do. You may know that better than we.

TN: Well, what do you think about it? They have threatened to resign –.

Osman: Oh, we call them cowards. From the beginning, yes. From – from the time we just began our strike. And they came and discussed with us. And they said, "You must wait, and you must not do anything before we take a decision", and such. So we told them that they are cowards.

TN: What did they say?

Osman: Oh, they said, "You are rash".

TN: What do the people in your village think about such a thing? Would they say that these university lecturers are rash or that they are courageous? Or what would they say?

Osman: Oh, also they say – "They are cowards". They call them cowards.

TN: Do they?

Osman: Yes. Of course, in the villages they say, "Good will never make a person die, or let a person dies, out of hunger. So you are -" They say, "Why are they afraid to lose their jobs in the university? They can find jobs as they can live. They will not die out of hunger or - or so - so they are cowards".

TN: So you think that they should have decided --?

Osman: Yes, yes. I don't think because they - they can - they - they - they can - dies out of hunger - I say - I say this - this would put the government under - to - to feel the - the prob - that it is not easy to - to join the University to the Ministry of Education. It is not so easy. And of course, this will - the government will face the trouble of - completing the university staff and bringing staff from abroad and this, of course, itself is difficult. They can't get them easily. And it needs time and so on. I think this is - if they resign, it will - it may help the situation, in our side.

§ 81

TN: Do you have this practice of cutting one's arm to show that one is brave?

Osman: With a knife?

TN: Yes, with a knife.

Osman: I - I - I saw it once. Practised once.

TN: In your village?

Osman: Yes, by someone who - yes, he is a Baṭāhīn, yes. Not to show courage. You see, they say, the Baṭāhīn believe that a person in his ordinary state of consciousness may - may - may imagine that something is big or can not be faced or can not be fought. But when he - he faces real danger, he just becomes another - another creature. He will never fear anything.

TN: But you don't have this practice at marriages?

Osman: This cutting of the arm? I am - I am trying to - to explain it for you. This cutting of the arm - that instance itself - I saw it, but I couldn't bear the - the sight. I went - I went away to our house and stayed there.

TN: Do you think it is common?

Osman: No. No, it is not common. But that person is - is famous for his rashness. They - they - they say when a person - there is a woman who sings and there come a verse which may, they say, heed the feelings or the passions of a lad, he may do anything.

He may – I saw that person who cut his arm – several times. He beats himself, his legs with a whip. And so, you see, when they are dancing – when a woman dances in a – in a – when there is singing or there is a marriage-feast or such – when a woman dances – if that woman is a slave-woman, you see, in the village they recognize slavery, they call – some people they call in village slaves and their wives and their children. And when a slave-woman dances, you can go and put some money on her forehead – on her forehead. But if an Arab dances, you can't put money there. So you can put only one thing: your blood. If you are – if you are interested, you can go there and dance yourself and you can get out your knife and just cut yourself and put some blood on her forehead.

TN: Is that unusual?

Osman: It is unusual. I saw it just once, and heard of it once.

TN: Would it generally be considered as rash?

Osman: Rash, yes.

§ 82

TN: What are these slave-women?

Osman: You see, during the – even during the Egyptian and British government here – I don't know other tribes, but some of the Baṭāhīn used to go to Nuba Mountains or to Southern Sudan. This is the – this is the truth. And before the wind-mills, the flour-mills, were produced here in the Sudan, the women used to – to grind the grains with their hands on – on a native saw-mill. Just pieces of stone and they put the grains – the grains of the – so the – if a man is –. He may be a rash Arab. He may say that his wife should not grind the grain –. He must go and bring a slave. So he takes his sword, he may have a gun, and goes to the Nuba Mountains, and finds there any woman, takes her and bring her and call her a slave. Just she – she stays there – she may object – she may run from him – he will return and search for her, and brings her. And he may bring her. And all that – she may be married to another slave brought in the same way, and their children are also slaves. – – –

TN: In what sense are they slaves?

Osman: Oh, in the old sense. They call them slaves. They don't object to that. But they are not treated as slaves. But the women when you go there, of course, they say, "Slave-woman," and

comes to greet you – she – she – of course, all the Arab women, they do cover their heads with their tobés. The slave-woman, when she comes, she just gets out her shoes and covers her head and comes and kisses the hand of any – of any Arab. If he is a guest to the house and she knows him. And even this – this habit is also vanishing. Because they – they do have /?/ their owners to pay. And they went away and made their own – their own villages, and they live there.

TN: Could it occur nowadays that somebody collected a woman from the Nuba Mountains –?

Osman: Oh, you can't. You can't.

TN: Whe did that custom disappear?

Osman: Oh, it disappeared forty or thirty years ago. Now, you can't do that. But I saw this grandfather of mine who did that thing. In the British and Egyptian regime. He died, I think, six years ago.

§ 83

TN: What do you think about this custom?

Osman: Oh, of course I couldn't approve /?/ that. But today, when we go there, and my father calls someone a slave, they do – when he is angry with someone, they might say, they call him “Oh, you slave. There is no good – you are not good at all”. And I say, “Please, don't call him a slave. He is not a slave. In what sense is he a slave?” He said, “Oh, your grandfather went there and brought him from the mountains”. I said, “No, he is not a slave”. I said, “In Islam, a slave is a man who came to fight against the existing – the Islamic or the Islamic regime, or came in the army of another country which come to fight the Islamic regime, and they were caught as prisoners. They may be enslaved when their – their country come and give some money or give some Arab captives, and take theirs. They will be called slaves in this sense. But you haven't gone on fight. You just – my grandfather told him, my grandfather went there and just stole them. They are innocent /?/ people”. He said, “Oh, don't talk like this. Stop”. And I just stopped. –

5. Interview with Ali, Ibrahim and Osman, February 7, 1964

§ 84

TN: Is honesty an important virtue? What do you think, Ali?

Ali: I think it is not – it is not as important as the other virtues, courage, hospitality, self-respect /?/.

TN: Why is that? . . . Do you think yourself that it is more important to be generous than to be honest?

Ali: No. Of course – I think – I think myself that it is important, more important than generosity, but others told me that these are the virtues. It may be explained by the geographical environments of the people. And since generosity is – *can* be explained in this way – but honesty, I don't think.

TN: So when people think of the good Sudanese or so, then they don't think of honesty?

Ali: No, most of them say that the Sudanese is the man who is generous, courageous, honourable, respects himself, and so on. But they don't include this honesty.

TN: Do you agree with this, Ibrahim and Osman?

Ibrahim: Well, I think that the virtues is a /?/ – it stands on the same level with other important virtues you have mentioned, for example, say, self-respect, generosity, and so on. And in fact, the Sudanese usually do respect the man who is honest. The man who is always honest in the sense that he – he is frank in his – in what he says, and frank in what he believes, and at the same time honest in the sense that he – he is a man to be trusted, especially when dealing with properties and so on, and when handling any kind of serious talk /?/. ---

Ali: Perhaps --- honesty is included in self-respect. Because a man – one of the characteristics of a man who respects himself is that he is honest. Maybe that they think of it in this way.

TN: Yes. What do you think of this idea, Osman?

Osman: I think – what Ibrahim and Ali have said about honesty is their own views, not what people think of it. --- I think honesty is as important as the other virtues. ---

§ 85

TN: Do you think that honesty is included in self-respect?

Osman: Since it is a virtue, I think it is – it can be included.

If a person is dishonest, he may find himself in troubles. He may be scorned or looked down upon. So I think it is included in self-respect.

TN: Yes. What happens to a person who is not honest? How would he be treated?

Osman: They don't respect him, and they don't co-operate with him. For example, if he is in very great need, and he comes and says that he wants so and so from some other person, he will say, "Oh, you are just a liar. I can't trust you". So a dishonest person is not respected.

TN: Yes. Why should one be honest? What do people think about that? What is their motive for being honest?

Osman: Just to get on in life. Just to get on in life. Of course, if you are dismissed, I think, you can't easily or comfortably get on in life with others. If all people keep their promises and you don't, of course, it will be difficult for you. ---

§ 86

TN: Suppose that somebody gives a dying person a promise, in secret, and breaks it – do you think that would be serious?

Ali: What does he promise him?

Ibrahim: A dying person? – Or a dead person?

TN: A person who is dying. ... He has asked somebody to do something, and he promises to do it. Nobody else knows anything about it, so no bad consequences can result for himself if he breaks the promise. What do you think that people would think about this?

Ibrahim: Well, this is a particular thing in the Sudanese society. It is well respected. Anything which a dying man says, it's always respected and they do carry it out. Especially in relation to his properties and so on. So they – they carry it out irrespective of anything else.

TN: Even if nobody else has heard of it?

Ibrahim: Yes, yes. And especially if the dying person is one of your relatives. And –. Anyhow, you have got an example: we have got one of our relatives who died during this vacation. And everything he said, his sons and daughters carried it out. And they usually write it down, so as not to forget. If he said, "Well, from my money give a person called so and so such and such an amount", they give him, without any kind of hesitance, since in

Sudanese society /?/, they – they respect what the dying man says.

TN: Do you think that is right?

Osman: Yes, as Ali says, if this dying man told some of his relatives to carry out some work or to do some thing which has relation with his properties, this man must carry it out. But if it comes to somebody else or who is not a relative of the dying man, if it concerns money – for example, if the dying man owns from that man about a hundred pounds, for example, and said, “Oh, will you please hand over these – this amount of money to my children after I die”, and his children or heirs do not know about this loan, he may – he may – he may not keep his promise. He may not tell them that he – his father owns him about a hundred pounds.

Ibrahim: This, I think, this is natural. If a dying man paid somebody an amount of money and – so as to give it to his sisters or sons, and he doesn’t do this, this is a fault. It is a fault of the man who is entrusted to do so. And this is a kind of dishonesty. And it is natural that not all people carry out what they promise to do. ---

6. Interview with Ali, February 9, 1964

§ 87

TN: What would you say of somebody who is generous or hospitable to somebody just because he doesn’t want to spoil his reputation?

Ali: I think, in this case I don’t respect this man. The motive behind the action is not very good. It is not good, I mean.

TN: Do you think this is the common view or – ?

Ali: No, it is my own view.

TN: Yes. Do you feel that people would disagree here? Do they put an emphasis on motives?

Ali: People here – yes. The Islamic morality emphasizes the motive, the part played by the motive – by the motives, intentions.

TN: Yes. But isn’t it rather common that people are generous and hospitable just because they do not want to get a bad reputation?

Ali: Not all of course, but some of them. Some of them.

§ 88

TN: If you give money to a beggar, do you think it would make any difference whether you do this publicly so that other people see you or whether you do it privately so that nobody else sees you?

Ali: I prefer to do it privately. That nobody sees me.

TN: Yes. Why?

Ali: In Koran, there is a statement saying that – I am not sure whether it is a statement in the Koran or one of the sayings of the Prophet – that when you give something to a beggar, try always not to be known. That even your left hand doesn't know what your right hand do.

TN: Do you think most people would agree with you here?

Ali: I am not quite sure. Some may, do, some may don't. But –.

§ 89

TN: Suppose that somebody breaks the fast – do you think it is worse if he does it in public than if he does it in private?

Ali: Of course, it is worse if he does it in public.

TN: Yes. Why?

Ali: If you are disobeying God, why don't you do that in private? I mean, you need not to show, I mean, disobedience to other people, just as a country doesn't want to show her bad things or what is bad in the country to the other world, to the outside world. So this is a matter between you and God.

TN: Yes. What makes it worse to do it in public?

Ali: I think one would thus, I think, abuse the feelings of other people who are Muslim.

TN: Yes. – If people fast, does it matter what motive they have for fasting?

Ali: Of course, the most important motive is the religious motive. And if we investigate this religious motive, this includes other motives, a motive concerning health, feeling the hunger, to be kind to poor, and so on. So I mean if one of these is your motives – that you feel hunger or to be healthy – it makes /?/ some people fast – of course, the Koran – I think in this case the motive is included in the religious motive.

