

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

I never knew that young women and girls could have much fun and enjoyment among themselves until I was forced to be only in the company of females in the Republic of the Sudan.

We studied together in groups and conducted meetings like seminars about our classes. In general we were always either studying, improving self or sewing.

WHEN I visited the homes of some of my female friends and colleagues, I took the opportunity to watch closely the schedules of the wife and mother. I wanted to know what she did and her actions while doing. She would wake up early (usually before everyone else) and bathe, say her prayers then prepare the morning tea or coffee for her husband and

then prepare the morning tea or coffee for her husband, and the breakfast for their children. She would wake them up so that they could wash and dress for school and her husband for work. After all had dressed, had their tea, coffee or breakfast and left for school or work, the wife and mother began preparing the mid-day meal (which is the heaviest meal of the Sudanese household). She would put the meats and vegetables on a low fire to cook slowly while she went about the house cleaning and putting things in order. She would be busy to hurry and get this cooking and cleaning finished. I never heard a Sudanese woman complain about the amount of work she would have to do. If she had a large house and/or many children a male house servant was hired to do the heavy cleaning and the washing and

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I USED TO wonder about one young Sudanese lady whom I used to visit often. I questioned her about her building her day and mind around her husband. She told me, "If I cannot make him happy then I cannot be happy and I would have failed as a wife." At that time I could not understand such devotion of wife to husband, for I had been raised in a country (America) where the wife would look elsewhere for a man other than her husband without much thought of not being happy if he was not.

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