Five Pillars of Islam: Practice, Survival, Resistance and Adaption from Africa to the Americas

Overview
This multi-day lesson will focus on the role of Islam in the Kingdoms of Western Africa, where Islam influenced the area tremendously in the time period prior to the Atlantic slave trade. The geographic focus will be on Africa that now encompasses the modern countries of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Nigeria. Students will learn that Islam was brought to the Americas by enslaved African Muslims. The overall theme of the lesson will be the practice, survival, resistance and adaptation of the five Pillars of Islam in Colonial and Antebellum America.

Grade
The first section of the lesson and resources can be used for 6th grade social studies.
The whole lesson can be directed for 8th grade social studies and World History in high school.

Subject
Social Studies/History

Essential Standards
6th Grade
- 6.H.2.4 - Explain the role that key historical figures and cultural groups had in transforming society (e.g. Mansa Musa, Confucius, Charlemagne and Qin Shi Huangdi).
- 6.G.1.2 - Explain the factors that influenced the movement of people, goods and ideas and the effects of that movement on societies and regions over time (e.g. scarcity of resources, conquests, desire for wealth, disease and trade).
- 6.C.1.2 - Explain how religion transformed various societies, civilizations and regions (e.g. beliefs, practices and spread of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism).

8th Grade
- 8.H.2.1 - Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states'
- rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.1.3 - Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.
- 8.H.1.2 - Summarize the literal meaning of historical documents in order to establish context.
- 8.H.1.1 - Construct charts, graphs, and historical narratives to explain particular events or issues.
- 8.C.1.1 - Explain how influences from Africa, Europe, and the Americas impacted North Carolina and the United States (e.g. Columbian Exchange, slavery, and the decline of the American Indian populations).
- 8.C.1.3 - Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States (e.g. women, religious groups, and ethnic sectors such as American Indians, African Americans, and European immigrants).

World History
- WH.H.2.7 - Analyze the relationship between trade routes and the development and decline of
- major empires (e.g. Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Greece, Rome, China, Mughal, Mongol, Mesoamerica, Inca, etc.).
- WH.H.5.1 - Explain how and why the motivations for exploration and conquest resulted in increased global interactions, differing patterns of trade, colonization, and conflict among nations (e.g., religious and political motives, adventure, economic investment, Columbian exchange, commercial revolution,

conquistador destruction of Aztec and Incan civilizations, Triangular Trade, Middle Passage, trading outposts, plantation colonies, rise of capitalism, etc.).

Essential Questions:

- What are the five pillars of Islam?
- How did Islam influence the kingdoms of Western Africa prior to the Atlantic Slave Trade?
- What impact did the Atlantic Slave Trade have on Africa?
- What were the differences and similarities in experiences of Omar bin Said and Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori in Colonial and Antebellum America?
- How did individuals that were enslaved in the Colonial and Antebellum America continue to practice the Five Pillars of Islam?
- What role did Islam have on the slave rebellions in the Americas?

Materials

- The teacher should have access to an overhead projector and use of a computer.
- Students should have access to computers, or printed handouts of all required materials for the lesson.
- The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes: http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html
- "Africans before Captivity" reading from LEARN NC (attached)
- Africans before Captivity graphic organizer (attached)
- Map of Muslim Africa: http://ayat-upf-dih.tv.s3.amazonaws.com/files/2011/02/03/Map-Muhammad%20Africa.jpg
- Pillars of Islam reading: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1859
- Five Pillars of Islam Worksheet (attached)
- Obmar ibn Said Autobiography – primary source reading: http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text3/religionomaribnsaid.pdf
- Documenting the American South - Adul Rahman Ibrahima Sori – secondary source reading: http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/ibrahima.html
- Omar ibn Said and Abdul Rahman Venn diagram (attached)
- Bahia Muslim Slave Revolt article: http://lostislamichistory.com/the-bahia-muslim-slave-revolt/
- "Servants of Allah" written by Sylviane Diouf excerpts (attached)

Duration

This lesson should be completed in four to five days.

Assessment

The lesson will culminate with students proving their comprehension by answering a series of essay questions. Teachers have the option to turn the assignment questions into more of a class discussion or Socratic seminar.

Procedure

Activating Strategy: The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes

1. The teacher should begin by previewing the unit material and providing a road-map for what students will learn in the multi-day lesson. After reviewing the essential questions, the teacher should play the animated video, "The Atlantic Slave Trade in Two Minutes," that shows the number, dates, and name of slave ships leaving Africa and going to the Americas (http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html). Before asking students some questions, stop or click on

certain slave ships and have students investigate the origin and destination of these ships. After showing the video, pose questions to spark discussion with students:

- How might the movement of people, also known as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade have impacted and altered the people and cultures of Africa?
- What major religion would the majority of enslaved people leaving Africa practiced in this time period?
- After viewing the video, what are your feelings or impressions as you were witnessing the number of ships leaving Africa and heading towards the Americas?
- How might you have handled being transporting against your will to a new land, cultures, economics and faith?
- What ways or strategies could a group of people maintain their religious and cultural identity in the face of this enslavement?

Learning Activity: Africans before captivity

2. In this activity, students will detail and explain the role of Islam on the Kingdoms of Africa prior to Atlantic Slave Trade. Pass out copies of "Africans before captivity" from LEARN NC (attached), 10 pages. Ask students to read this secondary source on the different influential empires and the influence of Islam. As students are reading the secondary source, ask them fill out the attached graphic organizer for better understanding. Project a map of Muslim Africa, like this one from 1375: http://ayat-upf-dih.tv.s3.amazonaws.com/files/2011/02/03/Map-Muhammad%20Africa.jpg.

3. After students have read and filled in the graphic organizer, ask students to answer one of the following summarization questions by writing individually in a journal or on paper to prove their understanding of the first learning activity. This can be done in class or as homework. If there is time, discuss responses as a class.
   - What role did Islam have on the development of Ancient Ghana and the influence of the Arabic scholars Al-Bakri and Al-Idrisi?
   - How was the rule of Mansa Musa influential the on the Empire of Mali and his embrace of Islam in the 14 century Africa?
   - What role did Timbuktu serve in the establishment of Islam in Western Africa?
   - Overall how did the Transatlantic Slave Trade influence and impact Western Africa in the 14th and 15th centuries?

Learning Activity: Five Pillars of Islam

4. In this second section of the lesson, students will detail and identify the five Pillars of Islam that members of the faith are expected to follow. Exceptions exist for the sick, elderly, young and pregnant women concerning fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Tell students that the Five Pillars include the following:
   1. Shahada – professing that Allah is the true God and Muhammad is his messenger.
   2. Salat – praying five times a day in the direction of Mecca.
   3. Zakah – paying a tax or giving a certain amount of money to charity.
   4. Sawm – fasting from the sun up to sundown during the holy month of Ramadan.
   5. Hajj – going on a spiritual journey (pilgrimage) to Mecca.

5. To assist in student understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam, students should read and analyze this secondary resource provided by the Oxford Dictionary of Islam: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e1859. Either print copies for students, or direct them to the website. Pass out copies of the Five Pillars of Islam worksheet, and have students answer the following guiding questions. Students should think about an enslaved person adhering to all five pillars.