TN: So you think that would be all right? If somebody fasts just because it is good for him from the medical point of view?

Ali: Of course, I mean, this is also included in the religious

motive. Because religion recommends fasting for different reasons. This may be one of the reasons.

§ 90

TN: Yes. Why do you fast yourself?

Ali: Of course, fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam.

TN: Yes. Do you fulfil all these duties – the five kinds of duties?

Ali: The five duties that – or pillars of Islam – there is one God and Mohammad is His Prophet, and praying, fasting, and pilgrimage. And, of course, pilgrimage to those who can – who can afford to go to Mecca. Then there is four: the first two – that there is one God and Mohammad is His Propet – I mean, everyone believes that. Then comes fasting and praying. And here comes the difference, because some people fulfil the fasting but not praying, sometimes praying or sometimes –.

§ 91

TN: Do you plan to go to Mecca when you can afford it?

Ali: You see, this young generation – they believe that one has to go to Mecca when one is old, because all your sins are forgiven when you go to Mecca, so why don't you take a long time and then you go to Mecca and do that? And they – usually, they feel a bit surprised when they hear that a young chap goes to Mecca. I remember in the hostel, two days ago, one of the students said that he is planning to go to Mecca, and some laughed.

TN: What do you think of it yourself?

Ali: If one can afford it. I think it is all right. It is not a matter of age.

TN: So if you can afford it in five years' time, will you do it? Or would you postpone it for another forty years? ...

Ali: Maybe. Perhaps.

TN: You are not so sure ...

Ali: Not so sure. You see – I mean – for the last four years, I have money. But instead of going to Mecca, I visited Egypt and East Africa and –.

TN: Do you think that is bad?

Ali: I think it is not bad, because in a way, it is a kind of experience. Exchange views, and knowing other people and so on. And pilgrimage itself has disadvantages. It has disadvantages also. So my going to East Africa is a kind of pilgrimage also, I think.

TN: Don't you think God would consider it insincere in a way to wait until one is old to have one's sins forgiven instead of going now to Mecca?

Ali: This concerns God himself, I think.

TN: Would you think that it is insincere, yourself?

Ali: It is not insincerity, but it's a kind of depth of belief. It depends upon the depth of one's belief.

§ 92.

TN: What do you think of those Muslim students who do not fast during Ramadan?

Ali: What do you mean by Muslim students? Because all of them are Muslim students, or most of them are Muslim.

TN: Yes. What do you think of those who do not fast? . . .

Ali: I think it is a problem of religion. As I told you, a relation between God and the person himself. I have no right to interfere with God /?/.

TN: Have you ever fasted at any other time of the year, besides Ramadan?

Ali: No.

TN: Don't you think that one should do it, sometimes?

Ali: Yes, if one needs that. But if he does not, why should he fast? – Though fasting is also, I mean, recommended by the sayings of the Prophet. Not only during Ramadan but –.

§ 93

TN: Do you think that a man alone on an island could have any morals? Could he have any ethics at all?

Ali: I mean, it depends – on the definition of ethics.

TN: Yes, but what do you think about it yourself – your own private view?

Ali: I don't think he can, because ethics is a kind of – deals with the relations between human beings. So if there is no human being except himself on the island, I don't think – any ethics.

TN: Yes. But there are relations between him and God, aren't there?

Ali: You mean – the example is not clear.

TN: You have a man alone on an island –.

Ali: He was born there?

TN: No, he came there. Wouldn't it be his duty to keep Rama-

dan, for instance? And to pray the prayers, even if he were alone on the island?

Ali: Yes.

TN: But you don't think of that as ethical duties, do you?

Ali: No, I don't. – Because ethics, I mean, deals with the relations between human beings, not between human beings and God.

TN: Yes. So if someone does not perform his religious duties, that does not make him morally bad?

Ali: My own view: yes. Because, as I told you, it just concerns this fellow, I mean. I have no right to interfere with that man /?/.

TN: So you think that a man can be morally good without performing his religious duties?

Ali: This is also a question whether ethics is independent of religion: I think, yes. It is independent of religion.

TN: Yes. Doesn't one have duties towards animals?

Ali: Maybe. Not sure.

TN: If this man alone on the island tortured animals, would you say that this would make him morally bad?

Ali: ... It all depends on the definition of ethics.

TN: Yes. What do you think yourself? Would you think of him as morally bad if he is cruel to animals?

Ali: ... I don't think.

TN: You don't think so?

Ali: I don't think.

§ 94

TN: Yes. Would this man not have any duties towards himself?

Ali: ... I – I think if we – concerning this point and the other points, that is, the relations between himself and God and animals, to do things, I think one should have a wide view /?/ –. I mean, not to stress only when – one aspect /?/ rather than another – a wide definition of ethics, so that God easily be included. So that the relations between him and animals and the relations between God and human beings are included in the definition, so that other sense – –.

TN: Yes. Then he could be morally bad, even when he is alone?

Ali: Yes.

TN: So you changed your mind?

Ali: I changed my mind.

TN: What would people think here in the Sudan – do they think that one has duties towards animals?

Ali: Of course, one can't tell /?/ but I think many of them don't. Though this is recommended, I mean, by religion.

§ 95

TN: Is it worse to drink alcohol privately or in a restaurant, a public place? Not during Ramadan, during the rest of the year?

Ali: This is also, I mean – this is similar to fasting, to break fasting, not to fast, I mean. I mean, this shows disobedience to people instead of doing that privately –.

TN: Do you think it would be offensive to drink whisky in Khartoum?

Ali: In Khartoum – I don't think. Because in town, you see, it is quite different.

TN: But in a village –?

Ali: In a village, I think, it will be.

TN: What would people say? – Suppose that you have some relatives in a village, and when you go there, you sit down and drink whisky in the afternoon?

Ali: This is a drunkard – I mean, they call him bad names. And of course, when he does that, this means that he is disobeying the order of God. Although now many of them drink. Many people, and they consider it just a normal thing, to drink. Just as normal as to smoke.

TN: Yes. Do you think that would affect their dignity?

Ali: ... Their dignity? ... I think – in a way, yes. Because if one doesn't respect another body, I mean, or treat him as an inferior, then this other body will be determined /?/ to oppress /?/ the dignity of -- I mean -. And, of course, the other person – they /?/ will be saying that he was a drunkard. – I think it affects one /?/ if it is done publicly, not privately, because it is done privately and nobody knows that.

§ 96

TN: Have all human beings got *karāma*?

Ali: All human beings? – I think they – Yes. But the degree varies.

TN: Who have got most of it?

Ali: Pardon?

TN: Who have got most of it?

Ali: But this – in this case, one – one has to know other people

well to judge. But if you ask a Sudanese who don't go outside the country, it is the Sudanese who have it.

TN: Have small children also got *karāma*? . . .

Ali: It is difficult to tell.

TN: Could you say of an eight year old boy that he lost his dignity at some occasion?

Ali: My own boy -?

TN: An eight year old boy. Could he lose his dignity?

Ali: This depends upon his age. And, I mean, if his dignity is injured, one doesn't know that because he doesn't rebel to this. I think, it is difficult to tell, but I think he has.

TN: When you talk about dignity, or about *karāma* in Arabic, do you usually refer to grown-up persons?

Ali: Yes, to grown-up persons.

TN: Not to children?

Ali: Not to children. Because, I mean, the children, they don't rebel. People, they don't talk about *karāma* of children.

TN: Could you insult a child?

Ali: If he has done something wrong, yes.

TN: Would you say that a child's *karāma* would be affected by an insult?

Ali: I think, yes, but - I mean, yes, but he doesn't rebel, you see. So - one comes to think that he has no *karāma*. But I think he has.

TN: Yes. But one doesn't usually say it?

Ali: Yes. - One may notice that, I mean, when his father beats the children or the small boys, they can't say anything.

TN: Have women got *karāma*?

Ali: Women, yes.

TN: As much as men?

Ali: This is also, I think - it is just as in the other case as - not the same - as the children. Because, as I said, the children don't rebel. And the woman also in this country is shy, and she doesn't rebel. Sometimes she does, but not always. So people come to think that, I mean, that the woman's *karāma* less, not in the same group /?/ with his /?/ *karāma*.

§ 97

TN: Does it make any difference whether one has a high position in society? Does the president have more dignity than - ?

Ali: No, no, no, I don't think. It doesn't, I mean, it doesn't

depend upon the position of the person. I mean, the ordinary man in the street, he thinks that he has his *karāma*, just the same as Abboud. And that he is not being /?/ in an inferior way.

§ 98

TN: Can one do anything to add to one's *karāma*? To get more of it?

Ali: Yes, by respecting himself. If he respects himself, then he has *karāma*.

TN: Suppose that one loses one's *karāma* by doing something evil or some bad thing, what should one do to get it back? Or could you say that you can get it back?

Ali: He can't get it back.

TN: He can't get it back? When it is lost, it is lost forever?

Ali: Yes. Because, you see, if one man was in prison, and then he got out of prison, and if some other person injured his dignity, the other man would say, "Did I injure your dignity? Have you dignity? You were in prison!"

TN: But if somebody is in prison when he is young, and then lives a good life for say, twenty – thirty years –?

Ali: It is a black spot in his life.

TN: Yes. So then he has *karāma*, after all?

Ali: He has – as I said – I mean – if anything evil happens /?/, whenever you --.

§ 99

TN: Some students have mentioned co-operation as an important virtue? Do you think that co-operation is important?

Ali: Co-operation itself is a result of the other virtues. I mean, it may be included in the other virtues. The four important virtues. Because they lead /?/ to co-operation – hospitality and so on.

TN: What Arabic word would you use for co-operation?

Ali: *al-ta'āwun*.

TN: As examples of co-operation, some people have mentioned that you should share the joys and sorrows of your relatives and friends. So if somebody is sick, you go there, for instance.

Ali: But is this – is this a sign of co-operation? – I don't think it is.

TN: What do you think it is a sign of?

Ali: To – visiting sick people –? It is not morally wrong to – or morally right to go and visit a sick man.

TN: Or if somebody is going to marry and collect money for him?

Ali: Yes, this may be – yes, this may be kind of co-operation.

TN: Yes. Do you think that is included in the other virtues which we have discussed before?

Ali: In generosity, I think, it is included. In hospitality also.

§ 100

TN: Do you think it is important to have a strong character?

Ali: Yes, it is important.

TN: How can one show strength of character?

Ali: By not ... – It needs a lot of thinking /?/. – Strong character – I mean – it is not easy. I think –.

TN: Yes. Do you think it is included in what you have said before about self-respect and courage, for instance?

Ali: Maybe it is included in self-respect. – – –

§ 101

TN: Suppose that somebody does not really believe in Islam, but he fasts and he makes his prayers, and so on, in order not to offend people and in order not to isolate himself from the rest ...

Ali: But not for God?

TN: Yes.

Ali: ... Do you mean, do I consider him as morally bad or –?

TN: Yes. What do you think about him?

Ali: Of this person? ... This person is pretending, and pretending is not good.

TN: Yes. But what should one do in such a case? If one does not pretend, then one will hurt people's feelings –.

Ali: Yes.

TN: Is it better to hurt people's feelings or to pretend?

Ali: To consider that to pretend and not to hurt other people's feelings –. But still I think that the whole thing concerns him and God.

TN: But suppose that you come home to your family which is very religious, do you think you should make your prayers and so on together with the rest of the family, even if you don't believe in it any more?

Ali: This is what the students always do: they go home, --, they fast.

TN: Do you think it is right?

Ali: I don't think it is right. Because the motive behind his fasting is not ...

TN: Yes. But if they did not fast, their families would be very much upset and worried ...

Ali: Yes, yes.

TN: Do you think that will be better than if the students are insincere?

Ali: It is difficult to decide. It is difficult to decide.

TN: Yes. What would you do yourself? Suppose that you do not believe in Islam any longer, and you go home to your family which is very religious – would you fast just in order to please your family?

