

## From Moors to Marronage: The Islamic Heritage of the Maroons in Jamaica

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### Introduction

The process of reconquista in Spain ended with the final conquest of the last Muslim possession, Granada, in 1492, as Columbus with his Andalusian mariners embarked on his adventures in the Atlantic. While Christian demands for religious homogeneity led to the forceful conversion or exile of the Muslim population from Spain, the natives in the West Indies perished in millions due to diseases and 'cruelties more atrocious and unnatural than any recorded of untutored and savage barbarians'.<sup>1</sup> Negro slaves brought from Spain's houses of Muslim captives to work in the mines and in the production of sugar died as rapidly as the Indians, but as they continued to be replenished from Spain many resorted to *jihad* or holy wars against the indignity of slavery. A common resistance to the slave system and one which was perhaps the most vexing to the owners was the flight from servitude to establish their own communities based on their tradition and culture in inhospitable and inaccessible areas. They became the cimarrones or the Maroons and Maroon communities, also called *Quilombos* in Brazil, became a common feature in the New World plantation economy. Marronage initiated by the Spanish Maroons became the nucleus of the Maroon society in Jamaica under the British.

### Historical Omissions

The presence of Maroon societies in the New World plantation economy is well documented. The history of the Maroons constitutes an important aspect of the historical study of Jamaica particularly because of the British recognition of their societies as separate entities beyond the jurisdiction of the British colonial government and their continuance into the present. However, there is much misinformation, misconception and misrepresentation regarding Jamaican Maroons. The Islamic heritage of the Maroons has not been studied, despite all the indications that Negroes brought directly to the West Indies from Spain were of Moorish background and who were believed by the Spanish government to be facilitating marronage.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, many African slaves who subsequently joined the Spanish Maroons also professed the Islamic faith as they came from the western and the sub-Saharan regions of Africa which saw the rapid spread of Islam from as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries. Between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries, a succession of Sudanic Kingdoms—Ghana, Mali, Kanem, Songhay, Hausaland and Dogomba—was organized under the banner of Islam incorporating Madinka, Fula, Susu, Ashanti, Hausa and other nations. The present paper attempts to focus on the Islamic heritage of the Maroons and examines the political and social structures from an Islamic perspective.

The omission regarding the Muslim background of the Maroons, like the misrepresentations, may be due to several factors. Historians are handicapped by the absence of written documents by the historical Maroons. The imperative of secrecy to maintain their strategy and their marronage perhaps precluded written history and hence restricted knowledge of their perceived goals, their religious beliefs, their social and cultural traditions and their economic and political structures. The uncertainty which historians encounter regarding the ethnic background and the faith of the historical Maroons was with all probability due to the deliberate intention to maintain secrecy regarding the Islamic belief. The Muslim Negroes knew too well the wrath of Christendom and Europe towards Islam. Spanish-Islamic people had been sold into slavery since the thirteenth century as Christian Spain began to reconquer its lost possessions from the Muslims. In addition, the hatred of the Crusaders was fresh in the memories particularly of those who came from the Iberian Peninsula. Many African Muslim slaves who subsequently joined the Spanish Maroons had experienced similar or worse experiences in the hands of the Christian slave traders or the Christian plantocracy, aided and abetted by the established Christian churches.

The absence of any written history by the Maroons has led researchers to rely on official documents, eyewitnesses' accounts and on planter historians. With the then prevalent mentality, almost all were biased and written from their ethnocentricity and coloured by their economic interests. Hence, the official documents and the histories are corrupt, inaccurate, inconsistent and unreliable for the proper reconstruction of Maroon history in Jamaica without which the history of Jamaica remains incomplete.

### **Omissions in Literature**

Bryan Edwards, a contemporary planter historian in his two-volume *History ... of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1793) and in his documentary on *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica in Regard to the Maroon ...* (1796), shows open hostility to the Maroons and lacks proper knowledge regarding their numerical strength, their ethnic background or their religious belief. A two-volume *History of the Maroons* (1803), written by R. C. Dallas who was not a trained historian, but whose work is regarded a primary source, suffers from inaccuracies and racial bias. A recent study *The Iron Thorn* (1993) by Carey Robinson, part of which was originally published as *The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica* (1969), is largely based on Dallas's work. Mavis C. Campbell in her 1990 book, *The Maroons of Jamaica 1655-1796*, skilfully uses documentary sources and extensive fieldwork and underscores a more convincing analysis of the Maroon communities, particularly regarding their African character. However, Campbell like the other authorities on Maroon history has not examined and analysed Maroon heritage in the context of Islam.

Another recent work entitled *Maroon Heritage: Archaeological, Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives*, published in 1994 and edited by E. Kofi Agorsah, uses archaeological, ethnographic and historical evidence to examine the nature and mechanism of marronage and Maroon culture in the Caribbean. Contributions are from varied backgrounds from Chiefs of Maroon communities in Jamaica to research scholars who discuss Maroon oral traditions, roots, family, traditional technology, religion and politics, resistance and guerrilla warfare, music and dance, woman and herbal medicine, etc. Although quite comprehensive, the contributors do not study any aspect of Maroon life and history from an Islamic perspective.

The most recent publication, *The Maroon Story*, by Bev Carey, published in 1997, is

an attempt to present an authentic and original story of the Maroons. Through the careful analysis of oral history/record and material archaeological evidence the author, who is herself a Maroon, traces the early Maroon roots to Amerindia and not Africa. The African heritage of the later Maroons has been studied and many of the misconceptions of Maroons as aiding the British to recapture runaway slaves have been dealt with. Bev Carey, however, ignores the Islamic background of those slaves coming from Spain and subsequently from Africa who have left behind much oral testimony to verify the practice of Islam by the historical Maroons. Even present-day Maroon leaders are unaware of the Islamic heritage of their forefathers despite the presence and usage of Islamic terms in their everyday activities.

Although evidence pertaining to the Islamic background of the Spanish Maroons and African Maroons is limited, their very existence in the form of oral tradition and oral testimony is indicative of the strong Islamic faith of the historical Maroons.<sup>3</sup> Such evidences are fundamental to understanding the current situation of the Maroon community in the West Indies.