- What obstacles would enslavement present concerning Salat, the requirement of praying five times a day?
- Why might have been the reaction of people living in the Americas to a person speaking the Shahada?
- Do you think that an enslaved person practicing Islam have any reservations about saying the Shahada to strangers? Why or why not?
- What was the early impression of Americans about Islam?
- How could any enslaved person or community make a journey to Mecca for the Hajj?
- Could there be an alternative to these practices in the Americas? Please describe.

6. Discuss student responses to the worksheet out loud as a class. These questions will be the foundation for the section of the lesson when students read about the lives of Omar ibn Said and Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori in Colonial America. Discuss: how did slaves practice the Five Pillars of Islam in the brutal and repressive conditions of slavery in the Americas?
   → **Teacher Note:** The website, Prince Among Slaves, is an excellent online resource with supplemental information regarding African Muslims enslaved in the United States. Teachers may wish to explore this site to gather more information or photos to share with students. (http://princeamongslaves.org/module/?module_id=4d4a79a98ead0e8166030000&content_id=4fdbaad9aa8eec121f00000d).

Learning Activity: Compare and Contrast Omar ibn Said and Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori

7. Students will compare and contrast the experiences of Omar ibn Said and Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori in Colonial America, two African Muslims who were brought to America as slaves. Students will read one primary and two secondary sources that detail the two enslaved individuals who continued to be practicing Muslims in Colonial America.

8. Introduce these two men: tell students that Omar ibn Said spent a large percentage of his life in North Carolina and produced an autobiography. Share more information about Omar ibn Said's life using the secondary source from Documenting the American South: http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/omarsaid.html. Tell students that Adul Rahman Ibrahima Sori was a prince in Africa and was captured and brought to America. Eventually, Mr. Sori was able to return to Africa in 1829. The film, Prince Among Slaves, recounts Mr. Sori's story. Consider playing the film's trailer for students from Unity Productions Foundation (https://vimeo.com/19235584).

9. Either with printed handouts or online, have students read the sources detailing the life of Omar ibn Said (http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text3/religionomaribnsaid.pdf) and Adul Rahman Ibrahima Sori (http://docsouth.unc.edu/highlights/ibrahima.html). While students are reading, have them complete the Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the lives of both men in America (attached). Students should also annotate the readings, and look for evidence of the two men practicing the various Pillars of Islam while being enslaved.
   - If the teacher is pressed for time, divide the class and have half the class reading about Mr. Said and the other about Mr. Sori. Have students partner together to compare and contrast/fill in the Venn diagram.

Summary Activity: Letter from Mr. Said or Mr. Sori

10. Either in class or as homework, instruct students to compose a two-paragraph letter from the perspective of either Mr. Said or Mr. Sori to a family member. The first paragraph should discuss their journey to the Americas, and the second paragraph should detail their experience practicing their Islamic faith in the Americas. Students should cite specific textual evidence from the primary and secondary sources. You may

ask studnets to age the letter in some way to give it an authentic look (i.e. brush tea or coffee on the paper, burn edges, make small tears, etc.).

11. As an extension activity, the teacher may ask students to make a connection to a different group in history who have had to adapt and survive to practice aspects of their belief system.

Learning Activity: Practicing the Five Pillars of Islam in Colonial and Antebellum America

12. Tell students that like Mr. Said and Mr. Sori, many enslaved Muslims in America found creative and heroic ways to practice the Five Pillars of Islam. Have students read the attached excerpts from "Servants of Allah" written by Sylviane Diouf. This is a long reading; you may want to assign half of the reading the night before for homework. Students should annotate the text to ensure understanding. The reading will help students find evidence of how enslaved people practiced the Five Pillars of Islam in the Americas.

13. Upon finishing the article, either in small groups or as a class, have students discuss the following:
    - Describe the ways in which Muslims in Colonial America practiced the first pillar of Islam, the profession of faith. The article mentions three of them.
    - What role did faith play in the lives of African Muslims?
    - In what ways did African Muslims practice the second pillar of faith, prayer?
    - Muslims are to give charity as the third pillar of Islam. How were enslaved Muslims, who were barely given enough resources to survive, able to be charitable?
    - What evidence has been uncovered that demonstrates that African Muslims practiced the fourth pillar of Islam, fasting?
    - Describe the ring-shout dance. Compare and contrast this dance with the fifth pillar of Islam, pilgrimage to Mecca.

Learning Activity: The impact of Islam on the slave rebellions in the Americas

14. Students will explore, engage, and analyze the role of Islam on slave rebellions in the Americas. Tell students that enslaved groups of people from Africa were not passive towards slavery. Rather, there are many examples of enslaved groups in the Americas rising up and pushing back against this economic system. The practice of Islam and Arabic provided a unifying language, religion and cultural identify that aided revolts in the Americas.

15. Using either printed handouts or computers, instruct students will to read the article on the Bahia Muslim Slave Revolt (http://lostislamichistory.com/the-bahia-muslim-slave-revolt/).

16. As a class, analyze and identify the impact of Islam in the Bahia Muslim slave revolt of the early 19-century Brazil. Discuss:
    - How did the Muslim slaves maintain an Islamic community in Bahia, Brazil?
    - What inspired the Muslims of Bahia to revolt against the Portuguese in 1814 and 1816?
    - How did Islam unify the diverse African Muslim slaves?
    - What role did mosques play in the revolt of 1835? What happened in mosques?
    - Were the Muslim slaves successful in their revolt? Why or why not? Were there mixed outcomes?
    - Do you think that a revolt like this would have been possible without Islam? Why or why not? Did the slaves have potential unifying factors other than religion?

Culminating Summary Activity

17. As a class, discuss the following questions. The teacher may choose to have students write an essay on one or more of the following prompts as homework.

- Explain and detail how Islam influenced the region of Western Africa prior to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Speculate why this religion spread through the area of Africa quickly.
- How did the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade impact Western African kingdoms and educational institutions?
- Compare and contrast the experiences of Omar ibn Said and Adul Rahman Ibrahima Sori in America. In what ways and did each person practice their faith, specially the Five Pillars of Islam in America?
- Explain and detail how enslaved groups in the Americas continued to practice the Five Pillars of Islam in Colonial and Antebellum America:
    - Initially, how was Islam first received in Colonial America and why was it significant that enslaved individuals openly practiced speaking the Shahada?
    - What creative ways did enslaved groups accomplish the impossible of feat of making the spiritual journey to Mecca?
- How did Islam influence the slave revolt in Bahia? Did this religious movement achieve its main goal? Please use textual evidence from the reading.

Africans before captivity

Excerpted and adapted from "African American Heritage & Ethnography (see http://www.nps.gov/ethnography/aah/aaheritage/)," published by the National Parks Service.