Ali: This depends upon my future. I mean – if there is enough -- I won't fast, if I don't believe any more in God or in Islam. But most people like this kind of future.

§ 102

TN: You say that self-respect is a negative concept. That one can lose one's self-respect in various ways. But can't one do anything to gain self-respect?

Ali: I don't think. I don't think.

TN: If you try and be morally good and so on, couldn't you add to your self-respect in that way?

Ali: Not, I mean – self-respect itself being only morally good. I mean, you can't differentiate between the two. You won't lose either /?/, you would lose your self-respect itself /?/.

TN: Yes. But if a person tries very hard to become morally good, wouldn't that add to his self-respect?

Ali: I don't think.

TN: So you think it is a matter of abstaining from doing bad things?

Ali: Yes.

TN: Suppose that you have two persons, one person who doesn't do anything, neither good nor bad things, and you have another person who tries to do good things – would there be any difference in self-respect for the two persons? – None of them do bad things. The first doesn't do any good things, and the second tries

to do good things. Would this be relevant to their self-respect or -?

Ali: ... One would be inclined to say that the second respects himself, not the first.

TN: You are a bit hesitant about it, aren't you?

Ali: Yes.

§ 103

TN: Is patience emphasized in the Sudan?

Ali: Patience?

TN: Yes.

Ali: It is not emphasized, but I think it is also included in the others. Because if you are courageous, then you are patient. If you are generous, and so on. ---

§ 104

TN: Suppose that your brother does something bad - he steals something or kills somebody - would you say that your own *karāma* would be affected? (Question repeated).

Ali: I think it would, because, you see, here the family ties are very strong, and what one does - one member of the family does - affects the other members of the family also.

TN: Yes. And also their *sharaf*?

Ali: No, the *sharaf* in this case - I mean, *karāma* - there is no difference between them.

TN: So you would say that your *sharaf* and your *karāma* would be affected if you kill somebody?

Ali: I mean, *sharaf* in this case is the same as *karāma*.

TN: You could use any of those words here?

Ali: Yes. ---

§ 105

TN: What do you think of *fakhr*, pride?

Ali: I remember, in the first meeting, I told you that it is not good to be proud. No one can praise himself except the devil.

TN: Yes. Does this affect one's *karāma*?

Ali: -- In a sense, yes, because - in a sense, he doesn't respect himself.

TN: One would lose one's self-respect to a certain extent -?

Ali: To a certain extent, yes.

§ 106

TN: Do you think that a girl would lose her self-respect if she doesn't wear her tobe?

Ali: Yes.

TN: What would you feel yourself if one of your sisters did not wear a tobe, in public?

Ali: In public? I would not let her go from the house. Not to go outside the –.

TN: Why?

Ali: She has to wear it, I think. Here, again, 'ird comes. That -- or circumcision is one kind of protecting this girl. Another kind of – another kind is the wearing a tobe. I mean, not to go without a tobe in a street.

§ 107

TN: Do you think also that girls should be circumcised?

Ali: In the *sunna* form, of course.

TN: Do you think so?

Ali: Yes. It is a kind of protection for the girl.

TN: If girls and women started protesting against this, what would you do?

Ali: *Sunna* form? I don't think they will protest. Because the women and girl and men here, they think that girls are protected from – and so they think it is a kind of protection. It is connected with 'ird. They want to protect the girl.

7. Interview with Osman, February 11, 1964

§ 108

TN: What do you mean by dignity, *karāma*?

Osman: Dignity, I think it means –. Dignity may mean self-respect, I think. But if it is –. But if it is meant by anything other than self-respect, it may be merely a vice. It may be a vice, not a virtue, if it is not self-respect. If somebody assumes dignity and he does not aim at self-respect, dignity may be a vice. It may mean *mutakabbir* (= haughty), not –.

TN: Yes. But can one assume *karāma*?

Osman: No, I don't think. *Karāma* is something which one – one try to – to protect or keeps, I think. But not to assume it.

TN: What should one do to protect one's *karāma*?

Osman: Well, *karāma* and *sharaf* here is the same meaning, I think. When we come to the question of protecting one's *karāma*, it means the same as *sharaf*. For example, – anything that a person respects or holds as dear – For example, one's wife, sister, mother, and so on, one always tries to – to – one regards their *karāma* and *sharaf* as one's own. But, for example, if one's wife commits adultery, for example, this will be an injury to his *karāma*.

TN: And to his *sharaf*?

Osman: And to his *sharaf*. They are the same, *karāma* and *sharaf*, here they are the same. His sister – any relative of his – if someone of his females commits adultery and he knows that and doesn't make anything, he may be called – he has no *sharaf*, or has no *karāma*.

TN: Yes. Is there anything else besides adultery which would affect the *sharaf* or *karāma*?

Osman: There may be other things, but I could hardly find an example.

TN: Yes. If your sister goes out without a tobe, would you say that that is relevant?

Osman: No, it is not relevant.

TN: What happens then?

Osman: To put on a tobe or any other kind of dress is just a custom, I think. It's a custom.

TN: Suppose that a woman goes out without a tobe in your village, wouldn't you say that that affects her *sharaf*?

Osman: Oh, they – they would regard her as mad. No, they – unless something is – is done to her, I think, nobody will call her – that she is – that she loses her *sharaf* or *karāma*. Just they will go around and say /?/, "Is she mad or is she all right? Because she is going without a tobe". Sometimes in villages between – from seven to – between seven and twelve, I think they can go without tobes. ---

TN: If somebody in the family kills somebody, would that affect the dignity of anybody in the family?

Osman: What affects the dignity of anybody in the family in this

case is that if this person kills that man – kills that man – when he was asleep or when he has no weapon, or in any way the other party is not prepared or ready, this may affect the *karāma* also. It may affect the dignity, of course, I mean, not mean the *karāma*. It would not affect the *karāma*.

TN: But *sharaf*?

Osman: No, the dignity. They says – a coward.

TN: Yes. What word would you use here? What Arabic word would you use here?

Osman: It is the same – you see, there is no correspondent word in English. They say he is *ghaddār* (= treacherous, false, etc.).

TN: But not *sharaf* or *karāma*?

Osman: Not *karāma*, no. It is just a bad name. Some – some – some tribes are known as of this grade, *ghaddār*. They don't at all fight anybody face to face. They just come by the dark or when they find him asleep or –.

TN: Is this your own view also, that it is all right to kill a man if he is not asleep or if he is not without a weapon?

Osman: I think it is not all right.

TN: But it is the customary view in your tribe?

Osman: Yes. Even if – if this man is one who you seek to kill, you must warn him and tell him that whenever you go out from your house, wear a weapon with you. "And don't blame me if I find you and you have no weapons with you or –." Usually, they don't attack people without the other party being ready. So it does not affect the *karāma*. They may call him *ghaddār*. *Ghaddār* means a person who attacks people when they are not ready. Just to ambush from somebody.

TN: Yes, yes. If somebody insults you, would you say that your *karāma* is affected?

Osman: If you accept the insult and you are not afraid of him, of course, because you are –. Sometimes you accept the insult from somebody who – whom you regard as not as an equal. For example, if you are met by a drunkard, and so he began to insult you, he may not at all insult you –. You just leave him. And so this does not affect the *karāma*. But if –. It depends upon the – the intention. And sometimes, there are some people with whom you are not on good terms, if somebody of these met you alone and he insults you, of course, if you couldn't do anything, this affects your *karāma*. Because you just – you are afraid of him. He couldn't insult you, I mean –.

TN: Does it affect your *sharaf* also?

Osman: Well, one here can not apply the word *sharaf*, to this situation. It is the *karāma* here. Sometimes they are used synonymously, and sometimes they are not. But here it affect the *karāma*, not the *sharaf*.

§ 113

TN: Yes. What does it mean to accept an insult?

Osman: Just to ignore the other party, who insults you.

TN: Yes. That is, if one does not accept it, then one ignores him?

Osman: Yes.

TN: How do you show that you accept it?

Osman: Oh, the way you show that you accept it, his insult, it may be -- the result /?/ itself is not -- it is not in the same -- or in the same manner. You may just talk to him and -- and say, "Oh, you don't deserve one to waste his time and stay with you, or quarrel with you or insult you". You won't you -- you -- you may tell him that he doesn't even deserve one insult. Or deserve to be insulted. He is just a man, just a mad man or a liar.

§ 114

TN: Have you been insulted by somebody lately?

Osman: Not somebody who is not -- or -. One who is younger than me and -. He is my niece, I think. He is in secondary schools, third year, secondary schools. Once, I think, during the holidays, we quarrelled, and we were serious -- both of us were serious. And he insulted me, but I thought he was younger and --. If I quarrelled with him, he may not be injured at all. He may blame me and say, "Oh, you are older --". And so, I accepted his insult and -. Just we became angry with each other, and after a week or so we reconciled. But not by somebody who is not younger.

§ 115

TN: What should one do in order to preserve one's dignity, *karāma*?

Osman: To preserve one's dignity? ... I think, last time we were speaking about honesty and self-respect and the other virtues -. They say if a person is -- keeps his -- respected himself --

became honest and so on, people will respect him. Nobody will try to injure his *karāma*, offend his -- and so on. But if he does attack other people's *sharaf*, *karāma* and dignity, he may not -- he may not be respected and anybody, he finds any -- any chance to do the same to him, he will --.

§ 116

TN: Yes. What should one do if one loses his *karāma*?

Osman: Sometimes he -- I didn't actually see one of them, but they say, they usually fly away from the village or the surroundings. For example, a person from the northern Sudan may try to go to the southern Sudan and live there for ever, and never return. Sometimes, they don't -- they just feel ashamed, and may do nothing. But sometimes --. For example, if somebody insults another man, told him that he has no *karāma* or has no *sharaf*, because your sister or your wife is so-and-so, he will try to deny that and they say, "Oh, let us -- let -- let us make a test". They make a test for it, which is --. It may be called, in the earlier times, and of course, -- this kind of test. They bring the woman who is accused of being -- adulterate, for example. They put seven axes here -- the ax-heads, you see, the iron part of the axe -- they put seven of them in fire until they are red. She takes each one in turn and try to hold it in her hand until it is black or until it is cool, and throw it, until she have the seven -- seven iron pieces. And then they brings a --. Also, they put seven needles, small needles, in a big pan, in boiling oil, and tell her to take these while the oil is boiling. And they say that if the -- the heat of the iron or that oil did not affect her hands, she -- she is -- oh, they say, she is ...

TN: What is it in Arabic?

Osman: *Sharīfa* -- it comes from *sharaf*. -- Yes, honourable, yes. She is honourable. ---

TN: Do you believe that ...

(Laughter.)

Osman: No. It is just a tradition. So either she -- if a relative of mine was accused of bring doing this crime -- either she passes the test or she will be killed. Just her brother or her uncle may kill her.

TN: Has this happened in your village?

Osman: No, I remember -- my father told me that one of our tribe has been told that his -- his wife do like this or do -- she

committed adultery with somebody. He doesn't tell this. He didn't tell this frankly to her family, but he alluded some way to her brother or so. Her brother found her asleep, and he just broke her neck. He told his father and he said, "Oh, she died. Just an ordinary death". --

TN: What do you think of this?

Osman: Oh, it is cruel, I think.

§ 117

TN: Yes. What should one do to a woman who has committed adultery?

Osman: I think it – if her husband does not want to keep her, he may divorce her, and I think her family may – may keep her and try to watch her /?/, do anything to her, but not to kill her, I think. Yes, I feel that is cruel. Certainly, if somebody is a relation of yours, you can't, I think. You can't. The difficulty is that these words, *karāma* and *sharaf* and dignity and – one cannot sharply differentiate – differentiate between them. For example, if a person who tell lies, you may say that he is – he is not dignified – he does not respect himself. A person who steals also – he may not lose his *sharaf* or *karāma*, but they say, he does not respect himself. And they don't believe him. So sometimes it is *sharaf*, sometimes it is *karāma*, sometimes it is dignity, sometimes it is self-respect.