### **Moors and Maroons**

The word 'Moor', coming from Latin 'Mauri' and Greek 'Mauros', is applied to the community or nationality formed by the mixed blood of Arabs residing in Northern Africa, Spanish, Berbers (the North African natives) and blacks who were followers of Islam. The term 'Moor', also 'Moro' in Spanish, was originally used by the Spaniards, implying discrimination to a degree, as 'Mauri' in Latin means 'wilderness' and 'Mauros' in Greek means 'black'.<sup>4</sup> The origin of Moors, no matter where they come from—Spain, Morocco, Libya, Egypt or Mauritania—never extends beyond the boundaries of Africa. Hence, a Moor being an African is a Negro or a black person. Furthermore, Moors and Islam are two inseparable terms; hence Moorish civilization, whether commendatory or derogatory, also designates Islamic or Muslim civilization.

Although the etymology of the word 'Maroon' is uncertain—*Marron* to the French—it is a generic term used in the New World to designate fugitive slaves from plantations. It is commonly accepted that it comes from the Spanish word *marran*, a sow or young hog. Initially, the hunters of wild hogs were called *Marrans*, distinguishing them from the buccaneers, who hunted wild cattle and horses.<sup>5</sup> Consensus opinion seem to suggest the view that it derives from the Spanish word *cimarron*, which originally referred to domestic cattle that had escaped to wilderness. Subsequently, the term is used almost exclusively to embrace runaway slaves. Thus, *cimarron* and its derivative 'Maroon' seem to be peculiarly New World terms when applied to runaway slaves. In other words, Maroons according to the established authorities were no less than domesticated animals or wild hogs.

### **Andalusian/Moorish Civilization**

For all its brilliance Muslim Spain was a province of the Arab Caliphate following its conquest by Arab and Berber forces from North Africa led by Tariq ibn Zeyad, who defeated the Visigothic King Rodrigo at the River Barbate in 711 AD. Subsequently, the Spanish Muslim civilization, known as 'Andalusian Civilization', was built upon the assimilation of the Spanish and Berber to Arabic and Islamic culture and was fostered by extraordinary economic prosperity and intellectual and cultural enlightenment. Although Christian Spain refers to 'Andalusian Civilization' as Moorish Civilization,

implying a civilization of the barbarians, 'Muslim Spain bears an aura of glory'.<sup>6</sup> For almost eight centuries, Muslim Spain 'set to all Europe a shining example of a civilized and enlightened State'.<sup>7</sup> Equal-handed justice administered by the Muslim rulers in Spain only could have helped establish toleration and efface all barriers among Muslims, Christians and Jews to participate in the literary and scientific studies. Islamic Spain became the channel through which elements of higher culture, both material and intellectual, entered Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Stanley Lane Poole, in his classic book *The Story of the Moors in Spain*, writes:

Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors ... Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history, philosophy and jurisprudence were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone.<sup>9</sup>

Among the outstanding architectural monuments of Moorish-Andalusian Spain are 'the Great Mosque in Cordova and the Alhambra in Granada, recognized and admired as part of the world's heritage right up to the present day'.<sup>10</sup> In arts, sciences, and civilization generally, Cordova was praised as 'the brightest splendour of the world'.

However, by the end of the fifteenth century, the severity of Castilian policy of expropriation and despoliation turned Muslim Spain into a land synonym for intellectual and moral desolation.<sup>11</sup> Al-Andalus from Jerez to Gibraltar was reduced to wasteland. The cities of Baeza, Andujar, Martos, Ubeda, Iznatoraf, San Esteban, Queda, Cordova, Seville and Cartegena were surrendered as empty husks.<sup>12</sup> 'Everything' was destroyed—'gardens, vines and cereals'.<sup>13</sup> The Spaniards turned the first observatory in Europe, the Giralda, or tower of Seville, created under the supervision of the great mathematician Jaabir ibn Afiah in 1190, into a belfry.<sup>14</sup> Moors were expelled from Jerez, Arcos, Lebrija and Puerto Santa Maria. Muslims who survived the wholesale massacre and expulsion policy were penned like sheep and reduced to slavery. So harsh and ruthless was the royal Spanish policy against the Moors that Muslim scholars have opined that 'it would take the combined charity of Jesus and Mohammed to make Islam forget or forgive the terrible wrongs inflicted upon the Andalusian Muslims'.<sup>15</sup>

Even critics who were harshest on the rights of the infidels, and who were willing to deny true sovereign rights to the Moors, objected to the devastation policy as 'openly contrary to the precepts of charity'.<sup>16</sup> Historian John G. Jackson laments, 'The decline and fall of the Moorish Empire was a great setback to modern civilization. Had this great African culture been able to survive, the world would have been five hundred years more advanced than it is today'.<sup>17</sup> Jackson's prejudice towards Islam is, however, well demonstrated by his reference to the culture as African and not also Islamic or Muslim.

### **Andalusian Mariners and Islamic Science and Technology**

The grandeur and vitality of the Andalusian civilization could not be contained or extinguished by the Christian Crusaders through policies of destruction, forceful conversion, expulsion or exile of the Moors from Spain. Muslim Spain, with its wisdom of philosophy, culture and above all its achievement in shipbuilding and navigation, could not be ignored by Columbus nor by his financier Queen Isabella of Castile when he set sail in 1492 to discover the routes to the East. The year also saw the conquest of Granada, the last Muslim possession in Spain by the centralizing monarchy of

Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. Yet, the end of Muslim rule did not mean an immediate extinction of Spanish–Islamic civilization. Military prowess had prevailed for the Christian forces in Spain, as it did for the Portuguese to reconquer all the lands west of the Guadiana River in 1250. The Iberian countries had much to depend on Islamic science and technology and on Andalusian mariners schooled in Atlantic navigation to discover and to dominate the sea routes.<sup>18</sup> Evidently, Moorish geographers, like El Idrisi, relying on the scientific interpretation of the Holy Qur’an were aware that the world is round as a sphere and taught geography from globes long before the time of Magellan.<sup>19</sup>

Shipbuilding was a major industry in Islamic countries, both for the construction of commercial vessels and for building and fitting out warships. Naval dockyards in the Muslim world existed all across North Africa, along the Persian Gulf, in Sicily and also at Seville, Almeria, Pechina and Valencia in Spain. Timber was abundant in Spain, Sicily and the Maghrib to supply the need for the Muslim dockyards. There were also iron mines in all these regions to meet the demand for iron for nails, anchors and the shackles.<sup>20</sup>

Muslim ships sailed to every part of the navigated world, not as voyages of exploration but as regular sailings of convoys of merchant ships. Those sailing to India and beyond, to Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia and China, relied on books, files and maps of sea areas divided into squares of longitude and latitude, charts of coastlines as well as directions of prevailing winds and data about tidal conditions. Muslim sailors with the help of an instrument known as *kamal* were able to measure the altitude of the Pole star, from which the latitude could be calculated. They have been the inventors of the pivoted-needle compass for use in ships. It was Ibn Majid, an epitome of Islamic achievement in navigation with 40 years of personal experience at sea and an extensive knowledge of the works of Arab geographers, astronomers and navigators, who was the chief advisor of Vasco da Gama.<sup>21</sup> Ibn Majid gave this Portuguese navigator accurate instructions for sailing from East Africa to India. Not surprisingly, Vasco da Gama showed Ibn Majid instruments, saying they had long been in use in Arab ships.