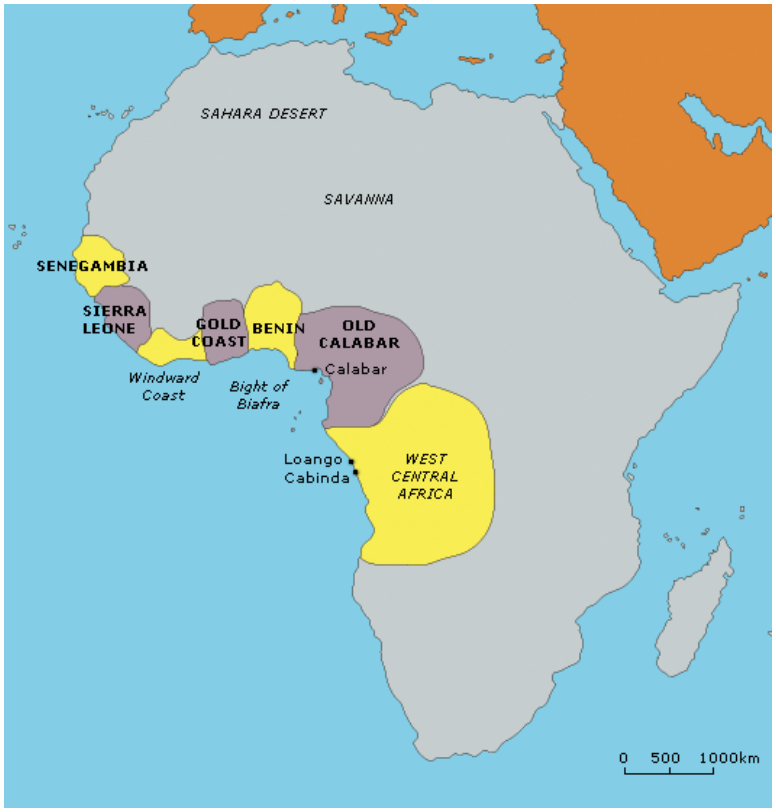

Figure 1. Major African regions contributing to the transatlantic slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Most Africans who came to North America were from West Africa and West Central Africa. It has been estimated that before 1700, 69 percent of all African people transported in the transatlantic slave trade were from West Central Africa, and that from 1700 to 1800, West Central Africans comprised about 38 percent of all Africans brought as slaves to the Americas.[1] Understanding West Central Africa is important to understanding African

American culture — but, more broadly, to understanding the culture and history of the American South.

Western Africa begins where the Sahara desert ends. A short, erratic rainy season supports the sparse cover of vegetation that defines the steppelike Sahel. The Sahel serves as a transition to the Sudan and classic savanna where a longer rainy season supports baobab and acacia trees sprinkled across an open vegetative landscape dominated by bushes, grasses and other herbaceous growth. Next comes another narrow transitional zone, where the savanna and forest intermingle, before the rain forest is reached. Finally, there is the coast, fringed with mangrove swamps and pounded by heavy surf.[2] The Sahara can be likened to a sea lying north of West Africa and the Sahel to its shore. The desert and the Sahel form geographical barriers to sub-Saharan West Africa that, like the Atlantic Ocean, contributed to the comparative isolation of the region from early Mid-east and European civilization until the fifteenth century.

Figure 2. This map of Africa shows zones of natural vegetation.

Early history

Archaeologists know little about sub-Saharan West Africa before 800 CE. After that time, the rise of Islam made Arabic records available.[3] Evidence from Dar-Tchitt, an archeological site in the area of Ancient Ghana, suggests agricultural expansion and intensification gave rise to walled villages of 500 to 1000 inhabitants as early as 900–800 BCE. By 700 BCE the settlement patterns changed to more numerous smaller, unwalled villages.

Figure 3. Islam spread to West Africa in about 800 CE and co-existed throughout much of the region with traditional religions. This map shows the extent of Islam in Africa today.

Jenne-Jeno, a second archeological site, was first settled around 250 BCE. Located around the inland delta of the Niger river, Jenne-Jeno probably started out as a place where local farmers, herders, and fishers brought produce to exchange with one another. Over time, the location became an interregional trade center. It might have been the first one in the region, but if so, others soon followed and several of these became the centers of a series of kingdoms and empires in the Sahel and Sudan. Eventually the region was densely populated by people who had a social organization based on kinship ties, political forms that are properly called states, and cities based on Saharan trade, at least as far south as modern-day Djenne. What we know about these states and cities comes mostly from oral traditions and literate Muslim Arab and Berber travelers, who made their first visits to the region in the eighth century.[4]) Oral sources included African poems, praise songs, and accounts of past events usually passed on through official oral historians such as Griots, who recite the histories from Ancient Mali and Songhai.

Medieval West Africa

When the Portuguese first explored the West African coastline in the 1400s, the cultures of African societies were highly evolved and had been so for centuries. In the thousand years before Portuguese exploration, three large centers of medieval African civilization developed sequentially along the west coast of sub-Saharan Africa. Islamic scholars and

African oral traditions tell us that all of these states had centralized governments, long-distance trade routes, and educational systems.

ANCIENT GHANA

The first polity that is known to have gained prominence was Ancient Ghana. Between 500 and 1250 CE, Ancient Ghana flourished in the southern Sahel north of the middle Niger and middle Senegal Rivers. From the work of two Arabic scholars — Al-Bakri, writing in 1067, and Al-Idrisi, writing in 1154 — we know that Ancient Ghana had a civil service, a strong monarchy based on a matrilineal system of inheritance, a cabinet, an army, an effective justice system and a regular source of income from trade as well as tribute from vassal kings.[5]

MALI

As Ghana declined over the next 200 years, the ancient Mali Empire arose in the same area but descended territorially further along the Niger River. Mali encompassed a huge area stretching from the Lower Senegal and Upper Niger rivers eastward to the Niger bend and northward to the Sahel.

Its great size made Mali an even more diverse state than Ghana. The majority of the people lived in small villages and cultivated rice or sorghums and millets, while some communities specialized in herding and fishing. Trade flourished in the towns, which housed a wide array of craftspeople along with a growing number of Islamic teachers and holy men. The main commercial centers were its capitals Niani, Timbuktu, and Gao.

Mansa Musa is the most remembered of the kings of Mali. During Musa's reign (1307–1337), Mali's boundaries were extended to their farthest limits. Musa instituted national honors for his provincial administrators to encourage devoted service. He ruled impartially with a great sense of justice, relying on judges, scribes, and civil servants. Musa established diplomatic relationships with other African states, especially Morocco.

Mansa Musa established the Islamic religion in Mali and is remembered for bringing peace, order, trade, and commerce. Mansa Musa started the practice of sending students to Morocco for studies, and he laid the foundation of what later became the city of Timbuktu, the commercial and educational center of the western Sudan.[6] Present-day Mande people trace their ancestry to the great thirteenth century.[7]

THE SONGHAI EMPIRE

Around 1375, Gao, a small tributary state of Mali, broke away under the leadership of Sunni Ali. Over the next twenty-eight years, Sunni Ali built the small kingdom of Gao into the huge empire of Songhai. Songhai encompassed the geographic area of ancient Ghana and Mali combined and extended into the region of ancient and contemporary northwest Nigeria. The Mandinka, Wolof, Bamana (also called Bambara), and other peoples lived in the western reaches of the Songhai Empire. Hausa and Fulani people lived in the region that is now northwest Nigeria. All of these cultures still exist.

