

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

Unity of the family and kind is another aspect of the true Islamic society which shows its superiority to other societies for it brings about harmony which reflects love and contains peace.

THE EUROPEAN countries near the Mediterranean Sea such as Greece and southern Italy (where I spent two months in 1966) try also to uphold this same unity, but there are frequent cases of certain ones who break their unwritten codes of ethics and are excluded from their family and society. The further one travels northward in Europe, the more distant and separate one will find the people.

One does not find young adults going out on their own living separate from their family or relatives in an apartment in a true Islamic society. But this is a frequent and seemingly natural happening in the western Christian societies. The Christian society expects its young to work and be able to support self by the time they are eighteen years old.

The young adult who reaches eighteen years of age expects to be respected as an adult without giving other adults their due respect. I am sure that all of the readers of this newspaper who are residing in the Christian society of North America know that newlyweds must establish themselves in a new apartment or home away from all relatives. This is due largely to Christianity's lack of knowledge of one's duty to one's family.

The young Muslim adult knows his duty to his family and to adults in general. He has been taught his duty since early youth. The young Muslim adult remains with his family until marriage. Even after marriage some young newlyweds live with or near some relatives, which is so unlike the average American family.

In the Islamic society of the Republic of the Sudan one finds that a single family may occupy from a full city block up to a whole neighborhood. This is because after marriage the Sudanese often just add extra rooms to their family's home or build on family land. This makes

for a beautiful family relationship.

The large family compound is still surrounded by a high wall. The women meet during the day while their husbands are at work, and their children of school age are at school. They often cook and sew together. One may make bread, another bean soup, another a dessert. Sometimes each might prepare a vegetable or a meat in excess to that amount which their family unit needs so that some could be given to the other family groups within their compound.

Often the women give one another massages and skin conditioners made of some local herbs and oils. Their family children play within the compound. And, the grandparents and old widow aunts and uncles are able still to laugh and satisfy their needs of belonging by watching the children and helping the new mother and father to understand their child. Needless to say, children in the Republic of the Sudan are much loved and receive much attention.

Very rare is the situation where one will find one man and his wife living alone without some other relatives. Also rare is a home without young children.

After the second child to a family the grandparents keep the first child most of the year. And where a family has many children hardly half of the children are all home at one time. In families where the children are close together, the odd or even ones if they are young are generally dispersed among the relatives so that the mother does not have a lot of little ones to take care of at one time.

It is not that the Sudanese do not love their children, nor that they do not want their children, but that they do love their children and they do share the Blessings and joys of watching a

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The Muslim Family Life

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child grow and help it to develop. Muslims love children. And as the Honorable Elijah Muhammad has pointed out in the Holy Qur-an the prayer of a true Believer.

"Our Lord grant us in our wives and our offspring the joy of our eyes". . . (25:74)

There are no orphans in the Sudan as in western societies. If death overtakes the parents of the child some relatives to the

parents take the child into their care. An argument may develop over who can keep the child, and is generally settled by letting the child spend a portion of the year with each relative.

The Muslim family is a united society. There is no break in the chain of relatives, where all are Muslims. We who follow the Honorable Elijah Muhammad have joined the Muslim family of the earth, (the owners of the earth). We mean what we say when we address one another as "Brother" and "Sister."