

Pakistani Muslim Travels, Finds **'African Muslims Pray for Success of the Messenger'**

I have just returned from a three-week trip to north-western Africa. I had undertaken the journey for a number of reasons, the first and foremost of which was to acquaint myself with the peoples of that part of the world. Not having previously traveled in Algeria and the lands adjacent to it, I wanted to learn firsthand of their problems, aspirations and accomplishments. Another—and no less significant—objective of my journey was to find out what the African Muslims knew and thought of the "Nation of Islam in America" and its rightful leader, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

It is, of course, my intention to write in this newspaper a detailed account of my trip—a "travelogue," so to speak. However, this would require some time, as I cannot adequately describe everything seen by my eyes and heard by my ears (I have more than 50 pages of notes!) in a brief or hastily-prepared article.

Moreover, the photographs taken by me in Africa also would not be ready for publication in less than eight or 10 days—and what good is a travelogue without ample illustrations? The present article is only a sort of "preface" to the presentation I hope to offer MUHAMMAD SPEAKS readers during the coming weeks and months.

I BELIEVE I was successful in gathering exactly the type of material I desired due to the fact that I could speak Arabic—however imperfectly. Also, being a Muslim (alhamdu-lillah!), I was able to venture, in pursuit of particular news, to many places generally inaccessible to non-Muslim (Christian or European) reporters and writers. And wherever I went, I was received with



Naeem

considerable warmth and cordiality.

In Algeria, I was privileged to meet several of the Republic's ministers and high government officials. In Tunisia and Libya, I was able to call on and meet with a number of religious and cultural leaders of the two nations.

I also exchanged views with Ghana educators, a Guinean industrialist and Sierra Leonean artists. During my stay in the Algerian capital (Algiers), it was my good fortune to meet with a number of freedom fighters from the Portuguese territories on the African continent, Rhodesia and South Africa.

NEEDLESS to add, discussion of the U.S. Islamic scene was a part of my conversation with practically all whom I met—students as well as scholars, fellahin (farmhands) as well as factory workers—especially if they were adherents of the Muslim faith.

One of my happiest encounters in this direction took place one bright, sunny afternoon in the heart of the old town ("Casbah") of Algiers. I had stopped at a cafe (coffee shop) to rest a little and to have some refreshments. However, no sooner had I introduced myself to the proprietor as a "Muslim from America" than everyone present

literally ran to and gathered around my table. "Ahlan wa sahlan," "Ahlan wa sahlan"—over and over the Arabic expression of fraternal welcome greeted me.

Presently one of the men in the crowd moved a bit closer to me and, introducing himself as Sayid Lalouni, politely enquired "if you are acquainted with the African Muslims in America..." When I answered in the affirmative, I was subjected to a volley of new questions.

BASICALLY, each of the queries comprised an earnest plea: "Please tell us more about L'hajj Muhammad..." (It took me a good few moments to realize that most African Muslims, unable to recognize the biblical name "Elijah," generally referred to the U.S. Muslim leader as "L'hajj," "Al-hajj" or just "Hajj Muhammad.")

As I began to tell them what they desired to know about the "African Muslim leader in America and his followers," I noticed that the ring of my new-found friends around me had become much larger. There were now not five or six but more than 20 persons near and about my table.

Likewise, there were now at least seven or eight cups of Turkish coffee on the table where I had placed my own. The others, it turned out, were also meant for me, being the offering of my hospitable brothers in Islam. (I could not, of course, gulp all that coffee. However, I had to oblige my "hosts" by sipping a little from each of the cups placed before me.)

I DO NOT know whether

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African Muslims Pray for Success of the Messenger

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I stayed at the cafe for an hour, 90 minutes or longer. I do know, however, that our informal discussion came to an end only when a muezzin's call from the nearest mosque reminded us that it was time to perform the Maghrib (evening or after-sunset) prayer.

Another moment of great satisfaction came at the mosque itself. As the prayer ritual concluded, a member of the congregation arose from his sitting position on the rug and, raising his hands upwards, stated in a clear, audible voice:

"WE HAVE a Muslim brother visiting us from America. Let us pray to Allah that our welcome guest finds his travels through our land both safe and pleasant . . . And let us all, please, also pray for the success of

our African brother Muslim in America, L'hajj Muhammad, who is a noble Islamic warrior constantly in combat with the enemies of Allah and His Religion . . ."

Anti-Negro Books Stay

DETROIT — Although the Detroit Public Library will no longer buy books of children's rhymes by modern authors which contain passages belittling racial or ethnic groups, it will not undertake to rewrite history and purge it of the racial slurs of the past.

The library commission, in adopting this policy, referred to a complaint about "Ten Little Niggers" rhyme in the Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes, which is published in Britain.