§ 118

TN: Yes. – If somebody breaks a solemn promise, would that affect his self-respect?

Osman: What kind of a promise?

TN: A solemn promise, a very important promise.

Osman: This may affect the treatment of other people to him, or with him. The treatment to him. Because a person who is known to be a liar or does not keep his promises, people may – they will not affect neither *sharaf* nor *karāma*.

TN: Do you think a person can respect himself even if he breaks a very solemn promise?

Osman: If he does that once, and he has an excuse, of course, he can.

TN: But if his excuse it that he will gain something himself?

Osman: No, I don't think. Also, it is based upon – upon treatment of other people. If you lose the respect of others to you, of

course, this may affect one's dignity. If nobody respects you, of course, there is no dignity left to you. So that it may affect his dignity, if it is known that he usually, he does not keep promises and he is a liar.

§ 119

TN: Yes. What do you think one should do in order to get other people to respect oneself?

Osman: In fact, I don't know the situation in the towns here, but there, in the villages or in the rural areas, they demand much. Or their demands are too high. For example – in particular, the old people – whenever one of them ask you to do him any favour, you must not say, "I have – Oh, I have some work to do". Even if you have, you won't say so. You just go on and do what he tells you to do. Just you respect the old people and be kind to others and not /?/ to be rude with anybody, and so they just respect you if you do that. And you are religious, of course, then they respect you. Sometimes one cannot do all that they demand. ---

TN: Do you think it is very important to be respected by other people?

Osman: ... Yes, I think it is important. Important because when I just become a man and have a family and come to live for myself, they want – they want their co-operation. So they don't trust. They may be just selfish – selfish people. -- respect him. That's why this is another important thing /?/.

§ 120

TN: Do you think that an official who takes bribes would lose his dignity?

Osman: An official?

TN: Yes.

Osman: Officials, here in towns, for example, they live among people who may be officials themselves, and they do take bribes themselves. So -. (Laughter). Not, I think, here in the Sudan-. The whole administrative system is so corrupted that it is no longer a vice, I think. Just you hear the students and people who don't at all believe in such things, they regard it as a vice. But even people out in the villages they say, "Oh, if you don't bribe that man, he won't at all do the thing for you, or do the things for you". Before this so manifest, they – they do not res-

pect people who take bribes. But by the time, it became just as a habit. And so they are indifferent. They have – they may have no opinion – they may not speak about him as being bad or corrupted, or so. Because it is so -- that they think everybody takes a bribe. Even the teachers in the university, always they say, any official – they don't --. I remember, one of my relatives who – they sent him away – when I came to secondary schools, they came and they brought five pounds with a tin of -- and said that he is a relative of the student so-and-so. So they believe that everybody take – takes bribe.

TN: Yes. Do you think it affects their *karāma*, yourself?

Osman: Yes, I think. I think it is a kind of disease. Because even if you are very rich or you want to give up the business or – taking bribes, you can't. You can't, you can't do it. So from the beginning one should not take bribes.

TN: Would you say that it affects their *sharaf* also?

Osman: I think it is concerned with self-respect and dignity, and so it has no import on *sharaf* or so. I think so.

§ 121

TN: Has everybody got *karāma*?

Osman: ... Yes, everybody must have *karāma*. But sometimes they deprive people of their *karāma* because of a fault which is connected by their father or their mother or anybody else in the family, for example. If a child is a very decent man, always truthful and honest and so on, has all these traits of character, always because of a fault of his mother or his father and who may be dead now, they just stick the same thing to him and say, "He has no *sharaf*. Why? Because his mother was so-and-so-and-so. Because his father was so-and-so-and-so". So people – people deprive others from their *karāma* or *sharaf*. But I think everybody has, unless he did something to deprive him.

§ 122

TN: How do they deprive the children of their *sharaf*? How do they show it, I mean?

Osman: The belief is that – they believe that if somebody has no *sharaf* or so, they say he – he – he inherits it to his family. The family inherits the disease from him. And so they prevent their children to go and play with that family's children. And sometimes when those who are believed to have – whose parents are

believed to have no *karāma* or *sharaf* – when they come and play with others' children, they – sometimes they – drive them out of /?/ their house or so. Of course, I am against the whole matter.

TN: Yes. Are there any such children now in your village?

Osman: No. We are very few of us. You can't tell – you can't tell anybody that he has no *sharaf* or has no *karāma*. A fight may break out. So – I don't think there are –. My village, in fact, is very small, just my father and uncle and somebody else. It is just a sort of camp, near the fields and so. But the –. Usually, they – their house is – their – anything they have brought /?/ is in a big village near-by. But usually, when I go there, I go to that camp.

§ 123

TN: What about the slaves – do they have *karāma*?

(Laughter.)

Osman: They have no *karāma* and no *sharaf*. By birth, they have no *karāma*, they say. And the slaves themselves, as they call them, believe that they have no *sharaf*, have no *karāma*. And so they plunge /?/ into vice, from the beginning. From the early childhood. They go and drink, and the girls commit adultery, and they become professional prostitutes, and so on. Even if they –. Of course, nobody can say that they are by nature have no *sharaf* or have no *karāma*. Just they feel it, and their mothers tell them, and fathers and brothers, and don't revolt against it if you call them prostitutes or so, or even if they practice the thing in the house itself, they don't revolt. So this is the question of the so-called slaves. Anyhow, it is inhuman.

§ 124

TN: Do you think all peoples, all nationalities, have *karāma*?

Osman: Yes. People believe that anybody who is not a slave have – has *karāma*. And his *karāma* should be respected. And his *sharaf* should be respected, because he may revolt if you do anything to his *sharaf* or his *karāma*, or injures his *karāma*.

TN: So it doesn't make any difference if you are a Sudanese or an Egyptian –?

Osman: Yes.

TN: Or any other nationality?

Osman: But of course, one may –. The villagers when they come here in town and see some – they see the women /?/ going

without tobes /?/, and they say, "Oh, how can these people live there with everybody going without tobes in the streets? In front of strangers, in the market. They are not men at all". "They are just like the women", they say. But they don't say that they have no *karāma* or *sharaf*, and so on. They say, they lack something here in -.

§ 125

TN: Should one show respect for everybody?

Osman: It depends upon the - the people, and the belief they have. For example, they believe that a drunkard should not be respected. And - a person who is old but not serious also does not deserve respect. And - they don't believe that everybody should - should be respected. Sometimes - of course, the slaves come into this category.

TN: Do you think yourself that an old man who is not serious loses his dignity in this way?

Osman: People say that somebody who is old and not dignified -. For example, they say, "Oh, old people should not, of course, chatter, speak merrily, or - with people who are younger than them, because sometimes these younger men will speak about some things which are not - which is not becoming of old men to speak about". And so an old man who likes that - who likes to chatter with these young men and so on - he may have such worth and let them pass --. He may just -. They say he is -. Such a person - such an old person should be put in the same category of these young people. So if you respect your fellows who are of the same age, you respect him. Because he is not serious. They say he loses his respect or self-respect in this way. The old people, they say so.

TN: So it is *iẖtirām al-nafs*?

Osman: Yes, *iẖtirām al-nafs*.

TN: But not *karāma*?

Osman: Not *karāma*.

§ 126

TN: Yes. What does it mean to treat somebody as an equal?

Osman: As an equal? ...

TN: Or could you tell of some instance when you have not been treated as an equal?

Osman: Always people expect others to treat them or - as equals,

when they are of the same age or – or such. For example, a person of age, he speaks to me and he –. For example, if he – if it comes to anything, he won't object to my taking part with him or –. So – to treat an equal, I think, a kind of respect, just respect somebody. I respect him, and also he respects me, and I treat him as an equal.

TN: Do you feel insulted if somebody does not treat you as an equal?

Osman: Yes. If he is my age and own me – he is supposed to treat me as an equal, and he doesn't treat me –, of course, I feel insulted. So, this way will be against the dignity. For example, you may call it –.

TN: Against *karāma*?

Osman: Against dignity or *karāma*, I think.

TN: What word would you use for dignity here?

Osman: *Iḥtirām al-nafs*.

§ 127

TN: If a person is not generous, does that have any effect on his dignity?

Osman: No, I don't think. They – they say, of course, they suppose that – generosity is inherited, either from the tribe – the tribe as a whole is – has been or – is known to be generous, or certain families of the tribes are known to be generous. And so if you belong to a family whose people – whose people are not known to be generous, this doesn't affect dignity, I think, neither *karāma*, nor *sharaf*, nor dignity. But if somebody belongs to a family who is known to be generous, and became neither, as shall /?/ we say, deserves not to be a son /?/ of that family, respects you. He does not /re/present /?/ this aim /?/. And they just call him bad names. And of course, this does not affect his dignity or *sharaf*.

TN: Yes. What do you think of this?

Osman: I think generosity as a whole is good. To be known to people not to be generous –. Of course, in this case I don't think – the situation – or the financial situation of this person may be based /?/ upon other things.

§ 128

TN: Have your parents ever talked to you about *karāma*?

Osman: I don't remember, I don't think. But they –. It is a matter

of praise – they praise people who have *karāma* – they praise people who are *kirām* (generous, etc.) So they say, when we were young and someone of us get a piastre from his father and goes and buys something, sweets, for example, and he does not give the others, we say – we call him *bakhīl* (greedy). We are not generous, in this way. We may call him names, because you are not generous. So – sometimes we – we heard – you heard them speaking of people who own lots and lots of money, and they don't give any to people who are poor or people who are --. And even if they have guests, they don't give food to the guests or not invite them to have food --. So you are not explicitly told about this – Just you hear a story, and you hear /?/ that there are people who are not generous and --. Whether they practice it themselves or not, you don't notice that.

§ 129

TN: Women are not allowed to take part in parties, are they?

Osman: Women, they go to parties, but not with – with men. But when there is a ball or a dance, for example, they do come and sit together, but not mixed. But usually, when they go there in some place and stay there and sing, and the men will be on the other side – not quite a party.

TN: What would happen if a woman mixed with the men?

Osman: (Laughter.) Well – they – they just drive her away, --.

TN: What are you going to do yourself when you marry?

Osman: Of course, I will do the same. (Laughter.) Even I won't have -. Oh, I will have parties for men, and so women will not come and mix with them. So, it is a tradition, and if you do anything which is not familiar, what will people say -. Anyhow, they – they will not be interested at all. They say, you will destroy – destroy traditions. All people turn against you, and they will hate you. Even your family, your father --.

§ 130

TN: Do you think you will demand that your daughters carry a tobe also?

Osman: My daughters?

TN: Yes.

Osman: They may not be so keen on that, but if I insist that my daughters should not put on tobes, or carry tobes, of course,

people may gossip and say, "You see everybody who goes and have education, they come and just do not go in accordance with their fathers' traditions," and so on. And they also say that this is against religion. So, also this affects their respect to you, when you are placed in the country or the rural societies. You may come and -. If you are serious, and you are speaking about something which concerns them all, they won't listen to you. And so you are just a townner, not a villager. You don't know anything about the village. So you have no right to speak. So one doesn't /?/ always -. But I think they - they are in the charge of the villages. We began to have different beliefs and -. Not because they thought and found these beliefs are reasonable and so -. Just because they hate the - the old men. They don't like the old men. They say, "Old men, old men always are against what we wish or what we desire to do". They say, "What old men say is always not reasonable".

§ 131

TN: Do you think you will stick to all the old customs, or will you break some of them?

Osman: Some of the customs themselves are not - are not good, I think. So these, I think, which are not good -. Before I come to the university, before I go to the secondary schools, I see some of them are not good, which I will not keep at all, or stick to them.

TN: What are those?

Osman: For example, when somebody is dead, people, they come and stay and gather together at the deceased's house and stay for long times, for two months, just staying there doing nothing and they leave their work and stay for months, and just the family of the deceased spend on them --. This is a custom which I - I don't accept.

TN: What are you going to tell them?

