

## On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyannah Sharrieff

I found that children although very well disciplined are catered to and loved very much in the Sudan among the Muslim homes which I visited. There is no separation of male and female children while they are infants, but as they begin to walk and talk the male infants are more often placed with the male members of their families, and the females more often placed in the company of females.

In the Sudan, I noticed that the Muslim children would obey any adult who gave them instructions. The children seldom went out of their homes without an older person with them, unless it was to a dukan (small store) when they were about 6 or 7 years old, and they would not have to cross any streets, where cars passed; but this was not often. There was no need for them to go out into the streets to play, for there was space enough within the walls which surrounded their homes for them to play. However they did not have much idle time for they were constantly being talked with or watching some member of their family sew, cook, clean, read, work on an automobile, etc. Thus they learned by observance at an early age.

**THE SCHOOL** and working hours being different from those here in America, permitted members of the family to give much of their attention and time to their children.

The Sudanese do not leave their children alone. There is always someone with or near the child at all times. If and when the baby cries someone is there to pick it up and look to its needs. They do not let a baby cry for want of warmth and affection as is the practice in western Christian societies. Here in America the baby is left alone to cry in a bed or chair or play pen, while the mother or guardian tells it that it will have to adjust to being alone. But this is not seen in the Sudan among the Muslims. There is always someone who will go to the baby when it cries. This is something to think about for one does not find people walking around with complexes which are said to be based on the lack of love and affection during childhood in the Sudan as is the case here in America.

In the Sudan and among the Muslims in general, one will notice that the children will respect any adult with whom they come in contact (especially if that adult is a Muslim). There is a certain trust which the child has for the Muslim adult. They know that they will not be led astray or knowingly misguided. They know that they are regarded with love and as children by the adults. To them an adult is like an aunt or uncle, or grandmother, or grandfather. They also know that these adults have the right to reprimand them for any misconduct on their part. And,

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any Sudanese Muslim adult who sees a child doing a misconduct will scold and reprimand the child accordingly. The child knows this. And, if he complains to his family of being scolded or reprimanded by someone outside of their family, he will more than likely be reprimanded a second time: For the family knows that the child's misconduct reflects on their upbringing and their family mannerisms.

**THE SUDANESE** are very close to one another. They know the families and the children in their community, town, and city, and can identify the child easily. They might even report the child to its parents after reprimanding it, if the offense is considered bad enough.

The Muslim Sudanese know that their future society rests with their children. They feel that a child is shaped by the care, attention, and love which it

receives as well as the environment in which it grows. Children are a reflection of their parents (be they foster or real).

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us and the Holy Qur-an bears him witness that it is the duty of the parent and the one trying to be upright (a Muslim) to care for, and provide for their children, with love and time as well as its necessities. The Holy Qur-an teaches the child to respect his parents for they are the ones who have provided for him during his life time until he is grown, and that to show thankfulness, is to show respect to them, and do their

bidding as long as it is in accord with the teachings of Islam. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that we the parents shape our children's mannerisms, and habits. He has said that everyone loves an obedient child. He teaches our children to respect those adults over them. He teaches us how to respect ourselves so that we may teach our children how to do so. He teaches us to plant Islamic mannerisms, of courtesy, respect, and knowledge in the child that it may grow up strong in such mannerisms, and develop good habits, and be good Muslims.

to be continued . . .

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