

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

I have heard the Honorable Elijah Muhammad say that there is as much a difference between an Islamic and a non-Islamic society as there is between day and night. Having lived in the Republic of the Sudan, Africa practically two years, I can bear witness that The Honorable Elijah Muhammad is 100 per cent correct.

IN ORDER to exist in an Islamic society and be comfortable one has to submit and follow all of the ways and laws of that society.

I was 20 years old when I went to the Sudan to study at the University of Khartoum, and I was not a Muslim. I had been forewarned of the vast differences within that society as opposed to the American society, but as the old adage goes, "experience is the best teacher."

Single and not yet 21 years old and at a university, I

expected to find the same campus life that I left in America; very free and opened parties with alcoholic beverages, loud or extra soft music, a student union building where both male and female students could congregate, swim, listen to music, study (part time—but sport and play most of the time), but I found the contrary to be true.

During the first week, I saw that the female students hardly looked at, and did not speak with any of the male students and that there seemed to be no "campus life" as I knew it in America. I could not believe that this relationship between male and female students existed so I looked more closely.

There, young women who lived with me at the girl's hostel were all very friendly and warm towards me. At first (inside the hostel) they thought that I was one of them and spoke to me in Arabic expecting me to respond to them in the same. I was first mute, but then I answered with a smile and a few words to explain my inability to speak Arabic. Indeed I could have made the same mistake for if I had seen any of them in an American college dormitory, I would have thought them to be

like myself, Black born in America only English speaking. I wanted to act as they acted, and this way I knew that I would make few if any mistakes. Often when we walked in groups to our faculties (colleges) on campus, a group of male students would pass us by. I would look in their faces and smile and often speak to them first.

THE MALE students would look slightly embarrassed, sometimes they returned a greeting to me. Other times they nodded their heads, looked at one another and quickened their steps to pass by. Whenever this happened, my female colleagues would lower their faces and stop their conversation until they passed the male students. One of my female colleagues told me, "you should'nt speak to the boys when we walk pass them." I thought she was silly for saying this to me, and I told her that I saw no harm in this. She told me, that men did not respect a girl if she looked into the faces of men, and was easy to speak with. I wanted to prove her wrong at that time. But, I was one and they were many. I had to stop looking in the boys faces in order to have some of the girls walk with me.

towards doing and creating for self.

Under the divine leadership of Messenger Muhammad Black children are learning in their own black schools that they CAN think, they CAN do, they CAN accomplish what they will.

It is not out of the ordinary for Muslim children in the primary grades to lead you in conversation about—the weight of the planet earth,—how fast the earth travels around the sun,—how

much of the useful land is under production,—how fast light and sound travels—and some could even discuss with you—the weight of the atmosphere. Unusual?? NO. Because these are children being taught and guided by Messenger Elijah Muhammad, who is showing us each and every day by His words, His actions and His deeds that he is truly the last and greatest Messenger of Allah, Who came in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad.

This experience briefly stated here is given to bear witness to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad's instructions on moral decency among our own kind. He instructs the woman not to look into the face of the man; to lower her gaze, and He is supported by the Holy Qur-an which is a text for Muslims all over the world... "And say to the believing women that they lower their gaze..." (Holy Qur-an 24:31).

To be continued....