By the time Portugal and Spain embarked on exploration and conquest of the Western Hemisphere in the 1500s, Mohammed Askia I ruled over Songhai. Askia completed Mansa Musa's project to create a great center of learning, culminating with the establishment of

the Sankore University in Timbuktu. Sankore teachers and students came from all over sub-Saharan Africa and from the Arabic nations to the east. Leo Africanus, an eyewitness, described Sankore University:

> Here are great stores of doctors, judges, priests and other learned men that are bountifully maintained at the King's (Muhammad Askia) costs and charges.[8]

Leo Africanus was born El Hasan ben Muhammed el-Wazzan-ez-Zayyati in the city of Granada in 1485, but was expelled along with his parents and thousands of other Muslims by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella when they completed their reconquest of Spain in 1492. Settling in Morocco, he studied in Fez and as a teenager accompanied his uncle on diplomatic missions throughout North Africa. During these travels, he visited Timbuktu. As a young man he was captured by pirates and presented as an exceptionally learned slave to Pope Leo X, who freed him, baptized him under the name "Johannis Leo de Medici," and commissioned him to write in Italian a detailed survey of Africa. His accounts provided most of what Europeans knew about the continent for the next several centuries.

Leo Africanus described Timbuktu as

> a town full of exceedingly rich merchants and hither continually resort a great store of Negroes which buy cloth brought out of Barbary and Europe. It is a wonder to see what plenty merchandise is daily brought thither, and how costly and sumptuous things be.[9]

The clothes that Africanus describes were European textiles traded for the Songhai exports of gold, ivory, and slaves.

West Africa, 1300–1800 CE

THE VOLTA KINGDOMS AND THE ASANTE EMPIRE

From the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, three smaller political states emerged in the forests along the coast of Africa below the Songhai Empire. The uppermost groups of states were the Gonja or Volta Kingdoms, located around the Volta River and the confluence of the Niger, on what was called the Windward Coast, now Sierra Leone and Liberia. Most of the people in the upper region of the Windward Coast belonged to a common language group, called Gur by linguists. They also held common religious beliefs and a common system of land ownership. They lived in decentralized societies where political power resided in associations of men and women.

Below the Volta lay the Asante Empire in the southeastern geographical area of the contemporary nations of Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and modern Ghana. By the fifteenth century the Akan peoples, who included the Baule, and Twi-speaking Asante, reached dominance in the central region. Akan culture had a highly evolved political system. One hundred years or more before the rise of democracy in North America, the Asante governed themselves through a constitution and assembly. Commercially, the Asante-dominated region straddled the African trade routes that carried ivory, gold, and grain. As a result, Europeans called various parts of the region the Ivory Coast, Gold Coast, and Grain Coast. The transatlantic slave trade was fed by the emergence of these Volta Kingdoms and the Asante Empire. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, people from these

regions were predominant among those enslaved in the British colonies of the North American mainland.[10]

THE YORUBA AND FON PEOPLES

Figure 4. The Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa, showing the Bights of Benin and Bonny (or Biafra).

Just below the Gold Coast lay the Bights of Benin and Biafra. (The modern nation of Nigeria has renamed the Bight of Biafra the Bight of Bonny, and you may see this name on some maps.) Oral history and findings in archeological excavation tell us that the Yoruba people have been the dominant group on the west bank of the Niger River as far as their historical memory extends and even further into the past. In the twelfth century, the Yoruba people began to coalesce into a number of territorial city-states of which Ife, Oyo, and Benin dominated. Old loyalties to the clan or lineage were subordinated to allegiance to a king or *Oni*. The Oni was chosen on a rotating basis by the clans. Below him was an elected state hierarchy that depended on broad support from the community. The people were subsistence farmers, artisans, and long distance traders in cloth, kola nuts, palm oil, and copper. Trade and the acquisition of horses were factors in the emergence of Oyo as the dominant political power among the Yoruba states by late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.[11]

Dahomey, or Benin, created by the Fon ruling dynasty, came to dominance in the seventeenth century and was a contemporary of the Asante Empire. As early as the seventeenth century, the Oyo kingdom had an unwritten constitution with a system of political checks and balances. Dahomey, located in Southern Nigeria, east of Yorubaland and west of the Niger River, also claimed to have obtained kingship from the Yoruba city of Ife. Oyo and Ife not only shared a common cultural history but also shared many other cultural characteristics, such as religious pantheons, patrilineal descent groups, urbanized settlement patterns, and a high level of artistic achievement, particularly in ivory, wood, brass, and bronze sculpture.

Relatively few Yoruba and Fon people, the two principal ethnic groups in the Oyo kingdoms, were enslaved in North America. Most were carried to Santa Domingo (Haiti) and Brazil. During and after the Haitian Revolution, some of the Fon people who were enslaved in Haiti immigrated voluntarily or involuntarily to New Orleans.[12]

The Ibo people, the third principal group found around the Bight of Biafra in the southeastern part of the region, predominated among those enslaved in the Chesapeake region during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Later in the eighteenth century Africans whom the Europeans called the "Congos" — that is, Kongos and "Angolas" — predominated among those enslaved in Virginia and the Low Country plantations of colonial South Carolina.[13]

West Central Africa, 1300–1800 CE

The Bakongo (the Kongo people), today several million strong, live in modern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo-Brazzaville, neighboring Cabinda, and Angola. The present division of their territory into modern political entities masks the fact that the area was once united under the rule of the ancient Kingdom of Kongo, one of the most important civilizations ever to emerge in Africa. For three hundred years, from its founding in the

1300s by Ne Lukeni Kia Nzinga until its destruction in 1665 by the Portuguese, Kongo was an organized, stable, politically centralized society based on a subsistence economy. The Kings of the Kongo ruled over an area stretching from the Kwilu-Nyari River, just north of the port of Loango, to the river Loje in northern Angola, and from the Atlantic to the inland valley of the Kwango — a region more than half the size of England, with roughly the length of coastline between New York City and Richmond, Virginia, and an inland reach equivalent to the distance from Baltimore to Lake Erie.[14]

The majority of all Africans enslaved in the Southern English colonies were from West Central Africa.[15] The Bakongo shared a common culture with the people of eight adjoining regions, who were either part of the Kongo kingdom or part of the kingdoms formed by peoples fleeing from the advancing armies of Kongo chiefdoms. Slave traders called the Bakongo, as well as the people from the adjoining regions, "Congos" and "Angolas," although they may have been Mbembe, Mbanda, Nsundi, Mpangu, Mbata, Mbamba or Loango.

The people of the coastal kingdoms shared a common social structure. The provincial regions, districts, and villages each had chiefs and a hierarchical system through which tribute flowed upward to the King of the Kongo and rewards flowed downward. Each regional clan or group had a profession or craft, such as weaving, basket making, potting, or iron working. Tribute and trade took the form of natural resources, agricultural products, textiles, other manufactured goods, and cowries shells.[16] The "Kongos" and "Angolas" shared a *lingua franca* or trade language that allowed them to communicate. They also shared other cultural characteristics such as matrilineal social organization and a cosmology expressed in their religious beliefs and practices.