Evidently, there are references which suggest that fourteenth-century maps alluding to the mythical islands in the Atlantic—those of Brendan, St Ursula and Brasil—were the works of Portuguese refugees from the Moors in the eighth century.<sup>22</sup> These islands became common in subsequent cartographical tradition and inspired voyages in search of them. The significance of Muslim contribution in the Atlantic exploration during the first generation cannot be ignored when one highlights the contributions made by the Majorcans considered to be by far the most numerous. The traditional trading links of Majorca with North Africa placed them in an indomitable position and well disposed to break into the Atlantic. The presence of a Morisco Pilot in the lead boat of Columbus and a good number of other Andalusian sailors suffice the dominant role played by Muslim mariners in navigating through the rough waters of the Atlantic into the Caribbean Sea and anchoring safely onto the shores of the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola in 1492.<sup>23</sup> Evidence further suggests that almost all the enlisted men—stewards, boatswains, caulkers, able seamen and ‘gromets’, or ship’s boys—were from towns of Andalusia like Seville, Cordova and Jerez de la Frontera.<sup>24</sup> Even the movie entitled *Christopher Columbus* produced by Lorimar Television could not downplay the role of the Moors in the discovery voyages. Moorish captives languishing in the jails for no crimes other than being Muslims were granted Royal Pardon to accompany Columbus on his voyages. Such pardons indicate that the Spaniards were aware of the seafaring skills of the Moors and that without them the expedition would be a complete failure.

The portrayal of the Moorish headgear and the Islamic greeting *assalaamu alaikum* in *Christopher Columbus* are indicative of the Moorish contribution to the discovery of the New World. Subsequently, many of these Muslim seafaring navigators were not only to sail with Columbus to Jamaica and to most of the Caribbean archipelago and the northern coast of South America, but also make transatlantic journeys after him.

### **Moors in the West Indies**

The extensive colonial possessions of Spain created an elusive and exaggerated notion of the Spanish empire as a source of wealth and as a market for goods and slaves among the European slave traders—Portuguese, Dutch, English and the French. However, Spain in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries did not need and could not afford to buy slaves in the West Indies. Spain had just regained her sovereign rights after almost eight centuries of Islamic rule. The massive displacement of population as a result of the forceful expulsion of the Moors imposed upon the Spanish government a labour of resettlement, which stretched manpower resources to the limit. Moorish Andalusia had to be colonized as well as the areas which were previously uninhabited. The policy of forceful expulsion or exile of the Moors at a time when manpower was limited worked in favour of the Spanish government. Evidently, the export of Moorish captives to foreign slave markets increased.<sup>25</sup> Although it is precisely not clear regarding the specific foreign markets, the destination of the Moorish captives was the newly acquired empire in the New World. Since Spain was not involved in the transatlantic slave trade, one of the policies of the four slave trading powers was to secure a share or a monopoly in the supply of slaves to the Spanish colonies. Hence, Spain could not have been exporting its own Moorish or Negro slaves to any foreign markets other than its own colonies where the need for labour was so acute. The Spanish slave trade to the West Indies thus initiated not from West Africa, but from Spain by the King of Spain on 3 September 1503.<sup>26</sup>

Jamaica was one of the final destinations for many of these Moorish captives who are referred to as Negro slaves from Spain. The exporting of such Moorish captives contradicted the directives of the Spanish Crown which did not consent to the immigration of Moors, heretics, Jews, reconverts or newly converts to Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Negro slaves born within the power of Spaniards were allowed to be exported, but under the circumstances of the time, Christian Negro slaves in Spain were inadequate to meet the demand. Also, many who had accepted Christianity became crypto-Muslims and tried to reconcile the secret practice of Islam with the outward profession of Christianity.<sup>28</sup> The Holy Qur'an commands *la ikraha fi addin*, 'there shall be no compulsion in religion', and *lakum deenukum wa lyedin*, 'your religion for you and mine for me'. To be a crypto-Muslim became a common characteristic even among the African Muslim slaves who were forcefully baptized by the slave owners on the plantations.<sup>29</sup> Besides Moorish captives who came to Jamaica and elsewhere in the New World as slaves, Negroes, implying Moors from Spain, were also included in the voyages of discovery and conquest.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Spirit of Marronage**

Given the background of the Moors who were not only once conquerors establishing empires over three continents, but were also culturally enlightened people, resistance to subordination or subjugation in various forms by them became a common feature in the

New World. Evidently, no sooner had they set their feet in the West Indies they fought unceasingly for their freedom. The unspoiled virgin islands in the Caribbean were to be the grounds of resistance and freedom for many of these proud Moors through whom Europe acquired the techniques to reign contemporary world. Many resorted to running away to the hills and forests, as they correctly perceived that the islands were largely unknown to their masters. Hence, they had little to fear from immediate repercussions. Within two years of initiation of the Negro slave trade from Spain to the West Indies, it had to be temporarily suspended on the ground that the Negroes ran away and made common cause with the Indians.<sup>31</sup> In 1521, the Spanish government tried to contain marronage by prohibiting the inclusion of Negroes in the voyages of discovery and conquest, as they were believed to be encouraging slaves to run away. Such a directive is indicative of the importance of the Moors as part of the discovery and conquest entourage long after Columbus. In short, Moors also came as *conquerors* and *discoverers*. Furthermore, it implies the existence of a Moorish Islamic community in the New World since the coming of Columbus.