Osman: Oh, I say - if - if I have somebody dead - my father and so on, my mother, my sister or anything - just after the burial I say, "Thank you very much. Now you have to leave this house /?/. It is all right. You can do nothing, and you can't bring him back from the dead, and --". Or I will come to the religious side and say, "Oh, this is God's wish. So you can't at all - and just gathering and assembling here to protest against God or do anything? Or do what? So I think there is no reason

why you stay here or -- stay here and just leave our work and sit down here".

TN: Do you think they will accept that?

Osman: Oh, some - some of them will grumble and some will say, "Oh, this boy is - there is nothing bad we know about him, and so he may be right". Some will grumble, of course.

TN: Will they think that you are not hospitable?

Osman: Sometimes. Some of them may think so. But I may not be the only person who can spend on you - of course, there may be - if it is -- their husband, they want to do the same and - my father, his brothers, and so on. Although the other people may go and make their *firāsh* - they call it *firāsh* - when they stay -- in their own house. This is the one.

§ 132

The other is about that - what they call it - some call the thing which they do it to girls - circumcision, which I - which I don't believe in and I don't accept it all. Even I try - sometimes I try to preach - to preach the people of the village, that this - this thing is very dangerous, and something pagan - it is not at all /?/ religious or has nothing to do with Islam.

TN: Yes. What do they say?

Osman: Oh, they don't accept it. They say - they say, "We don't want our girls to - commit adultery before they - they are married, and so on, without being discovered". This is what they say. But I think they are -. And this is a custom which I believe I won't stick to. And even if my wife, anyhow, I will warn her that if she did the things to my daughters in my absence, I will divorce her. Because I believe it is something cruel, very cruel. The operation itself is very cruel.

TN: Yes. There are two forms, one big operation and -.

Osman: Operation, yes, and one which is small, the *sunna* operation.

TN: Yes. Are you against both?

Osman: No. The *sunna* operation -. They cut a small part of the rudimentary clitoris, and I don't think this is -. And it doesn't at all give the pain that that operation gives, of course. This may not at all keep a person in bed or so, the small one. But that keeps a girl for - for about a month in bed.

TN: Will you allow the *sunna* operation?

Osman: Yes. I will allow the *sunna*, yes, the *sunna* operation. Which does not make a -. Anybody can do it -.

TN: Yes. Do you think that's a good thing?

Osman: No, just it is - religious. Prophet Mohammad ordered that - just say, they take this - this part which is -- out. And so -. So far as it does not harm or affect very much, one can have no objection against it. But the -- operation which is - sometimes, girls die. So this is another.

§ 133

Again, some forms of what they call courageous acts, I am also against. For example, a person - if he knows that he cannot face the situation, why should he go? But if I am prepared and so, I may go, of course. But when I know that I can't face it, that it is impossible for me. I won't go. Unless one does not know -. For example, if someone is going for help in the middle of the night, I must go and see if I can help. But I can't go just and face something which I can't -.

§ 134

TN: Do you think that there are any mistaken beliefs about *karāma*? Is there anything which you disagree with?

Osman: I can't think of examples, but, as I told you, before here, now, the killing of adulterates, or the adulterates, and so on, I don't agree with that. Of course, if it happens in my family, I won't - I won't kill her. Of course, I can't.

§ 135

TN: What about '*ird*'?

Osman: '*ird*'? It is the same as the *sharaf* which we are speaking about. *Sharaf* and '*ird*' are -. But '*ird*' is always concerned with women. When they call it /?/ '*ird*'. They say if somebody insults /?/ your wife, or your sister, you should call him the same. Or he tries to stick any vice to them, or to any one of them, --. So they say that protecting your '*ird*'. Because /?/ sometimes of hardships in the family, it's the '*ird*' and so /?/ --. People will be very keen that - desire your -- and daughters not to go out and beg, because some people may say, "We can't get any food unless we offer ourselves to us". Sometimes they kill them, because they may go out, under the influence of hunger they may be --. Some people may kill them.

TN: Yes. Do you think this has happened?

Osman: Yes. It happens. Sometimes, they kill them before – during the Mahdia. During the Mahdia, of course, the Khalifa's army was composed of the West Sudan tribes, the Ta'āysha, – and so on. People here in the northern Sudan they regard the Rizayqāt and – as slaves. And so sometimes, they kill their wives and daughters because they are afraid that the Rizayqāt come and attack. And even in the –, the owner of the whole village was there, men and brothers and people. The males of the village were killed by the Rizayqāt, they went and drowned themselves – get drowned in the river. They are afraid from the Rizayqāt to use them as women /?/. All in the river, they drowned themselves. So sometimes this *sharaf* –.

§ 136

TN: Yes. Do you think that *sharaf* is so important?

Osman: I think it is very important. It amounts to that if a person loses his self, he either kills his daughter or his wife, or he kills himself or just leave. This is –. The least one can do is that he leaves the area, the surroundings. Certainly, when – in particular, when it deals with '*ird*' or women. Oh, they regard it so important.

TN: Do you agree with this?

Osman: Oh, I don't agree that it is so very important, that it comes to committing murder or crime, if somebody has –.

§ 137

TN: Have women got as much *karāma* as men?

Osman: In the opinion of the people they are – they are – women very weak creatures – have nothing to do – they can't resist anything – they can – they can't – they say these virtues of *karāma*, *sharaf* and –, they can't be given to women or put in the hands of women, because they are weak, and they will lose it. So it is always in the hands of men. They don't – they don't blame a woman, anyhow, for what she does, when they punish her. A man /?/ punishes himself by punishing her /?/.

§ 138

TN: Yes. What about children?

Osman: No, of course, the – people, they don't blame them, I think.

TN: Would you talk about the *karāma* of a child?

Osman: No, I don't think. Whereas it is the *karāma* of the family, and the *sharaf* of the family. Because they say the whole thing sticks – it sticks to the family, not to persons, because if only one person of the family has committed what injures the *sharaf* of the family, it is the family's *sharaf*, not the person's. So –.

TN: Yes, you can talk of the family's *sharaf*. But can you talk of the family's *karāma* also?

Osman: No, I think, the person's *karāma*. But the family's *sharaf*. But sometimes they ascribe it to the family, and sometimes to the person. When the person – they say he represents the family, they speak of his *sharaf*.

§ 139

TN: Do you think that self-respect and dignity has anything to do with religion?

Osman: It may be included in some of the teachings, but I don't remember. Dignity and self-respect? I don't think they are explicitly mentioned, but some of the things which a Muslim must have as traits of his character may include self-respect and dignity. But they are not – I think – I don't think they are explicitly mentioned in the teachings. They may be included in some of them.

TN: Still, you think they are very important?

Osman: I can't give a clear – a sharp answer to that they are very important. I don't – just we keep them or stick to them, because people –.

§ 140

TN: Do you think one must be a good Muslim in order to have self-respect?

Osman: If you live in a community of Muslims, you must be a good Muslim to have self-respect. But if – just like our Islam – me, for example, I smoke, but I don't do anything besides smoking. So I think that I am not a good Muslim. Because – although Islam does not say – prevent people from smoking – but it is a kind of extravagance. You just lose your money on things which are no use. Yes, I believe that, of course. But – in a community of Muslims, a person must be a good Muslim to have respect, to gain self-respect.

§ 141

TN: If somebody does not fast, does that affect his dignity or self-respect?

Osman: No. If he is not a Muslim, it doesn't. And if he is a Muslim, also, it doesn't, because they say, if he is a Muslim, if he hasn't any excuse, he won't – he won't break fast – break fast. Yes, they always say a Muslim will /?/ not break fast unless he is ill or has any excuse, from fasting. But if he is not a Muslim, it doesn't affect, because he is not a Muslim.

TN: Yes. But if somebody who comes from a Muslim country does not fast, what would they think about him?

Osman: Here in the university community, of course, nobody knows whether he comes from a Muslim family or –. But there in the village, of course, he -- face /?/ the village. If he is fasting or break fasting. If he is not fasting, of course, he can't go to their family and say, "I want food". Nobody will give him food. And if his father discovers him, he may tell him, "Oh, are you still a baby or a child?" -- They – they relate it to patience and courage and so on.

TN: Would it reflect upon the family's *sharaf*?

Osman: No.

TN: In any way?

Osman: No, not at all.

TN: Wouldn't it give the family a bad reputation?

Osman: (Laughter). Yes, -- people who are all Muslims, and it is all the family does not stick to Islamic teachings or so, they may – yes, people may not respect these. So they are /?/ – they are atheists or *kuffār*, as they say. So they deserve no pity. They don't co-operate with them. But, of course, in the evening, the --- people, they don't know Islam very well, and they don't stick ---. So it does not affect the *sharaf* or *karāma*. ---

§ 142

TN: What do you think yourself of your fellow-students who do not fast?

Osman: Of course, since they are not Muslims, I don't blame them.

TN: Yes, but those who profess to be Muslims and not –.

Osman: And not fast? Oh, I say they are ill or –. --- And God does not order people to do something which hurts them. ---

TN: Yes. But what about those students who do not have any diseases or any other valid excuses? Those who just don't like it?

Osman: They don't like it and they are Muslim students – oh, we don't respect them. As Muslims. Or even we may talk to them and argue with them and say, "You have no right". And they say, "We can't read, we can't work during Ramadan, if we are fasting". It is not a valid excuse. Since it is not the time of the examinations, you can sleep by day and work during the night.

TN: Have you tried and persuade anybody to fast?

Osman: No. Not at all. All the people – Muslims – the percentage of Muslim students is not very – very high. Of course, you – you don't – you don't know them – you don't recognize whether a person is Muslim or not – because even people who don't pray regularly – who don't do their prayers regularly – sometimes you find somebody who is doing his prayer – there comes a time when you find him /?/ stealing to it or – and so you can't recognize whether he is a Muslim or not a Muslim. Just he admits /?/ that he does not like it, and there is no question of whether –.

§ 143

TN: When would you say that a student is a real Muslim?

Osman: Those who /?/ usually do the prayer after sunset in the mosque, and -- on Friday in the mosque, and the prayer of -- between eight and nine o'clock in the evening in the mosque, and so a person who usually comes to attend their prayer – we do believe that he is a Muslim.

TN: Do you think that is enough?

Osman: Oh, in just what he appears, of course. What goes on in his mind –. Even in Islam itself – there is –. You can't discover what is going on in people's mind. If they just appear to be so, we take them as so. Unless you discover that they are --. You take them in good faith that they are Muslims. Unless you discover that – if you are told, "We can't believe, we don't believe", we tell, if he does do that, he is just a pretence, he pretend to be a Muslim. But he – he go and drinks and frequents prostitutes and so on in place – and gambles and so on; we say, "Oh, you may be mistaken. You may have seen somebody else, and just mistook him for --." Anyhow, usually we don't easily give – give him away. We regard him as a Muslim /?/ for – if somebody tells us, unless somebody discovers by himself.

TN: Yes. Do you think it is important to have a good motive for being generous and hospitable and courageous and so on? What would you say of somebody who is hospitable just because he does not want to get a bad reputation?

Osman: (Laughter.) Oh, of course, according to my Islam does/?/ – myself, I say he is not generous at all. Because I think a person may look at it from –. Sometimes people are generous and they give – spend their money on people who do not need them, for example. They just pretend to be generous, for example, they meet anybody who does not need anything from them and he say, “We must go – we must buy you something and we must do that”. But I think generosity should be a kind of /?/ –. You give some people who need the money. Out of their –. Just you feel that. A human motive, I think. There must be a human motive. ---

TN: What would you say of a person if you discover that he is hospitable and generous and so on just because of his reputation?

Osman: (Laughter.) In fact, all the people of the village are so. They want to seek reputation, and they do confess – they say, “What is the use of money, if they did not bring you a good reputation?” They – they seek reputation, not a good reputation, just a reputation. Then of course –. Oh, they don’t think, of course, that Muslims don’t think of this. Muslims regard –. All of them are God’s sons. People are God’s sons, and so, when they need it, you spend it, when you don’t want it. But I think it is hard. You can hardly find anybody in the rural areas who think in this way. They just seek reputation.