Fu-Kiau, a renowned Kongo scholar, explained Kongo cosmology this way:

> The Kongo cosmogram is the foundation of Kongo society. The circle made by the sun's movement is the first geometric picture given to human beings. We move the same way the sun moves: we wake up, are active, die, then come back. The horizon line is the kalunga line between the physical and spiritual world. It literally means 'the line of God.' When you have a circle of the Kongo cosmogram, the center is seen as the eternal flame. It is a way to come closer to the core of the community. If someone is suffering, they say 'you are outside the circle, be closer to the fire.' To stand on the cosmogram is to tie a social knot, bringing people together. Dikenga is from the verb kenga, which means 'to take care, to protect,' but also the flame or fire from inside the circle, to build and give life.[17]

Figure 5. Woman-and-child figures are visual metaphors for both individual and societal fertility among West African peoples and reflect their matrilineal social organization, that is, tracing their kinship through their mother's side of the family.

The rise of the slave trade

Europeans did not introduce slavery to Africa. As African rulers rose and fell, their political opponents, people of high social status, and their families were sold to promote internal political stability. Poor people were sold to reconcile debts owed by themselves or their families. Chiefs sold people as punishment for crimes. Gangs of Africans and a few marauding Europeans captured free Africans who were also sold into slavery. Domestic slaves were resold and prisoners of war were sold. Africans themselves carried out the capture and sale of other Africans for enslavement — few Europeans ever actually marched inland and captured slaves themselves.

At the same time, had Europeans not wanted African slave labor for their American colonies, there would not have been any market for African slaves. African wars fed the slave trade, and the slave trade, in turn, fueled internal Africal wars. A. Adu Boahen, an African scholar, argues that "the greatest sources to supply slaves were raids conducted for the sole purpose of catching men for sale and above all, inter-tribal and inter-state wars which produced thousands of war captives, most of whom found their way to the New World."[18]

THE COST OF A SLAVE

All of these African people were bartered for European trade goods. A slave purchased for 100 gallons of rum worth only £10 could be sold for £20 to £50 in seventeenth-century America. The low cost of slaves greatly encouraged the slave trade. Even though the price of slaves rose three- or four-fold during the eighteenth century, many Europeans were convinced that it was "cheaper to buy than to breed." In fact, until the late eighteenth century, it was cheaper to import a slave from Africa than to raise a child to the age of 14. During the late seventeenth century, merchants in the Senegambia region of West Africa paid as little as one pound sterling for young males, which they sold to European traders for the equivalent of three-and-a-half pounds sterling, or eleven muskets, thirty-one gallons of brandy, or ninety-three pounds of wrought iron. Initially, many slaves were acquired from regions within fifty or a hundred miles of the West African coast. During the eighteenth century, though, rising prices led slavers to search for captives in interior regions, 500 to 1,000 miles inland.[19]

WARS OVER SLAVERY

As the slave trade continued, more and more wars broke out between African principalities. Whatever the ostensible causes of these wars, they produced prisoners of war that supplied slave factories along the West and West Central African coast.

The fighting between African societies followed a pattern. Wars weakened the centralized African governments and undermined the authority of associations, societies, and the elders who exercised social control in societies with decentralized political forms. Both winners and losers lost people from niches in lineages, secret societies, associations, guilds and other networks that maintained social order. Conflict brought about loss of population and seriously compromised indigenous production of material goods, cash crops and subsistence crops. Seventeenth-century Capuchin monks reported that the Angolan Ndongo slave catchment area was rapidly becoming a wasteland as countless people died in war or as slaves in transit to slaving depots, were exported as slaves, or fled the advance of slave-catching warriors.[20]

Both winners and losers in the African wars came to rely upon European trade goods. Eventually, European money replaced cowrie shells as a medium of exchange. European trade goods supplanted indigenous material goods, natural resources and products as the economic basis of West African society. At the same time, Europeans increasingly required people in exchange for trade goods. Once this stage was reached, an African society had little choice but to trade human lives for European goods and guns — guns that had become necessary to wage wars for further captives in order to trade for goods upon which the African society was now dependent.[21]

The effects of the trade on African civilization and culture were devastating. African societies lost kinship networks and agricultural laborers and production capacity. The loss of people meant the loss of indigenous artisans and craftsmen along with their knowledge of textile production, weaving and dying, metallurgy and metalwork, carving, basket making, potting skills, architecture, and agricultural techniques upon which their societies depended. Africa's loss was the New World's gain. These were the same expertise and skills that Africans brought to the New World along with their physical labor and ability to acclimate to harsh environments that made them indispensable in the development of the new colonies and nations of the Western Hemisphere.

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Figure 1 (page 1)

Developed by Audrey L. Brown, Ph.D., National Park Service. Based on data in David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment," The William and Mary Quarterly, January 2001. Drawing by Everett Lindsay, National Park Service. This image is believed to be in the public domain. Users are advised to make their own copyright assessment.

Figure 2 (page 2)

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Figure 5 (page 7)

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Name: _____

Africans before Captivity

Location/physical features	Culture	Impact of Slavery	Influence of of Islam
Ancient Ghanna			
Mai			
Songhai Empire			
Volga and Asante Empires			
Yoruba and Fon Peoples			
Bakongo (Kongo)			

Name: _____

Five Pillars of Islam Worksheet

1. What obstacles would enslavement present concerning Salat, the requirement of praying five times a day?

2. Why might have been the reaction of people living in the Americas to a person speaking the Shahada?

Do you think that an enslaved person practicing Islam have any reservations about saying the Shahada to strangers? Why or why not?

What was the early impression of Americans about Islam?