### **Moors in Jamaica**

Although the immediate response of the Negroes in Jamaica is imprecise, slave revolts and resistance across the Caribbean would suggest that the scenario was no different in this land of plenty of wood and water. For the Spanish Negro fugitives, the topography and ecology of Jamaica were also conducive for their hideouts and establishments. Since the prohibition of 1521 applied to all the new territories of Spain it is likely that Spanish Maroon communities had already been established in Jamaica by 1523, when the first set of African slaves purchased from the Portuguese arrived in the island. The presence of 107 free blacks substantiated by the census of the island taken by the Spaniards in 1611 further strengthens the argument that Moorish or free Negro communities referred to as Maroon communities were in existence long before the British occupation of Jamaica in 1655. Bryan Edwards suggests that the blacks had formed their own communities and attacked the British intermittently.<sup>32</sup> Though, imprecise in number, a few Negroes apparently enjoyed the trust of the Spaniards as they were left in authoritative positions in Jamaica at the time of British occupation. Following the British occupation of Jamaica as most of the Spaniards had left the island chiefly for Cuba, the slaves from the Spanish settlements joined the then existing Spanish Maroon communities or formed new societies of their own. Since the Spanish Maroons were Creoles, they were for the most part the direct descendants of the Moors or Negroes from Spain.

### **Spanish Muslim Maroons**

Some of the uncertainties regarding the ethnic background of the Maroon leaders at the time of the British conquest can be clarified to some extent by an analytical study of their names.<sup>33</sup> Christian names given to Negroes, whether free or slaves, often had little religious significance to the persons, but they accepted them for social approval or to avoid physical torture. The name of Don Christoval Arnaldo de Ysassi, a Jamaican born Spaniard who was appointed the governor of Jamaica by the Spanish King in 1655, is indicative of his Moorish origin. It is a corruption of the Arabic word *ysassa*, meaning one who enjoys political authority or in short, ruler. Apparently, de Ysassi or Sasi as the British called him was the title bestowed upon him for his political position. Such an

appointment also demonstrates that white Spaniards were often dependent on blacks, free or ex-slaves during political and military crises, perhaps because of their superb sense of strategy and a shared common political past. Some historians have disputed Ysassi's claim of Negro loyalty to him, although it would appear from evidence that such loyalty was not wholly lacking.<sup>34</sup> The Spanish lieutenant general of Jamaica, Don Francisco de Leyba, testified in Madrid in 1659 that the black settlements in the hills were obedient to Ysassi, though they governed themselves.<sup>35</sup> It would seem that Leyba and Ysassi both had a common Moorish background. Leyba is an Arabic term meaning intelligent or lioness. His warlike and administrative qualities might have won him this title. The Christian names, i.e. the first names of both Ysassi and Leyba, although they appear to be European Christian names, may have meant very little to these Spanish Jamaican leaders in their real lives since most Moors who were under the control of the Spaniards were forcefully baptized.

Despite the numerical strength of the British with their superior weaponry, the defensive fight put up by Ysassi's contingent was reported to have caused heavy casualties to the British and caused alarm among the conquering forces of the uncertainties of their hold over Jamaica. The British officers appealed to soldiers and planters from the other islands to come to their assistance because they feared that they would not be able to keep the place for long.<sup>36</sup> Ysassi, however, eventually had to flee to Cuba with most of his men in the face of stiff British opposition and with almost no or very little Spanish assistance coming from Cuba. Perhaps the Spaniards in Cuba feared that military help extended to Christopher de Ysassi might lead to the formation of an independent black state of Jamaica and challenge the established status quo of the plantocracy in the New World.

Similarly, Juan de Bola, invariably called de Bolas, Lubola by the British or Juan Lubolo by the Spaniards, also appears to have been of Muslim origin. Bola, a name common among the people of Yoruba, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, in Arabic means the 'respectable'. Juan de Bola was the head of one of the three main black groups of Maroons. He commanded the respect of one of the biggest settlements of free Negroes who were regarded to be not only guerrilla warriors but also agriculturists and were settled in the Clarendon hills. Two hundred acres of cultivated crops, which was considered the largest single source of locally grown food, is indicative of the high stability of the community.<sup>37</sup> These free Negroes either were the descendants of the first generation of Moors who came as part of the conqueror party or directly came from Spain subsequent to Columbus. Bola has been accused of betraying the Maroon cause to the British. Perhaps he was a more pragmatic Maroon leader who realized that the stability and safety of his settlement required a policy of accommodation with the British. The first duty of Muslims is to maintain peace, which is the essence of Islam. The 'Declaration' by the Jamaica governor and Council, officially called 'a charter to the said Negroes', issued 1 February 1662/1663 saying, 'Bola and all the Negroes ...', recognized the freedom of Bola's people with 30 acres of land to anyone 18 years old and above.<sup>38</sup> This acknowledgement of the freedom of the Negroes in Bola's community may suggest that the British did not want to unnecessarily antagonize such a stable and self-sufficient Maroon society at a time when their first priority was security.

Very little is known of the head of the Karmahaly band of Maroons, Juan de Serras. However, his name and his style of leadership are possible indicators of his Islamic faith. Serras, a corruption of the Arabic term Sarra, meaning happiness, complemented his style of leadership. With all the uncertainties regarding his background, Juan de Serras may have been a Spanish creole, a creolized black, or a Moor from Spain.



Evidently, he was a man of extraordinary ability.<sup>39</sup> Apparently, he had established an efficient and disciplined organization based on a hierarchical ordering similar to those founded by the Muslim rulers in al-Andalus and in the early Caliphate days, rather than modelled on European feudalism. Although a warrior himself, he carried the title of governor, like most rulers did during the Caliphate rule. His governorship also suggests that he had the authority to govern both the civil and military aspects of his administration. The position of a sergeant general, who was the next in command, is indicative of the importance of the military force. Serras governed his people with consensual authority, known in Arabic as *shura* or consultation. Such governance was still unknown to Europeans but long established and practised by the Muslim rulers in al-Andalusia for over 800 years and in the Islamic world, as enjoined by the Holy Qur'an, which says: 'And their government is by counsel among themselves' (42: 38). Here the government with a council has been emphasized. The Holy Qur'an makes it compulsory to take counsels from the ministers by commanding: 'take counsel from them in the affair'.<sup>40</sup> 'Give to one another counsels of goodness and piety'.<sup>41</sup> The Holy Prophet (SAW) consulted always with his companions and sometimes changed his decisions in the light of his discussions with them.<sup>42</sup> The four succeeding Caliphs followed the Qur'anic command and the Prophet's tradition.<sup>43</sup> Serras evidently recognized those with particular skills in his group and delegated functions accordingly, thus suggesting an understanding of his people and their acceptance of his leadership. Serras was also aware that the Qur'anic selection of a leader is 'The most honourable of you near Allah is the most righteous of you'.<sup>44</sup>

The policy of consensual leadership apparently made the Karmahalys more united against their enemies, the British and other Maroon groups. Recognition of talents and his consultation with the people on their wants further helped Serras to promote the freedom and equality of the people. His behaviour, attitude and the importance, which he attached to his duties as sovereign towards his subjects, speak of his Islamic roots and his knowledge of Islam.<sup>45</sup> Far and remote from the centre of the Islamic world and in the midst of a most brutal plantation society, i.e. military feudalism combined with the worst form of slavery, it is most probable that Serras's strong background and devotion to Islam had influenced his consensual leadership.