TN: Do you think that is wrong?

Osman: Yes, it is wrong.

TN: What should one do instead?

Osman: Oh, of course, you may do that if you don’t need the money. And even if you can foresee that – even for some years in the future, you have enough, the rest you can give to the poor. Without seeking reputation or so. And so –. Anyhow, I am a Muslim myself. I believe in Islam. And in Islam they say, when you want to give some money to somebody, you should not mention your name or – even if you can’t do that without showing yourself to him or appearing in front of him. If you can just

throw that in his house without he seeing you, this is the best kind of generosity. So one shouldn't seek reputation from others /?/.

§ 145

TN: Yes. When people collect money for somebody who is going to get married –.

Osman: Yes?

TN: Does it happen that they make a list and state the amount of money which they have given?

Osman: Yes. Sometimes. Although also I don't believe in this. This is one of the customs which I do not accept.

TN: Yes. Is that usual or does it only happen sometimes?

Osman: No, it is usual. All the people do it. Usually, the person who is making the feast itself, he makes it for the purpose. He used to go and when he is invited to marriage-ceremonies and – and pay money. So – sometimes they don't make the list of the people or listing the amount. Sometimes they just give him the sum and they –. But sometimes the person who gives the money insists on – they do insist on that they should have their names registered. Because he may – and say that, "Oh, so-and-so or that friend of mine came, and he didn't give me anything". So you must register his name, because they remember that.

TN: Yes. How much should you contribute?

Osman: Oh, sometimes – sometimes they if somebody came to your marriage ceremony and gave you about 50 P.T.s, you usually give him more than that. Unless you haven't – you can give him the 50. But sometimes – between relatives, they pay very – very – great amounts of money – ten pounds or –.

TN: Do they think that this is a sign of generosity?

Osman: No, they just are contributing to the ceremony itself. Because it is not a kind of generosity at all.

§ 146

TN: What do you think are the most important virtues, traditional, Sudanese virtues?

Osman: Of course, I accept most of them, but modified. Not in the present form.

TN: Yes. Which are the most important, would you say?

Osman: Courage and honour.

TN: Yes.

Osman: Courage and honour are the most important, I think.

TN: In your own view?

Osman: In my own view.

TN: And after that?

Osman: Comes probably /ʔ/ generosity. (Laughter.) Because, you see, I think -- are going individualistic, I think. And by time, generosity will -- may not have the importance it has not in the rural areas. So --.

TN: Courage and dignity?

Osman: And honour. Dignity sometimes --.

TN: What Arabic word would you use here?

Osman: *Sharaf* and *shajā'a*.

TN: *Sharaf*. Not *karāma*?

Osman: *Lā*. No. Anyhow, it may be ancillary, but I don't --.

TN: What about *ih̥tirām al-nafs*?

Osman: I think these are minor virtues. Anyway, in my case, you might not find time to be in such a way for so long time or for such and such hours, so that you may contact these people and develop such *ih̥tirām al-nafs* or such things. -- Ministry of Education /ʔ/, I may be working for most of the day and go and have a rest, and after that, of course, do some work, read, for example, not go out, in the clubs -- I don't believe in clubs -- go and playing cards and --. So, these are my --. They may have an importance. But still these are -- I think -- are the most important, and still, my opinion of them is still a belief, of course. I believe in them, of course.

8. Interview with Ali and Osman, February 19, 1964

§ 147

Ali: I'll start by giving you some /ʔ/ other example about *karāma*. History tells us that when Ismā'il, son of Mohammad Ali, of Egypt, conquered the Sudan, and they proceeded to the village Shendi, where he met al-Mak Nimr. And Ismā'il asked al-Mak Nimr, I mean, to give a certain amount of money, and of cattles, sheep, and so on. Slaves of course. And while discussing this matter, Isma'il got angry and threw al-Mak Nimr his pipe. Of course, Mak Nimr was very angry at that time, but he didn't say anything. But night -- first he said to Ismā'il that O.K., I'll bring all these things to you, and so on -- at night, he made a

kind of celebration /?/ and brought alcoholic, the national alcoholic, the merissa, the soldiers of Ismā'il. And when all the soldiers and Ismā'il himself were drunk, the men of the tribe of Mak Nimr brought canes, and so on, and set all the huts – and set them on fire. So all the soldiers were burned, and also Ismā'il himself. I think this is /?/ a good example for *karāma*.

Osman: Because Mak Nimr felt that he was insulted, Isma'il /?/ insulted his dignity.

Ali: He was treated as an inferior.

TN: Do you think he acted rightly?

Osman: Of course, when – when one compares the loss of life and the things he caused, of course, he didn't act rightly. At least, he might have prepared for a battle with Ismā'il. I think, it is sort of hideous action, not –. The Sudanese always insist upon that there should be equal chances on both sides. ---

§ 148

Osman: So many minor stories go in the same direction of *karāma*. Sometimes I heard of – you may hear that somebody just insulted the District Commissioner – the English District Commissioner – because he called him bad names, or he even – hit a soldier, because the soldier pushed him out of the court. He was punished for that, and paid about fifteen or twenty pounds, just for that crime. So people here are famous as hot-tempered.

TN: Is Mak Nimr famous for being courageous?

Osman: No, this does not show that he is courageous.

TN: Has he shown it in any other ways?

Ali: The very fact that he fled, I mean, does not show that he is courageous, of course.

Osman: Yes. – Anyhow, the Ja'aliyyin tribe, they take it that he – he was courageous. But other tribes, when they fall out with one of the Ja'aliyyin tribe, and they call – they – they may call him that he was not courageous or he was a coward – he fled. He should have stayed and fought Mohammad Diftardār who came to punish him.

TN: Do you think it would have been reasonable for him to stay? If he had no chances?

Osman: No, it would not have been reasonable. -- But he has done was not reasonable, in the first place. Of course, the only chance for him –. What would be reasonable of him what he has done, I think. His flying away.

TN: So you wouldn't blame him for being a coward?

Osman: No. Except when I am angry with a Ja'ali, I call him an Abyssinian or coward.

§ 149

TN: Yes. Do you have any other examples?

Osman: What about the other example you told me about?

Ali: Oh, it is about one of my relatives. He was working at Port Sudan. He was doing his job very well. Then he was asked to train another one. Well, he trained him. And after some years the one who was trained was promoted. I mean, he became senior to my relative. So this – my relative resigned, and came here to Khartoum. When I asked him why he did that, he said he – this was an insult. He was insulted.

TN: Would you feel that – would a Sudanese feel that it would be an insult even if the other one was better?

Ali: I mean, the very fact that he trained him, I mean –.

TN: Yes, but suppose that you train somebody and he becomes much better than you are?

Osman: Yes, of course, this is not a reason to resign. Today, I think, I know of many who were trained by old men and became excellent. And they are their seniors. They don't resign.

TN: Do they feel insulted?

Osman: Sometimes when you ask them, they – they revolt and say that this government is corrupt because this was somebody who – – and so he became my senior, because he has some relative in the government who – who made him superior; he does not deserve it. They say so. Even he deserves it, they say he does not deserve it. So, in fact, they – they feel that they are insulted. But usually, they don't resign. Except for some people. Some people may resign.

TN: Yes, yes. Do they feel that their *karāma* is affected? Or their self-respect?

Osman: This may – may – may be regarded as – may be regarded as having effect on *karāma*. But not serious. As other things.

TN: Did your relative feel that his self-respect was affected by this incident?

Ali: No, I don't think. But his *karāma*.

Osman: But usually people call something their *karāma* which is not theirs, their *karāma*, in fact, it is not. They just say it is their

karāma. And some people who very hot-tempered or moody, usually –.

§ 150

TN: Yes. Could you give me some example – some other example? ---

Osman: Yes, I can remember one example. Once, they say, ---, the grandfather of the present Abū Sins – Abū Sin is the name of a family who – from very early became the head of the tribe of the Shukriyya, the Shukriyya tribe – and they say that great Abū Sin, he usually sits in the shade of a canteen in the market. And he just when he sees somebody who – whom he does not like – he just order – order him to come and call him bad names. Once, while he was sitting, they say, somebody who was an official, or a teacher of an intermediate school, came near the place where he was sitting, and he didn't greet him. Abū Sin felt that this – he felt that this man does not respect him. And so when he saw him again, he said, "Oh, call that man". When he came near, he looked at him and said, "What are you wearing?" He said, "I am wearing a pair of trousers". "What are they made of?" He said, "They are made of khaki". "Oh – this khaki, your father, before he died, he was very much eager to have some clothes of khaki. But he couldn't – he died before he could fulfil his wish". And so – this -- was a kind of insult, that your father, while he was living, just wish to have some clothes made of khaki, and he didn't fulfil his wish. So even not to greet somebody – he may regard it as an insult in order that /?/ you do not respect him. Or his *karāma* is affected if you don't greet him. ---

TN: Did he expect the others to greet him?

Osman: Yes, yes.

Ali: Not because he was superior, I think, because, as I told you, everybody considers himself as – as equal as anybody. I think, because Abū Sin was an old man, older than the teacher. So he expected the teacher to greet him.

TN: Do the older people expect the younger people to greet them first?

Osman: Yes. In Islam they say: the young greets the old; if you are two and we are three, you greet us; a person who is sitting on the ground should be greeted by a person who is standing up; a per-

son who is a pedestrian should greet a person who is riding a camel or a cow; and so on. This is the rule. ---

§ 151

Osman: I will tell a story about Ibrahim Mûsa Mâlik. He has a tree which he used as a court. He usually comes after breakfast and sits there and listens to people's complaints. While he was there, the District Commissioner, the English District Commissioner, came. And the - he had called /?/ also the *nâzîr* or the head of the tribe, and sent for him. Ibrahim Mûsa, he was very - very angry, and he felt insulted when the British District Commissioner sent for him. He said to the person sent, "You go and tell him that if he wants me he should come. I won't go to him. Here I am not to be ordered by the British. I shall tell them what to do in the area of - in my area, when they are dealing with things concerning my tribe". And the British Commissioner came, and when he arrived at the tree, at the place where the head was meeting with his counsellors, by the time he arrived, --. And the District Commissioner went and reported this to the Governor. The Governor said, "This is - this is all right. We can ask the head of the tribe for that". And Ibrahim was questioned. He said, "Yes, this part of the country is not yours, it is not his, and so he should not send for me - he should come to me, where I am --". And he asked Ibrahim whether he wants the District Commissioner to apologize or he wants just the reconciliation or reconcile the matter. He said. "No, the Commissioner should apologize for what he has done. It is an insult to me. If - if he does it again, you must replace him by another". And so the District Commissioner came and apologized --. And so sometimes this may be /?/ an insult, I think. It would /?/ be regarded as an insult.

Usually - of course - things have changed - today, all men of the villages also have the same idea about this. If just by mistake you say anything to a father /?/ or /?/ an old man, he may regard it as an insult, and you will be punished for that or be called bad names and say, "You are not polite", or so. But today, I think, this may not be regarded as an insult.

Ali: No, I think, if I were in his place, in Mûsa's place, I would consider it as an insult. Because the District Commissioner treated him as he treat - as he treat anybody --.

Osman: I think since this District Commissioner, this *nâzîr* or

head of the tribe comes under the authority of the District Commissioner, he should treat him so. Why did he do so? Or asked him to come and see him?

TN: So you would also think that it was an insult?

Osman: I don't think it is an insult. I think the *nāzir* is under the authority of the District Commissioner, and so the District Commissioner did not insult him, when he sent for him.

TN: So you disagree with Ali here?

Osman: Yes. I think when the boss sends for one of his secretaries or so, it is not an insult. Or some of the people who work with him. So the District Commissioner of course – in fact, the *nāzir* was under the District Commissioner, the Commissioner's authority. So it wasn't an insult.

Ali: Yes, but he thinks of himself – I mean – who has privileges and is not like others. And so he should not be treated like others.

§ 152

TN: Do you think that some people stress their dignity too much nowadays?