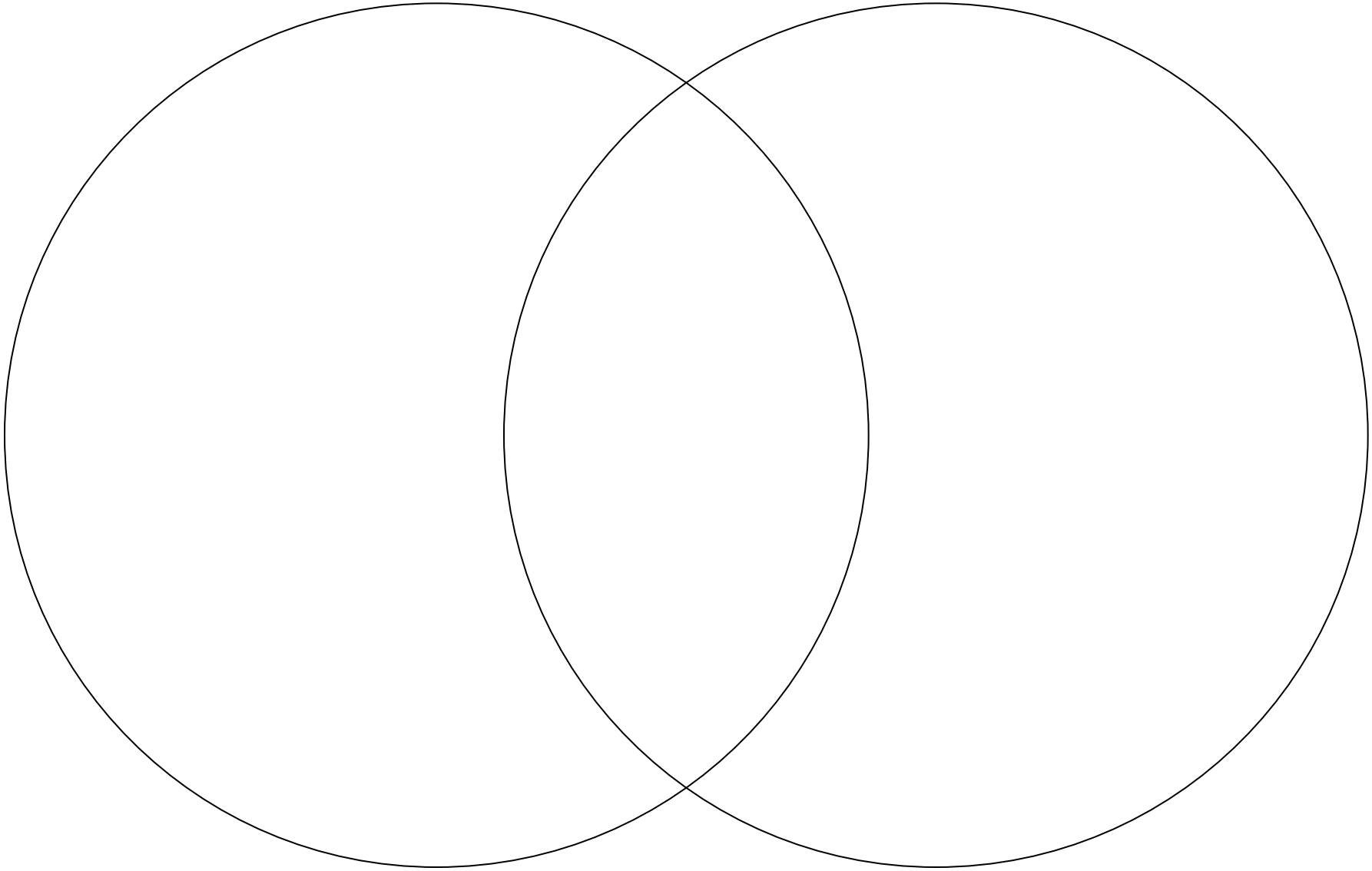
3. How could any enslaved person or community make a journey to Mecca for the Hajj?

Could there be an alternative to these practices in the Americas? Please describe.

Name: _____

Omar ibn Said

Abdul Rahman



Servants of Allah Excerpts

Diouf, Sylviane

Published by NYU Press
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The First Pillar: *Shahada*

The First Pillar, the profession of faith, or *shahada*, is expressed by the formula *La-ilaha ill'l-Lah Muhammadan rasul-ul-lah*—"There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." According to Islam, when uttered with sincerity, the *shahada* makes anyone a Muslim. In America the *shahada* manifested itself in three ways: affirmation of the Africans' faith in Allah and his prophet, Muhammad; rejection of conversion to Catholicism or Protestantism; and, when necessary, pseudo- conversion.

"Allah. Muhammad." It was with these words that a slave found wandering in Kent County, Pennsylvania, introduced himself to the men who interrogated him one day in June 1731. He was a fugitive and could not speak English. He could not say where he came from or to whom he be- longed. As a slave he was called Simon; later he was known as Job ben Solomon. But as Ayuba Suleyman Diallo he had placed his faith in Allah. When confronted with an unknown, potentially dangerous situation over which he had no control, he simply affirmed his Islamic faith. He made the *shahada* the definition of his own existence, of his person. He did so rightly, because in the end, his Islamic faith and education saved him, freeing him from bondage. Islam appears to have been a central force in other enslaved Africans' lives as well. Omar ibn Said, from Senegal and North Carolina, has left testimonies of his faith in numerous manuscripts in Arabic. Most start with an invocation to Allah and Muhammad. His last known manuscript is a copy of *surah* 110—*An-Nasr*, or "Help"—which refers to the con- version to Islam. Another testimony of the resilience of the Muslim faith appears in Ben-Ali, or Bilali Mohamed, a Guinean Pulo who became something of a celebrity in the Sea Islands of Georgia. He remained a devout Muslim all his life and died uttering the *shahada.*

Clearly, some Muslims continued strongly affirming their religious convictions. They had come from areas where Christianity had not—and still has not—been accepted or from areas where it was the religion of a few traders, mostly mulattos. What the Africans knew about Christianity they had learned in the Koran or the New Testament, not through any contact with the Europeans. They were not aware of the antipathy that their religion inspired on the other side of the ocean; furthermore, they were strong believers.

On the Africans' part, it is worth noting that, as was—and still is—the case in Africa, the peoples who followed traditional religions were more willing than the Muslims to convert. This does not mean that they renounced their previous faith; rather, they incorporated whatever seemed useful in the new religion into their original beliefs. For that reason, they did not exhibit the defiance of the Muslims, whose creed could not accommodate Christianity.

The African Muslims clearly remained attached to their faith, and their enslavement was itself a good reason to be even more devout. Faith meant hope, moral comfort, and mental escape. It was also a link to the past, to a time when they were free, respected, and, for many, engaged in intellectual pursuits, not menial labor. Kélédor expresses well the emotional support that religion could give to the slave:

> *I had resolved to be faithful to the religion in which I had been carefully raised. I was attached to it by conviction; I was attached to it so much more that it was the only thing left to me from my family and my country; so much more that I attached to it the memories of the causes of my captivity, and the hope of release which was promised to me.*

The Second Pillar: *Salat*

This faith, preserved openly or secretly, manifested itself in the various acts that mark the life of a Muslim believer throughout the year. First was *salat*, prayer, **the Second Pillar of Islam**. Constraining so as to promote self-discipline, it is done five times a day, at precise times, and is preceded by ablutions (the washing of the feet, forearms, hands, and face). It also requires a mat, prayer beads, and a veil for women. In a situation of servitude in a non-Muslim environment, the discipline of *salat* seems a particularly difficult endeavor. Though it considers prayer a pillar, the Koran is flexible, and a believer is allowed to abstain from praying if circumstances are not favorable. Understandably, then, the Muslims who prayed did so by choice, not by obligation.

Some, such as Job ben Solomon, prayed secretly. The erudite Job had been sent to the tobacco fields, but after he got sick, his master, seeing his lack of physical resistance, made him tend his cattle. Unbeknownst to the slaveholder, this was probably a real pleasure—within the limits of slavery—for the young man, because stockbreeding is the traditional occupation of the Fulani. Job had more freedom than in the fields, for he was far from the overseer's eyes, so he regularly left his cattle and hid in the woods to pray. But a young white boy had been watching him and amused himself by throwing dirt in his face. This experience, coupled with other problems, prompted Solomon to flee. He was soon captured, however, and taken into custody until his owner reclaimed him. While in jail, the young Senegalese man acquired some notoriety because he could write Arabic and was thought to be of high lineage. This new fame may have contributed to his owner's good disposition, for he gave him a place to pray and lightened his workload. This major accommodation to a non-Christian slave's spiritual welfare was far from being the norm, but it was not completely exceptional, as other examples of slaveholders who tolerated their Muslim slaves' habits attest.