The Karmahalys settled in the impenetrable north and northeastern interior of the island posed the greatest threat to the British within 10 years of British conquest. The first formal declaration of war was made against the Karmahaly Negroes and other outlying Negroes who were called the Rebellious Negroes.<sup>46</sup> Serras, himself an astute diplomat and with the assistance of his appointed emissaries, was able to defuse the tense situation, and gain time to secure his position. The Council Proclamation of 1668 gave the Karmahalys the freedom of movement to trade for necessary provisions. The permission 'to pass and repass in any part of this island without trouble' also implied that they could deploy their people at strategic points to challenge the British.<sup>47</sup>

The Karmahalys inhabiting mainly the eastern parishes of St. Georges, St. Thomas and Portland are believed to have avoided all possible confrontation with the planters from the end of the seventeenth century until the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, it would appear that with the coming of new African slaves in the island, runaways from the plantations increased either taking refuge in the Spanish Maroon communities or forming separate communities in the neighbourhood. Clashes with the colonial authorities thus became inevitable. In addition, slave rebels from the estates in Clarendon and St. Elizabeth developed their societies in the hills in the leeward part of

the island. Evidence suggests that many of the runaways were of Islamic faith. Hundreds of Muslim slaves were brought to the Caribbean from West and Central Africa.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Establishment of the *Deen* of Allah**

Oral testimonies seem to suggest that the Spanish Maroon leaders and the subsequent African Maroon leaders had founded their communities to establish the *deen* of Allah or Islam to guide them in this life or *dunya* for the hereafter (*aakhirah*). The terms *deen* and *dunya* are Qur'anic words, which form an integral part of the vocabulary of some of the living elderly Maroons in Mooretown, Portland.<sup>49</sup> However, the Maroons are not aware of the significance of these terms in Islam nor of their origins but consider them as just a part of their vocabulary referring to the religion that one should follow in this world for guidance for the hereafter. Interestingly, many Qur'anic terms such as *deen* and *dunya* have become part of the vernacular in non-Arab Muslim countries, and in most cases the populace is often not aware that they are Arabic words having Islamic significance.

Increasing slave rebellions on the plantations and the existence of Maroon societies as a source of refuge for the runaways led to an intensified effort by the colonial government upon the requests of the planters for the extirpation of the Negroes in rebellion and the established Maroon communities. Repeated attacks by the British troops on these communities led to defensive responses or *jihad* from the Maroons ultimately compelling the colonial authorities in Jamaica to sue for peace and conclude treaties first with the Leeward Maroons led by Cudjoe and subsequently with the Windward Maroons headed by Quao. The Leeward treaty formally concluded on 1 March 1738/1739 is referred to in the official documents in various ways such as 'Agreement with Captain Cudjoe Vera Copia' or as 'Articles of Pacification with the Maroons of Trelawney Town' or as 'Articles of Agreement betwixt Coll. Guthrie Lieu. Sadler and Capt. Cajoe'.<sup>50</sup> The treaty begins 'In the name of God, Amen' which in Qur'anic term is *Bismillah*, i.e. 'In the Name of Allah'.<sup>51</sup> Historians have failed to study such a beginning from an Islamic perspective but have researched ancient Italian practices to look for precedents. Even the African background of the Maroons served as no indicators to the researchers to examine one of the most dominant religions of West Africa or Andalusian Spain, i.e. Islam and study Maroon beliefs and their institutions. All actions of a Muslim should begin with *Bismillah* to ensure good and meritorious conduct. This pious beginning undoubtedly speaks of the Islamic faith of Cudjoe and the other leeward Maroon leaders who must have insisted upon its inclusion before signing the agreement. Such an introduction to a treaty or contract was never the precedent in Christendom Europe.

The Arabic names Cudjoe, meaning a shy person, and his brother Ghani, denoting self-sufficiency, further strengthen the argument of their Muslim background. Ghani is one of the attributes of Allah, the self-sufficient, and is a common name among Muslims throughout the world, including Muslims of Akhan origin. Apparently, the Anglo-Saxon corruption of Ghani rather than Gyani is Johnny.<sup>52</sup> The names Cuffee and Quao the two Maroon leaders from the windward are also suggestive of Islamic background. Quao invariably spelt as Quoha, Quaba, Quoba, Quaco and Quaw by contemporary authorities, such as Philip Thicknesse, Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica and in official documents seems to be a corruption of the Arabic word *quwah*. The term '*quwah*' denotes one of the attributes of Allah, the most strong. Cuffee who was the other windward Maroon leader is also a Qur'anic word used to specify another attribute

of Allah, the sufficient. These Maroon leaders referred to each other as brothers. Present Maroon leaders claim that they were all brothers and Granny Nanny was their sister.<sup>53</sup>

The use of the term 'brother' among the Maroon leaders is also indicative of the presence of a strong feeling of Islamic brotherhood which is one of the basic principles of Islam—*equality* and *brotherhood*. Evidently, the claims made by both the Moore Town (windward) and Accompong (leeward) groups that Nanny was the sister of Cudjoe may imply blood-related sister or 'sister' of the same faith, Islam. The terms 'brother' and 'sister' are common in Islamic societies denoting a common family, i.e. the Muslim *ummah* or community. The value of human brotherhood is a fundamental element in the value system of Islam. Human brotherhood in Islam is based on an unshakeable belief in the oneness and universality of Allah the worshipped, the unity of mankind the worshippers, and the unity of religion the medium of worship.<sup>54</sup> The Holy Qur'an says: 'The believers are brethren'.<sup>55</sup> Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, 'A Muslim is brother to a Muslim. He does neither wrong to him, nor puts him to disgrace, nor he hates him. Despising his brother Muslim is enough evil for a man. Every Muslim's blood, property and honour are sacred to a Muslim.'<sup>56</sup> He also established brotherhood between masters and their slaves: 'Your slaves are your brothers'.<sup>57</sup> Historians such as Mavis C. Campbell see the use of the term 'brother' by the leeward Maroon leaders as Ashanti tradition.<sup>58</sup> However, they fail to take note that much of the Ashanti Empire had come under the direct influence of Islam as early as the tenth century.