Osman: Yes? Nowadays? I don't think so. Nowadays people – sometimes they accept things which really affect their dignity. And they just say, "It doesn't matter".

Ali: It does matter, but, of course, he can't do anything.

TN: Yes. Could you illustrate that with some example?

Osman: For example, in the Gezira area, the field inspectors who are in charge of certain blocks or certain areas – they are young people, just our age – sometimes they come and insult old people, call them slack, lazy. "You are not paying attention of taking heed of your work. Just I dismiss you". And so, they accept it.

TN: But they feel insulted?

Osman: Yes, they feel insulted, but they – they accept it.

TN: Why do they accept it?

Osman: Oh, they say, "They are our seniors, and even if we go and complain about this, they won't listen to us". But some people don't accept it. Even they quarrel, and then they call them bad names.

TN: Do you think they ought to protest?

Osman: If –. Of course, I think, the field inspectors should use

somewhat moderate language, not to insult people. Because even if somebody is your inferior or second, you should not – you should not insult him. Just tell him that he didn't do his work and you want him to do so. ---

Osman: It depends upon the kind of the insult. If somebody call me, "You are bastard", for example, oh, this will be a very great provocation. You may kill him. (Laughter.)

TN: Do you think it would be right to kill him?

Osman: No, it is not right, of course. You may just call him bastard in return, and settle the matter.

TN: Do you think you could be provoked so much that it would be justified to kill somebody else?

Osman: I don't think. Unless it comes to matters of 'ird, for example. If you find somebody with your sister, for example. Here of course, if you – if you are not so keen on the matter that you kill that fellow or so – you are just afraid that people may – when people hear it, they may call you a coward or somebody --. They will call you a -- or just you are not --. This may be a kind of provocation which they think justifies one to kill, --. But usually, they kill them both.

TN: Has this happened recently, in your village?

Osman: No, but there are cases. They were published in the newspapers. About somebody who found someone else with his wife and killed them both. Of course, he was tried for murder, and he was hanged. Some may just satisfy themselves by giving him a hard beat or so. ---

§ 153

TN: Do you think that these traditional virtues apply equally to men and to women?

Osman: Here?

TN: Yes.

Ali: Of course, some of them apply only to men -- the case of courage.

Osman: I think – usually, they are understood to apply to men, because women usually do not take a very great part in life, here. Of course, this is due to some factors that – here in the Sudan -- women have not a very great chance to participate in life. And so one cannot say that they apply equally to both sexes. This may be the reason – that a woman does not partici-

pate in life, and so one cannot say they apply equally. Even here in the towns where women think that they are taking part in life, usually they don't – they think the traditional virtues do not apply to them. Even an educated woman who thinks that she is an equal to man, she is not courageous at all.

§ 154

TN: Do you think that they should apply equally to men and women?

Osman: I think it would be better. Society will go alright if certain particular ones are – particular virtues like those concerned with *sharaf* and *karāma*, and so if they apply equally and they are just respected by both sexes, this may be all right. Courage, to some extent. There will be no harm in that.

TN: Do you agree?

Ali: Do you expect the man to accept that – to accept that – I am asking Osman. Do you expect that a man would accept the insult of his wife when she finds him with another woman? I mean, the man has the right, of course, to beat her, but –.

Osman: Why – why should – shouldn't she –?

Ali: To beat him?

Osman: Not beat him. At least, she may divorce him or order that – order for divorce. Or she may go to her family's house and her father. She – I think she has a right to go equal, and I think, in my case, I won't -- my wife if she finds me committing such a crime. That she orders divorce or even insults me. I won't accept myself, first /?/. Because I confess that I deserve it.

Ali: I think, if it applied equally to the women, the whole social life will upset then – this will upset the whole social life.

Osman: Yes, it would.

TN: It would certainly imply changes for the Sudan.

Both: Yes.

TN: Do you think that that would be good or bad on the whole?

Ali: Of course, I don't like the prevailing conditions now. But I don't want also a radical change to be applied equally to the women, but gradually.

Osman: No, I want change /?/. Don't you want to participate? To see that there is complete change? --

Ali: Not complete, I think.

Osman: Is it not going gradually now? Of course, in the towns, I think life is different from life in the country.

TN: Do you feel that it changes slowly or rapidly?

Osman: In the towns, there is rapid change. Even change with regard to their – in their villages. One notices that there is change, some change. For example, ten years ago no Sudanese woman would call her husband by his name. Today, people who are of our age or under our age, their wives call them by their names. Sometimes they will eat with them on the same table. And this, of course, did not happen in the old families. There are many things which are changed now.

TN: Will you allow your wife to eat at the same table as you?

Ali: Of course.

TN: Even when you have guests?

Ali: No. (Laughter.) It depends upon the kinds of the guests, of course. If they are my relatives and close friends, it's all right. But if she doesn't know them –. You see, it is a bit difficult, because one likes to change a bit, I mean, not to stick to what is traditional. But at the same time, he finds himself that unconsciously he sticks to them. This you notice among the students. You find each one of them wants to have a girl-friend and to go with her and so on. But when it comes to be applied to the sister, he doesn't want that. So unconsciously this kind of confliction, psychological confliction, it is very difficult. ---

Notes

Chapter 1. The Field of Ethics, pp. 13–26.

¹ On the history of the term 'ideology', see e.g. Naess *et al.* 1956.

² It might be thought unnecessary to emphasize the point that the language of science should not always be precise. Yet it is curious to notice how deeply the idea of the ideal language, free from vagueness, ambiguity and other kinds of unclarity, has impressed analytic philosophy.

³ The term was suggested to me by Prof. H. Törnebohm in discussion.

⁴ E.g. Godfrey Wilson in his study of Nyakyusa ethics (Wilson 1960).

⁵ Moore 1903, p. 2.

⁶ Taylor 1961 contains a clear expression of this view.

⁷ On criteria of disinterestedness and universalisability, see e.g. Brandt 1959, Ch. 2, and Hospers 1961, pp. 169–174, where further references can be found. In my opinion, such criteria had better be regarded as proposed criteria of adequacy for ethical systems. Cf. sec. 5 and 6 below.

⁸ I.e., 'ethics', like other terms for cultural entities, has got an "open texture". Cf. the illuminating discussion of 'religion' in Alston 1964, pp. 87–90.

⁹ Ladd 1957 and Hytten 1959 contain critical surveys of current definitions of 'ethics'.

¹⁰ Ladd 1957, p. 45.

¹¹ Ladd 1957 does not escape this criticism.

¹² Cf. Ladd 1957, p. 45.

¹³ E. Durkheim 1953, pp. 35–36; cf. Ladd 1957, p. 49.

¹⁴ There exists an extensive literature on the question of why one should be moral. See e.g. Taylor 1961, pp. 142–149, and Hospers 1961, sec. 11, where further references can be found.

¹⁵ Macbeath 1952; Brandt 1954; Ladd 1957. In this context I should also like to mention M. & A. Edel's survey *Anthropology and Ethics* (1959).

¹⁶ E.g. Moore's use of the method of isolation; see Macbeath 1952, Lectures XIII–XIV.

¹⁷ Cf. Macbeath 1952, p. 57.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 424.

¹⁹ Brandt 1954, p. 55.

²⁰ Brandt 1954, p. 64.

²¹ Ladd emphasizes conditions (ii), (v), and (vi) on similarity to ordinary usage, intercultural applicability and effectiveness (see pp. 45, 81). Demand (iii) on an interesting field is not explicitly formulated, but the demand that the definition should make it possible to develop "a comprehensive, rigorous, and sound theoretical system" (p. 44) is perhaps intended to make this point. Demand (i) on explicitness is taken care of on p. 73 f. where intuitive criteria are rejected. As for condition (iv) – that the definition should not delimit too narrow a field – Ladd considers that even a definition as wide as Brandt's is incompatible with a high degree of "logical rigor and objective verifiability" (p. 316). I shall argue in the next two chapters that Ladd's insistence on a very simple methodology leads him to a conception of ethics which is too narrow for the purposes of descriptive ethics.

²² Ladd 1957, p. 82.

²³ Ladd 1957, pp. 45, 76, 316.

²⁴ Ladd 1957, p. 316.

²⁵ Ladd 1957, p. 85.

²⁶ Ladd 1957, p. 85.

²⁷ Ladd 1957, p. 107.

Chapter 2. The Deductive Ideal, pp. 27–35.

¹ Stevenson 1944, p. 174 ff.

² Cf. e.g. Mill's *Utilitarianism* or Hospers 1961, Ch. 5. Moore 1912 remains the clearest statement of the utilitarian theory of ethics; cf. also Smart 1961.

³ Ladd 1957, p. 278.

⁴ Ladd 1957, pp. 277–278.

⁵ Cf. Ladd 1957, p. 279.

⁶ Brandt 1959, p. 295.

⁷ Naess and Galtung draw this consequence in their reconstruction of Gandhi's political ethics and discuss whether their reconstructed system of principles is complete, consistent, and independent; see Naess and Galtung 1955.

⁸ Pound 1959, pp. 59, 69.

⁹ Waismann 1952, p. 119 ff.

¹⁰ See Hart 1961, pp. 121–132.

¹¹ Hart 1961, p. 129 ff.

¹² The history of the notion of a dangerous article in American case law is very instructive; see e.g. Levi 1961, pp. 9–27.

¹³ Cf. Edel's emphasis on the need for investigations of "the full cultural content" of ethical terms (Edel 1959, p. 118).

¹⁴ The usual definitions of 'connotation' seem tailor-made for closed terms. Black 1952, e.g., explains that "The connotation of a term is

the sum total of properties that anything must have in order that the term will apply to it" (p. 438). On this definition, open-textured terms would seem to have no connotations. But, as Prof. Naess has pointed out to me, this is a subtle issue which stands in need of further clarification.

¹⁵ Mill seems to have been dimly aware of this when he wrote that there are many things which are "part of happiness", as he somewhat inadequately expressed it (*Utilitarianism*, Ch. IV).

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Ladd 1957, pp. 282-284, or Brandt 1959, p. 354.

¹⁷ Smart 1961 is an exception.

Chapter 3. The Study of Ideologies, pp. 36-45.

¹ Cf. Ofstad 1961 on stable but low-integrated decisions (p. 18).

² Ladd 1957, p. 14.

³ Hare 1952, p. 1.

⁴ Hare 1957, p. 182.

⁵ Aristotle mentions some of them in his study of incontinence (*The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book Seven).

⁶ Hare expresses himself much more cautiously in his latest book (Hare 1963, ch. 5).

⁷ Firth 1951, pp. 189-190.

⁸ Cf. Naess 1956, pp. 1-3.

⁹ Richards 1938, p. 50.

¹⁰ Cf. Ladd 1957, pp. 23-25, 263-265.

¹¹ Naess 1956, p. 5.

¹² The two most important works to consult are Naess 1953 and Naess 1956.

¹³ Ladd 1957, p. 13.

¹⁴ Ladd 1957, p. 85 ff.

¹⁵ Ladd 1957, p. 108.

¹⁶ Banton 1961, p. 116; Southall 1961, p. 16.

¹⁷ Cf. J. L. Austin's work on "speech-acts" (Austin 1961 and 1962).

Chapter 4. The Ethics of Virtue, pp. 46-55.

¹ The inner-life conception of the ethics of virtue is also too narrow to do justice to many ethical systems to be found in European cultures. This is probably one of the reasons which have contributed to make the ethics of virtue a relatively neglected field in contemporary moral philosophy. Cf. sec. 3 and 5 below.

² Moore 1922, p. 320.

³ Moore 1922, p. 321.

⁴ von Wright 1963 (a), p. 14.

⁵ von Wright's essay on virtue in 1963 (b) is wedded to this Aristotelian-Christian tradition in the ethics of virtue. His notion of a virtue is, therefore, not suitable for our purposes. Other recent writers have largely neglected this field of ethics.

⁶ Sidgwick 1907, pp. 217, 219 (note), 237 (note).