In the absence of a vast corpus of references to Muslim prayer in the Americas, and because of the policy of forced conversion, it seems natural to assume that secret prayer was the most common. Yet a few cases of public prayers have been recorded. Yarrow [Yoro] Mamout, for instance, used to pray publicly. He had been deported to Maryland at the beginning of the eighteenth century and lived there for the rest of his long life. The painter Charles Wilson Peale, who made his portrait, wrote in 1819, "he professes to be a Mahometan, and is often seen & heard in the streets singing Praises to God—and conversing with him." Peale described Mamout as an honest, courageous, serious man, well-liked by everyone. His age, his Islamic dress, and his economic success for a former slave had made him a celebrity. In Maryland—the very Catholic land of Mary—he had been able to retain his Muslim African name and to have others respect his faith and his right to express it publicly. That was no small feat. Yarrow Mamout must have possessed a strong determination and a very deep faith.

"An old native African named Philip, who was a very intelligent man, . . . not a pagan but a Mohammedan," used to pray in public too. Scientific writer Joseph Le Conte mentioned in his autobiography that "he greatly interested us by going through all the prayers and prostrations of his native country." Another example of public prayer has been pre-served through the literary genre so particular to the United States: the slave narrative. Charles Ball, a non-Muslim native-born slave who published his autobiography in 1837, related in great detail the story of a Muslim enslaved in South Carolina. He noted his peculiar habits: "In the evening, as we returned home, we were joined by the man who prayed five times a day; and at the going down of the sun, he stopped and prayed aloud in our hearing, in a language I did not understand." Though the slaves' schedules were extremely rigorous, the man still managed to do his five daily prayers. Just as he would have done in any Muslim country, he did not hesitate to pray publicly, wherever he was.

Ed Thorpe, an eighty-three-year-old former slave, recalled his grandmother Patience Spalding, who came from Africa, in these terms: "Wen muh gran pray, she knell down on duh flo. She bow uh head down tree time an she say 'Ameen, Ameen, Ameen.'" *Ameen* is the Muslim equivalent to *amen*. Rachel Anderson, seventy-three years old, remembered her great-grandmother: "Muh great gran—she name Peggy—I membuh she pray ebry day, at sunrise, at noon, an at sunset. She kneel down wen she pray an at duh en she bow low tree times, facin duh sun." Rosa Grant, sixty-five, had more detailed memories: "Muh gran come frum Africa too. Huh name wuz Ryna. I mem- buh wen I wuz a chile seein muh gran Ryna pray. Ebry mawnin at sun- up she kneel on duh flo in uh ruhm an bow obuh an tech uh head tuh duh flo tree time. Den she say a prayuh. I dohn membuh jis wut she say, but one wud she say use tuh make us chillun laugh. I membuh it wuz 'asham- negad'. Wen she finish prayin she say 'Ameen, ameen, ameen'." *Ashamnegad* could have been *Ashhadu anna*, which would be followed by the formula *Muhammadan rasul-ul-lah*. The complete sentence means "I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." *Ashamnegad* could also have been *Ashhadu alla*, which would be followed by *allah ilaha ill-Allah*, meaning "I bear witness that there is no God but God." Both formulas express the Muslim's profession of faith, the *shahada*.

The Sea Islands Muslims did not hide to pray; they did so very publicly in front of the other slaves, and some prayed in front of their masters. Thomas Spalding's grandson, for example, mentioned that his grandfather had slaves, "devout Mussulmans, who prayed to Allah . . . morning, noon and evening," and that Bilali faced east to "call upon Allah."

In addition to both secret and public prayers, some Muslims managed to hold prayers in groups, in specially designated areas. On Fridays, the Muslim Sabbath, Brazilian Muslims in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries prayed in a group as recommended by the Koran, because the *jama'ah*, or prayer in congregation, is thought to be more effective. After completing their ablutions, they put on white garments, covered their heads, each took a rosary made of one hundred big beads, and prayed on a skin mat, men in the front and women in the back. In Brazil, enslaved and emancipated Africans had succeeded in secretly maintaining a Muslim community large enough and sufficiently organized that the common prayer could be held in a consecrated place. The house of a free Muslim, a hut that the Africans had been allowed to build on their master's property, a room that others rented with their pooled resources—all these makeshift mosques enabled the Muslims to accomplish their devotions together, in the best way they could afford. African religions were forbidden at the time, and these slave meetings could not have gone unnoticed—even in Bahia, where city life was more flexible than anywhere else in the slave colonies. The Africans were watched. They probably knew it but were willing to take risks to maintain the rites of their religion.

All the references to prayers in the Sea Islands mention three daily prayers, and there are examples of Africans saying two daily prayers in Bahia. As Islam requires five, the incidences of fewer prayers indicate that the Muslims had to adapt to the limits imposed on their time.

The Third Pillar: *Zakat*

The Third Pillar of Islam is the *zakah*, or legal alms, an annual tax, paid according to the believer's revenues and assets, that is given to the poor and needy, the slaves who want to buy their freedom, and the debtors. It is intended to instill in the believers a sense of collective identity as well as responsibility, by making it a duty to participate actively in the welfare of the community. The *zakah* is mandatory when conditions are favorable, whereas charity is not but is strongly recommended. For slaves to pay a tax or even give alms seems incongruous; nevertheless, Islamic almsgiving did take place between slaves, as has been recorded in Brazil, the West Indies, and the United States.

In Brazil, Ramadan, a month-long fast, ended with a feast during which Muslims exchanged gifts called *saka*—at least, that is what their observers understood. In actuality, the Brazilian Muslims were involved in two kinds of almsgiving. One was the *zakatul-Fitr*, a special charity that must be paid during Ramadan. It consists of whatever is necessary for an adult person to eat for one day. In addition, the faithful are required to pay the *zakah* on their property, between 2 and 3 percent of their earnings or possessions, and they often chose to do so during this particular month. Even enslaved or nominally free, Muslims who were devoid of even the bare minimum found ways to be charitable in order to respect a fundamental tenet of their religion.

Other Muslim communities in other parts of the Americas were also faithful to the commandment. Among the Sea Islands Muslims, Katie Brown on Sapelo Island remembered that her grandmother Margaret— one of Bilali's daughters—used to make funny cakes she called *saraka*. She made them on the same day every year, and it was an important day. Hester, another daughter of Bilali, made these cakes every month. On Saint Simons Island it was Bilali, Salih Bilali's son, who made the *saraka*. According to Shadwick Rudolph of Saint Marys, his grandmother Sally made the best. In some parts of Trinidad the offering of food to the ancestors is called *sakara*; in Grenada and Carriacou, *saraka.* Popular memory has associated the word *saraka* to rice cakes in the Sea Islands and *sakara* and *saraka* to ritual offerings in the West Indies, but there is little doubt that these words are slight corruption of the Arabic word *sadakha*. *Sadakha* are voluntary alms that the believer offers to acquire merit with Allah. Freewill offerings are given during the holy days, on Fridays, during funerals or baptisms, or whenever the believer wants to do good.