The Maroon leaders appear to have followed the Sunnah, i.e. the tradition of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), in choosing those with the best skills, military or otherwise for the good of the entire society. Following the tradition of the historical Maroons, the present Maroon communities continue to have a 'Chief who is unanimously elected by the elders and is regarded to be the most righteous person in the society'.<sup>59</sup> The Holy Qur'an says: 'As for the land, My righteous servants will inherit it. This is a message to a people who are righteous'.<sup>60</sup> Hence, there is a distinct and clear message from Allah that the righteous and just will hold the reins of Allah.<sup>61</sup> In recognition of the superb military skills, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) entrusted Zaid, one of his former black slaves, with the generalship of the army which consisted of his very close companions who were regarded to be the acknowledged leaders of the Arabs. After the death of Zaid, the Holy Prophet (SAW) appointed Zaid's son, Osama, as the commander of the army consisting of such illustrious men as Abu Bakr and Omar, his two principal ministers and subsequently successors and Caliphs. Race or past social background did not have an impact on the choice of leadership. So such was also the leadership of the Maroons based on integrity and transparency as required under Islam.

### **Adoption of Islamic *Aadaab*/Etiquette of Greeting and Meeting**

Oral tradition suggests that the historical Maroons of Moore Town adopted Islamic *aadaab* (etiquette) of greeting and meeting. Moore Town is built on land granted by the British to Granny Nanny in 1740. The Islamic greeting *assalaamu alaikum*, meaning 'peace be upon you', still continues as the official Council greeting among the 26 Council members in Moore Town.<sup>62</sup> The present Maroon Councillors are unaware of the significance of the greeting in Islam and consider it as a traditional greeting adopted by the historical Maroons such as Granny Nanny herself and therefore to be adhered

to with respect. The existence of such a tradition leaves no room for further argument on the authenticity of the Islamic heritage of the Maroons of Moore Town.

The adoption of the Islamic greeting suffices to say that the historical Muslim Maroons of Moore Town differentiated themselves from the non-Muslim communities since the Islamic greeting is confined only among the Muslims. In Islam, a non-Muslim should be greeted with *Assalamo-Ala-Manitaba'al Huda*, i.e. 'Peace be on him who performed allegiance'.<sup>63</sup> Since words of salutation of non-Muslims should not be uttered in any way, the Islamic greeting of the Council members of Moore Town would further suggest that Granny Nanny, the great Jamaican heroine, was a Muslim. It was under her leadership in 1740 that the windward Maroons fought against the British and she was granted 500 acres of land in the Parish of Portland for her people. After the British had reduced Nanny Town, which was founded by her, to rubble in 1734, Granny Nanny and her people apparently founded their community in and around Moore Town, which was then called New Nanny Town.<sup>64</sup> Moore Town, according to Colonel C. L. G. Harris, Chief of Moore Town, was the corruption of 'More' originating from the request for 'more land' made by the elders on the advice of Granny Nanny to the then Governor Archibald Campbell. 'Muretown' initially spelt on the map indicating the land then granted to the Maroons was later changed to 'Moore'. Although the historical Maroons were not satisfied, they accepted the word 'Moore' out of expediency and incompetence of the Colonial land surveyors. Past and present Maroons in Jamaica revere Nanny as 'Granny' Nanny. She was in a position to revoke Quao's decision and impose her own. The acceptance of Nanny's decisions is indicative of her skills in military strategies and political acumen. According to oral testimony, it was under the directives of Granny Nanny that the Maroon Council was formed for the governance of the Maroons. In Islam, since it is important to take counsel, the historical Maroon leaders formed Councils, a tradition still maintained today for the governance of the Maroon people. Furthermore, following the *Sunnah* or the traditions of the Holy Prophet (SAW), Granny Nanny never assumed political leadership but blessed her people with her spiritual piety. The present ethnic diversity which exists within the Moore Town Maroon community also suggests that the community by then comprised of people belonging to different ethnic groups from West and Central Africa but professed Islam which appears to be the unifying force. The continuation of *assalaamu alaikum* among the Maroon Councillors even today speaks of the pervasiveness of the greeting among the historical Maroons and the unity of the Muslim *ummah* community.

### **Granny Nanny Blessed with *Karamat***

Although popularly called Granny Nanny, her real name according to oral tradition as reported by Colonel C. S. Harris was Sarah. Sarah is a Qur'anic term meaning 'happiness'. Like many Muslim women, such as Hazrat A'isha, Hazrat Umm 'Umara, Hazrat Umm 'Atiyya, Granny Nanny or Sarah was a courageous and skilful warrior who fought gallantly for the defence of human dignity, the basis of Islam. These early Muslim women warriors fought in battles alongside with men often protecting their fellow men such as Prophet Muhammad (SAW).<sup>65</sup> Apparently, Granny Nanny, considered by the Maroons as the most illustrious woman who never lost a battle with the British, had the commanding ability in the battlefield as well as the political acumen to unite the community. The name Nanny Town perhaps is indicative of her leadership and the respect she earned from her people. Because much mystery shrouds around

Nanny for her military genius, historians in West Indian history have reinforced myths, which evolved out of the ignorance of the contemporary authorities. Evidently, under Granny Nanny's military leadership the Maroons sometimes killed the entire British contingent, such as at the battle in Seaman's Valley in 1729, where all of the 600 invading troops lost their lives. Out of such disastrous British defeats arose myths that Nanny was a witch practising witchcraft. Lack of interest and adequate knowledge in Islam has only perpetuated the continuation of such abominable myths.