⁷ To take the word 'trait' in such a wide, non-committal sense seems to agree well with ordinary usage. Among the senses of 'trait' listed in *The Oxford English Dictionary* are "A particular feature of mind or character; a distinguishing quality; a characteristic" (1933 ed., Vol. XI, p. 241).

⁸ The terminology as well as the example from Charters 1927; see e.g. pp. 114-115.

⁹ Cf. Ofstad 1961 on free will.

¹⁰ Hume 1902, p. 99.

¹¹ On the teleological-deontological distinction, cf. ch. 2, sec. 4.

¹² *The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book Two (1955, p. 66).

¹³ Hume's ethics has sometimes been presented on the pattern of an action-centered ethics, e.g. by C. D. Broad in his widely read essay on Hume in *Five Types of Ethical Theory* (1930). Broad tried to find answers in Hume's text to the kind of questions Moore raised in *Principia Ethica*. The result makes odd reading indeed for one who has Hume's own presentation of his ethics in fresh memory.

¹⁴ See e.g. the surveys in Edel 1959 (Ch. XIII) and Ladd 1957 (pp. 52-59).

¹⁵ Benedict 1946, p. 222 ff.

¹⁶ On the ambiguities of the terms 'internal' and 'external' as used of sanctions, see Ladd 1957, p. 55 f.

¹⁷ Dickson 1949, pp. 305-306.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

¹⁹ Cf. the following explanation in Freudian terms of the difference between a guilt-oriented conscience and a shame-oriented conscience: "A person with a guilt-oriented superego suffers guilt when he transgresses, even if none perceives his transgression, because the agent of punishment (the introjected figure) is always with him. However, a person with a shame-oriented super-ego does not suffer shame when he transgresses unless others witness his transgression, for no agent of punishment (the external others) is present. Instead of experiencing *actual* punishment (shame), he continues to anticipate punishment, he suffers from anxiety". Spiro 1961, p. 120.

²⁰ Brandt 1954, p. 113.

²¹ Sidgwick 1907, p. 217. Cf. sec. 2 above.

²² Cf. ch. 2, sec. 2-3.

²³ Lecky 1904, p. 44.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter 5. The Analysis of Virtues, pp. 56-64.

¹ Cf. von Wright 1963 (b), p. 138.

² The Oxford English Dictionary (1933), Vol. XI, pp. 238-240.

³ Brandt 1959, p. 467, note 7. Cf. e.g. von Wright 1963 b, p. 144.

⁴ Brandt 1959, pp. 466-467.

⁵ Both Brandt and Hospers deal with virtues and vices in the course of discussions of free will and responsibility (Brandt 1959, ch. 18; Hospers 1961, ch. 10).

⁶ Roback 1927, p. 450. Quoted from Allport 1937, p. 51.

⁷ Stagner 1961, e.g., considers only studies of moral behaviour of the latter kind (studies of "habitual patterns of behaviour organized around goals designated by society as permissible or forbidden"; p. 215). Hartshorne and May's study of honesty amongst school-children (1928) seems to have been unclear on this point; cf. the discussion in Stagner 1961, pp. 215-217.

⁸ Allport and Odbert 1936.

⁹ Allport 1937, p. 309.

¹⁰ The list of terms was based on the 400,000 separate terms and derivatives in Webster's *New International Dictionary* (1925). The criterion for inclusion in the list consisted "in the capacity of any term to distinguish the behaviour of one human being from that of another" (Allport and Odbert 1936, p. 24). E.g.: "abrupt, absent-minded, abstemious, academic . . . ; abashed, ablaze, absorbed, accusing, affrighted . . . ; absurd, acceptable, acclaimed, accomplished . . . ; abrasive, absinthine, abstract, abysmal, accidental . . ." (from the sampling of terms listed in Allport 1937, p. 309).

¹¹ Hartshorne and May seem to have overlooked this point in their study of dishonesty among school-children (Hartshorne & May 1928). Cf. the comments in Stagner 1961, pp. 215-217.

¹² Charters 1927, pp. 46, 60. Charters gives several other instructive examples as well (ch. III).

Chapter 6. Survey of the Investigation, pp. 67-76.

¹ Krótki 1958, p. 36 f.

² On the ambiguities of the term 'Arab' as used in the Sudan, see Barbour 1961, p. 80.

³ Krótki 1958, p. 36 f.

⁴ Barclay 1964 makes the estimate that "possibly 70% of the population is Muslim" (p. vii).

⁵ Trimingham 1949, p. 4; Saad ed Din Fawzi 1957, p. 395. Cf. Barbour 1961, p. 74.

⁶ The *khalwa* is "the indigenous institution for the provision of literacy and the memorization of the Koran" to be found in nearly all parts of the Northern Sudan (Nasr el Hag Ali 1954, pp. 13-14). Cf. Kitchen 1962, pp. 70-71; Barclay 1964, pp. 168-169.

⁷ The Muslim Brotherhood spread to the Sudan from Egypt in the early 1950's, according to one informant. It did not emerge openly as a political party until after the fall of the military regime in October, 1964.

⁸ Nordenstam & Shaw 1967 (a).

⁹ Nordenstam & Shaw 1967 (b).

¹⁰ See ch. 5, sec. 5.

¹¹ J. K. Campbell's recent investigation of moral values in a Greek village is a good example of this kind of study (Campbell 1964). Barclay's study of a suburb of Khartoum (Barclay 1964) provides some of the background necessary for ideological research of this kind in the Northern Sudan.

¹² Cf. ch. 8.

Chapter 7. Courage, Generosity and Hospitality, pp. 77-91.

¹ Wehr-Cowan 1961 gives the following translations of *shajā'a*: "courage, bravery, valor, valiance, boldness, audacity" (p. 465).

² Crowfoot 1918 reports similarly from the Rubāṭāb that if a boy drops his head during the operation of circumcision or does not reply to his comrades' cheers or shrinks at all, "he is counted as a coward and a disgrace to himself and his family" (p. 132). Nor do girls or women usually utter any cries at circumcision or child-birth (p. 133, 129). Abdulla El Tayib 1955 reports the belief that too much display of courage while in labour would make the mother or her children vulnerable to the Evil Eye; the patient ought therefore to groan and cry ostentatiously (p. 150).

³ Literally: "slyness, cunningness, shrewdness, adroitness, skill, cleverness, smartness" (Wehr-Cowan, p. 471) or "courage" (Abdulla El Tayib 1956, p. 60).

⁴ Abdulla El Tayib describes similar forms of *shaṭāra* and *buṭān* in his 1956 paper; *shaṭāra*, *buṭān* and *sura*, wrestling, were the most important games of manliness and strength, he writes (p. 60). Cf. also Davies 1957, p. 70.

⁵ Crowfoot 1922 refers to *buṭān* during the marriage ceremonies in the Dongola district as well as in Burri outside Khartoum (pp. 7, 14).

⁶ The Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. 3, Ch. 8 (Aristotle 1955, pp. 100-101).

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ Nichomachean Ethics, Bk. 3, Ch. 8. There are striking similarities between Aristotle's views on courage and those of the informants.

⁹ This point was suggested to me by Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim el-Shoush.

¹⁰ Wehr-Cowan gives the following translations of *karam*: "noble nature; high-mindedness, noble-mindedness, noble-heartedness, generosity, magnanimity; kindness, friendliness, amicability; liberality, munificence" (p. 821).

¹¹ Wehr-Cowan: "*ḍiyāfa* — hospitable reception, entertainment as guest, accommodation; hospitality" (pp. 548-549).

¹² On the connections between hospitality and the other virtues, on the one hand, and honour, reputation, shame on the other hand, see ch. 8, sec. 6; ch. 9, sec. 2.

¹³ Cf. Westermarck 1912, pp. 596, 571-572.

¹⁴ On the importance of the motive, see further ch. 9, sec. 4.

¹⁵ Sūra IX. Quoted from Palmer's translation (1928, p. 163).

¹⁶ Westermarck 1912, pp. 526-569.

Chapter 8. Honour and Dignity, pp. 92-105.

¹ On female circumcision in the Sudan, see MacDonald 1936 (this paper is often referred to but I have not been able to trace a copy of it) and Barclay 1964, pp. 237-240.

² Barclay 1964, p. 237.

³ Here the informants seem to reflect widespread opinions. According to Barclay 1964, many of the men in the suburban village outside Khartoum which he investigated believed that infibulation is a kind of protection for the girls (p. 240); and Trimmingham 1949 asserts that "Northerners do not trouble to justify the practice /of Pharaonic circumcision/. It is '*āda* (custom)'" (p. 182). Trimmingham mentions that the Baqqāra say that infibulation is a protection against untimely pregnancy as well as a way of making the girls more attractive to men (*ibid.*). The last reason was also mentioned by Barclay's informants (*loc. cit.*), but not by mine.

⁴ Similarly Crowfoot 1918, p. 122.

⁵ For *dignitas* I follow E. Wistrand's interpretation (Wistrand 1962). (The historical correctness of his interpretation, on which I cannot judge, is, of course, of no importance in the present context.)

⁶ Wistrand 1962, pp. 30-31. My translation.

⁷ Wistrand distinguishes between five social classes (*op. cit.*, p. 20).

Chapter 9. The Ethics of Respect and Self-Respect, pp. 106–116.

¹ Cf. the similar story in Davies 1957: "Do you want to shame me before my people?" he demanded. "Who would marry my daughters if I failed to show hospitality to a guest?" (p. 79).

² On the distinction between shame and guilt, see ch. 4, sec. 4.

³ Cf. e.g. *sura* II in the Koran: "make not your almsgiving vain by taints and annoyance, like him who expends what he has for the sake of appearances before men ..." (Palmer 1928, p. 38).

⁴ Peck and Havighurst 1960, pp. 5–8.

Chapter 10. Further Problems, pp. 117–125.

¹ A number of hypotheses arising out of the present study will be tested through three sets of questionnaires on the concepts of honour, dignity and self-respect which were distributed to the first and fourth year students in the University of Khartoum in Autumn 1966. The analysis of the data obtained with the help of these questionnaires has not yet been concluded.

² Doughty 1936 (see e.g. Vol. I. p. 447), Dickson 1949 (see e.g. ch. VII), Musil 1928 (see e.g. ch. XIX).

³ Watt 1960, p. 21.

⁴ Goldziher 1889, Vol. I, p. 13; Watt 1960, p. 22; Farès 1932, p. 30 ff. Wehr-Cowan translates *murūwa* as "the ideal of manhood, comprising all knightly virtues, esp., manliness, valour, chivalry, generosity, sense of honour", p. 902).

⁵ Cf. Farès 1932, e.g. p. 34 ff. There is much interesting material on pre-Islamic ethics to be found in this work, as well as in Shoush 1959.

⁶ The concept of *ird* among the Awlad Ali in the Western Desert of Egypt appears to be rather similar to that of my informants; see Abou A.M. Zeid's paper on *Honour and Shame Among the Bedouins of Egypt* in Peristiany 1965.

⁷ Pitt-Rivers 1954; Campbell 1964, cf. also the papers in Peristiany 1965.

⁸ Peristiany 1965, p. 9.

Note on the transliteration of Arabic words and names

There exists no generally accepted system for the transliteration of Arabic words and names. Several codes are used for the transliteration of written Arabic; and in the case of colloquial Arabic, one can take either the spoken or the written form as the starting-point for the reproduction of the expression in English. In this book, Arabic words and names have been transliterated on the basis of their written forms according to the following code:

(1) *Consonants:*

ع ' ʿ	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ṣ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع ' ʿ	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	ه h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي y

Silent t (ة) is omitted.

(2) *Vowels:*

fatha	a	(lengthened: ā)
ḍamma	u	(lengthened: ū)
kasra	i	(lengthened: ī)

This system has, however, not been followed in the case of well-known names (like 'Khartoum', 'Gezira', 'the Koran', 'Ali', 'Osman', 'Ibrahim') and a few well-known words (like 'tobe', 'omda').

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