The Fourth Pillar: *Sawm*

Muslim men and women further succeeded in respecting one of the most constraining Koranic commandments: the fast, or *sawm*. **The Fourth Pillar of Islam** is meant to remind the believer of the poor's hard lot and of the compassion of God, who gives people their sustenance, as well as to enhance self-discipline. The Muslim fast lasts twenty-nine or thirty days, during which one may not eat or drink between sunup and sundown. It is a very demanding fast that provokes headaches and general fatigue and results in weight loss. To better appreciate the effort Ramadan could represent for a slave, it is necessary to remember that if the slave trade lasted so long and took away so many people, it was in part because the slaves' mortality rate was very high. The average life of a slave was fifteen years, no more than six in harsh climates. Planters worked their slaves to death because it made better sense financially, they reasoned, to buy full-grown men and women to replace deceased slaves than to have to care for them, even in a limited way, for the rest of their lives. The French writer Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint Mery, who visited the United States at the end of the eighteenth century, informed his readers that a slave brought about $257 a year to his owner, whereas his upkeep was only $13.48

The slaves were, as a rule, underfed and overworked. Despite these extremely brutal conditions, Muslims fasted. Salih Bilali of Saint Simons was one of them. James Hamilton Couper, his owner, described him as "a strict Mahometan; [he] abstains from spirituous liquors, and keeps the various fasts, particularly that of the Rhamadan." Omar ibn Said was described as a "staunch Mohammedan, and the first year at least kept the fast of Rhamadan with great strictness." In Bahia, Ramadan was strictly observed by the large Muslim community. Shortly before the Muslims' uprising of 1835 in Bahia, the guards of the prison where the *imam* Licutan was held heard his visitors tell him that they would come to deliver him as soon as the fast was over. In the aftermath of this revolt, as the police were searching a Koranic school, they found a calendar indicating the days of the Ramadan. Afro-Brazilian physician and historian Manoel Querino, who studied the Muslims of Rio at the beginning of the twentieth century, observed that during Ramadan, every morning at four and again at eight in the evening the Muslims ate a dish made of cornmeal, milk, and honey. In the meantime, he noted, they did not drink or eat, nor did they swallow their saliva.

African Muslims enslaved in the Americas were not obligated to fast; they chose to do so. The Koran is not strict on the matter and allows a believer to abstain from fasting if he or she is far from home or is involved in strenuous work, which was the Africans' case. The decision to fast indicates that they were well aware that their stay in America was definitive and that no circumstance, as bad as it might be, could justify, in their eyes, derogation to the demands of their religion.

The Fifth Pillar: *Hajj*

The Fifth Pillar of Islam, the *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, which develops the believers' sense of brotherhood and unity, was fundamentally out of the question. It is clear that some Muslims enslaved in America and the Caribbean had made the pilgrimage before their capture; West Africans, including teenage boys, had routinely accomplished it since the twelfth century. They walked to Arabia, crossing the African continent from west to east, on a journey that took some of them several years as they settled along the way, opening up schools and proselytizing. Some enslaved Muslims made references to their family and friends going on the pilgrimage. Omar ibn Said had made the pilgrimage himself, as had Mohammad Abdullah from Kano and Bahia.

In addition to such references to the pilgrimage as having been accomplished by the Muslims themselves or their relatives in Africa, one clear instance linking Mecca to the American slaves has been documented. Before the abolition of slavery, Brazilian scholar Raymundo Nina Rodrigues, who was visiting a house used as a mosque, saw pictures on the walls depicting the "temple of Mecca," with Arabic inscriptions. The presence of these images shows that the African Muslims had not renounced the pilgrimage, even if they were to make it only in their imagination.

Another American reference to the pilgrimage may lie in one of the religious traditions of the American South, Trinidad, and Jamaica: the shout or ring-shout, during which men and women turn in a circle while clapping their hands and shuffling their feet. The common explanation of the shout is that it was originally an African dance. But there is another, very intriguing explanation. In her book *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, published in 1942, Lydia Parrish was the first to report a linguistic scoop, given to her by Dr. Lorenzo Dow Turner. The black linguist had been studying Africanisms in the language and culture of the Gullahs of Georgia and South Carolina and had come up with an interesting hypothesis concerning the origin of the shout:

> *There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating a religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation for the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.*

In a linguistic book published in 1949, Turner explains, "Shout = a religious ring dance in which the participants continue to perform until they are exhausted." The word would come from the Arabic *shaut,* which means, according to Turner, "to move around the Kaaba . . . until exhausted. Turner's first interpretation seems to be the best. Actually, the circumambulation of the Kaaba is called *tawaf* and is made up of seven tours. To accomplish one tour is called *sha'wt*; it is pronounced in Arabic as *shout* is in English. Neither the *sha'wt* nor the *tawaf* imply exhaustion.

The linguistic hypothesis seems reinforced by the observation of the "dance" itself. Just as the pilgrims do in Mecca, the shouters turn counterclockwise. As in Mecca, they do so around a sacred object, such as the church itself (in the Sea Islands) or a second altar built especially in the middle of the church (in Jamaica and Trinidad). One can wonder if Muslims who knew that they would never go to Mecca recreated in a certain way the major event of the most important pilgrimage a Muslim can make. This hypothesis is fascinating and, if ever verified, would show an extremely puzzling phenomenon of retention and recreation. However, in the absence of other, more revealing clues, one can only conjecture.

Conclusion

Affirmation of the faith, prayers, alms, fasting, and dreams of Mecca: Islam did survive on the American continent. It adapted itself to the local realities when necessary, while retaining its force and specificity. It is not surprising that the enslaved Africans did not waver in their faith in God. A certain amount of fatalism, expressed in the word *mektoub*—"it is written"—is an integral part of Islam. Besides, it is in the most difficult situations that faith of whatever sort prospers best. In fact, far from making the Africans' religious fervor disappear, slavery deepened it. This was true for both Muslims and non-Muslims. That African Muslims kept their faith is not exceptional. What is, is that they had the will to follow rites that were difficult to live by, and that they retained them in the most orthodox manner.

The bulk of the testimonies show that the Muslims did not content themselves with living their faith in silence, as recommended by the Koran when one is confined to a hostile environment. Fear of ridicule, the suspicion and incomprehension of others, not to mention the constraining aspect of some practices did not discourage them. The Muslims actively preserved their religion. They took difficult and sometimes astonishing steps to ensure its continuity in the New World. They were willing and able to organize themselves in a most efficient way with religious net- works reaching into Africa and Europe, as is discussed in the following chapters. They showed realism; under certain conditions, they opted for a surface assimilation that guaranteed them physical survival and, beyond this, the survival of their creed. They were able to manipulate or gain the goodwill of some individuals or groups—not only abolitionists but slaveholders as well.

The African Muslims of America demonstrate that, contrary to what is sometimes asserted, Islam was not superficially implanted in West Africa. It was deeply rooted and for that reason could withstand deportation. During slavery, on both sides of the Atlantic, Africans were devout Muslims, sincere believers, strict practitioners, and active agents in the development and shaping of their religious and cultural world.

Servants of Allah
Diouf, Sylviane
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