From an Islamic Sufi perspective, one who strives union with the Divine, whether male or female and renounces this world and its attractions and becomes purged of self and its desires is blessed with *karamat* or favours from Allah. Such favours in ordinary terms are described as miraculous powers. In Islam, Sufis made their appearance at a very early period and the dignity of sainthood was conferred on women as much as on men. In other words, in the spiritual life there could be 'neither male nor female', since in Unity there is no distinction.<sup>66</sup> Among the Muslim Sufis, the name of Rabi'a al-Adawiyya of Basra stands out prominent. Born in 717 AD, Rabi'a was the first Sufi who apparently for the first time emphasized the concept of love of God, love for love's sake—not out of fear of Hell or hope of Paradise. The story of Rabia, it would appear, begins with misfortunes but the power of endurance and her great devotion and conspicuous worship of God enabled her to attain the position as one of the most respected Sufis in Islam. Rabia not only became an orphan at a young age but also became a slave. However, *karamat* or favours from Allah won her freedom when her master while she was praying 'saw a lamp above her head, suspended without a chain, and the whole house illuminated by the rays from that light'.<sup>67</sup> Rabia's life is one of endless miracles, which she disclaimed, as she was anxious to avoid a reputation for working miracles.

Similarly, the devotion and dependence of Granny Nanny on Allah in the struggle against plantocracy, and the establishment of Divine Guidance, were answered by favours or miracles. Historians regard the miracles attributed to Nanny as Ashanti-inspired system of belief *obeah* or *obi*.<sup>68</sup> Nanny is believed to have had the power to command the supernatural and manipulated it for good or evil for the benefit of her people. Contemporaries have failed to understand that miracles and not *obeah* were wrought on her behalf, that 'Allah might justify His servant in the eyes both of friends and enemies' indicating that the grace of Allah was with Granny Nanny as it had been in the case of Rabi'a.<sup>69</sup> Muslim authorities emphasize that miracles are wrought on all true believers of Islam.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, since 'spiritual matters are outside the comprehension and intellect of man', it was only normal that the miracles attributed to Granny Nanny have been misunderstood and misinterpreted.<sup>71</sup> Granny Nanny like all true believers of Islam seems to have never claimed nor rejoiced over her miraculous powers. It is likely that since the historical Maroon leaders appreciated the significance of the grace of Allah, the tradition to refer to Nanny's miracles as 'science' is common among most leaders of Maroon communities today.<sup>72</sup> Islam is based on science and one of the objectives of Islam is 'to emancipate the mind from superstitions and uncertainties, the soul from sin and corruption, the conscience from oppression and fear, and the body from disorder and degeneration'.<sup>73</sup> The science of knowing Allah, His attributes and His works, His laws affecting this world and thereafter is the science or *ilm*, knowledge sought by Muslims and perhaps by Nanny too.<sup>74</sup> The blessings which Nanny received were the miracles; hence the miraculous power was science.

### **Islamic Family Practices**

The fragmentary evidence regarding the family structures among Maroon communities is also suggestive of Islamic practices. Although polygamy practised among the Maroons has been seen by historians as an African custom, in Islam, polygamy is allowed under specific circumstances. Monogamy is the general rule in Islam, while polygamy is the exception, particularly in the aftermath of war when widows or orphaned girls need protection. The Maroon communities had more women and children than men, who were either abducted from the plantations or escaped and were provided protection by the Maroons.<sup>75</sup> To contain social ills such as prostitution and to enlarge their communities, the Maroon men would appear to have followed the Islamic prescription which permits polygamy but limits it to four. There is no accurate account as to the number of wives a Maroon man had. That the Maroons despised the unlawful sexual pleasures carried out in the plantations is exemplified by the severity of the punishment meted out to those committing adultery as required under Qur'anic laws. While adulteresses were severely punished in Cudjoe's community, in Nanny Town an adulterer was not spared but put to death, even if it happened to be the headman.<sup>76</sup> Adultery or fornication has been expressly made unlawful by the Almighty Allah as otherwise the society would be reduced to chaos and disorder.<sup>77</sup> The Holy Qur'an proclaims: 'And come not near adultery. Lo! it is an abomination and an evil way'.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Essence of Islam—*Allahu Akbar***

The most important and authentic oral tradition pertaining to the Islamic heritage of the Maroons is the *dhikr*, *Allahu Akbar*, i.e. 'Allah is Great'. *Allahu* is derived from the Arabic word Allah, meaning the One True Creator and Sustainer of all being. The word Allah is unique in that there is no comparable word or term and it can have no plural or gender connotation. Knowledge of *Allah* and belief in Him constitute the very foundation of Islam.

*Allahu Akbar* is uttered in many of the practices of Islam signifying that man is only a creature of *Allah* and that *Allah* is supreme. Such then was the firm belief and submission of the historical Maroons to *Allah* and His guidance. The life of a Muslim begins at dawn with the call for prayer, *adhan*, which commences with the praise, *Allahu Akbar*. All *salaat* whether obligatory or voluntary begins with *Allahu Akbar*. The greatest strength of Muslims at times of war is the complete reliance on *Allah* and the inspiration is drawn from the *takbeer*, *Allahu Akbar*. This is the solemn oath taken by Muslims in their *jihad* for the defense of Islam and the Muslim *ummah* or community. The knowledge and the literal translation of the phrase *Allahu Akbar* by the present Maroon leaders of Moore Town testify to the community's traditional foundation in Islam.<sup>79</sup>

### ***Jihad* and the Islamic Concept of Freedom**

*Jihad*, both inner struggle for self-purification and the wars against slavocracy, resulted in recognition of Maroon rights within territorial limitations by treaties. It is believed that Granny Nanny was not only against Cudjoe's treaty with the slave regime but she was also disappointed with Quao for signing the treaty on behalf of the Windward Maroons.<sup>80</sup> Granny Nanny, it would appear, was fighting to establish the Islamic concept of freedom, which is an article of faith, a solemn command from the Supreme

Creator, built on some fundamental principles. Freedom in Islam, therefore, is a natural right of man, a spiritual privilege, a moral prerogative, and above all, a religious duty. Within the framework of this Islamic concept of freedom, there is no room for religious persecutions, class conflict, or racial prejudice. The individual's right of freedom is as sacred as his right of life; hence freedom is the equivalent of life itself. The existence of the slave system was an antithesis to the concept of Islamic freedom. The Maroon treaties perhaps appeared to Granny Nanny as the denial of the Unity of Allah since slavocracy would still continue outside the Maroon territory and that Maroon behaviour and policy towards other runaways would be monitored by the slave system. However, the order of succession of Maroon leadership, as stated in the treaty, speaks of the unity and the prevailing consensus among the Maroons.

With the signing of the treaties, the historical Maroons were faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the Holy Qur'an prohibited the breach of the treaty provisions and, on the other hand, runaways from the plantations had to be facilitated or accorded shelter in accordance with the commands of Allah. Apparently, Cudjoe and Quao accepted the offer of peace and cessation of hostilities in accordance with the Qur'anic commands: 'And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah. He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing; and if they intend to deceive thee, then certainly, Allah is sufficient for thee'.<sup>81</sup> The Holy Qur'an further says: 'Allah invites you to the abode of peace'.<sup>82</sup> The Holy Prophet set the example for followers of Islam to even accept humiliating conditions under extreme circumstances for the sake of peace but with trust in Allah.<sup>83</sup>

### **The Islamic Act of Prostration**

Dallas's account of Cudjoe's behaviour during his meeting with Colonel John Guthrie and Captain Francis Sadler when the peace offer was made is highly unacceptable in the context of Islamic procedure which was followed but completely distorted and misunderstood by Dallas and subsequent historians who rely on his work. There is no official record depicting such a behaviour on the part of Cudjoe nor did Colonel Guthrie or Captain Sadler write on this ignoble act. The Maroons have ever since rejected the account, particularly the part, which reads, 'He then threw himself on the ground, embracing Guthrie's legs, kissing his feet, and asking his pardon'.<sup>84</sup> Cudjoe, the warrior leader who apparently had organized both the leeward and windward Maroons under his command to fight against the slave system in the island, could not have acted in such a disreputable manner.

Furthermore, Cudjoe never proposed submission, but offers of peace had been made to him. What is explicable is that Cudjoe immediately prostrated on the ground to thank Allah for the peace offer. This is implied in the same account, which says, 'The rest of the Maroons, following the example of their chief, prostrated themselves ...' In Islam, prostration is 'the highest manifestation of humility and self-surrender to Allah'.<sup>85</sup> By this act, all the limbs—forehead, two hands, two knees, two ends of feet and nose—are brought to submission. This posture of prostration performed by Cudjoe in glorification or seeking Divine favours seems to have been misinterpreted and ridiculed by Dallas. It is customary among Muslims to prostrate to express gratitude to Allah or to seek mercy, beneficence or blessings. Prayers in Islam consists of recitation from the Holy Qur'an, meditation and motions involving standings, bowings, prostrations, and sittings that make up a cycle. The illustrations in Figure 1 will help explain Cudjoe's behaviour of humility and prostration at the treaty offer incident.



*Waquf Posttion*

"Subhana Rabbiya-l-'Azeem"

سبحان ربي العظيم



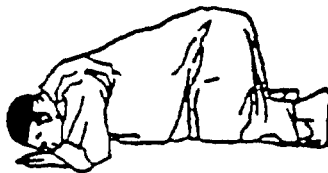
*Ruku' Position*

("Glory to my Lord the Great", repeated three times). This is called Ruku'. After that the standing position is resumed with these words: "Samt' a-l-ahu Liman Hamidah: Rabbana Laka-l-Hamd

سمع الله لمن حمده ، ربنا لك الحمد

Subhana Rabbiya-l-A'La

سبحان ربي الأعلى



*Sujud Position*

(Glory to my Lord the Most High, repeated three times).



*Jalsa position*

Fig. 1. Different postures in prayers: explains Cudjoe's behaviour at the Treaty Affair Incident.



In Islam, after establishment of peace with the conclusion of treaties with the enemies, it is one of the greatest sins to violate the terms. The Holy Qur'an says: 'Don't make mischief in the land after its peace' (7: 56). 'Treaties on no account shall be violated' (23: 140). Although Cudjoe, Quao and the historical Maroons are ridiculed by historians for assisting the slave authorities for the return of runaways, it would appear that the Maroon leaders in accordance with the Qur'anic commands abided by the treaty provisions which guaranteed peace for their communities. Cudjoe would appear to have negotiated well with the enemies winning for those who had fled their masters 'within two years last past' two options.<sup>86</sup> On being granted full pardon and indemnity, they could return to their masters or remain under Cudjoe's authority. Apparently, Cudjoe worked for the freedom of all runaways within his community, Muslims and non-Muslims. As Allah, the Exalted, has said: 'But he hath not attempted the ascent— Ah, What will convey unto thee what the Ascent is! (It is) to free a slave' (90: 11–13).

With reference to Muslim runaways, Cudjoe simply applied the Islamic principle, which calls for universal brotherhood. Emphasizing on the virtues of freeing slaves, the Holy Prophet (SAW) said: 'A person who frees a Muslim slave, Allah will deliver every one of his limbs from the fire of Hell in return for each of the limbs of the slave ...'<sup>87</sup> It would be logical to suggest that Muslims or those who accepted Islam remained in his community and non-Muslims were returned to their masters for reasons of security, peace and harmony of Cudjoe's people. Similar were the reasons for the Moore Town community confirmed by Colonel Harris. In addition, Islam must have been the criteria for extending membership to post-treaty runaways to Cudjoe's or Quao's communities.

### Conclusion

The argument put forth by historians like Mavis Campbell that 'there was lack of any general philosophy of freedom ...' among the Maroons can be refuted on grounds that the Islamic concept of freedom was the basis of the Maroon struggle against slavocracy.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the tendency was not towards ethnic exclusivity as Campbell claims. The Maroon communities, both in Accompong, in the Leeward and in Moore Town in the Windward areas, are not ethnically homogeneous, but consist of various ethnic groups, such as Yoruba, Coromantine, Hausa, Akan and Fulani.<sup>89</sup> Islam united the heterogeneous society to form the Muslim *ummah* apparently to fight against the oppressor, *bucra*. The word *bucra*, the corruption of the Arabic word *baqarah* or cow, is often used to denote the fossilization of human beings. While the planters found comfort in being called *bucra*, the Maroons and slaves amused themselves in such mockeries. Self-sufficiency, as *Surat Al-Baqarah* in the Holy Qur'an states, prevents men from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. So such was the view prevalent among the Maroons and the slaves towards the plantocracy. Indeed, the unity of the Maroon Muslim *ummah* to fight for the cause of righteousness, piety and good conduct is the greatest manifestation of *tawhid*—the Unity of Allah.

### NOTES

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85. *Al-Hadis Mishkat-ul-Masabih*, Vol. 3, p. 284.
86. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
87. *Riyadh-us-Salaheen*, compiled by Imam abu Zakariya Yahya Bin Sharaf An-Nawawi, trans. S. M. Madni Abbasi, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994, p. 647.
88. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
89. Interview with Colonel Harris, Moore Town, 14 January 1999; see also CO 140/4, 29 September 1686.