

On My Life in the Girl's Hostel in the Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrleff

One will find the females living in the hostels of higher educational institutions living as one family.

ONE NEED NOT lock one's room or one's cupboard or even hide one's purse among the Muslim Sudanese, for it is against the laws of Islam to steal.

Two hundred and fifty young ladies between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six lived together within the gates of the girls' hostel in the Sudan and during my twenty-two months of life there in the hostel, I not once witnessed or heard of an argument, or disagreement among these young women.

I imagine that many of the readers of this article will find this very hard to believe, but in a society of peace one finds no way for arguments. Of course in such a large number of people one will find its number subdivided into smaller groups. The girls of the same town (who grew up together) would generally room and eat together.

The University drew students from all over the Sudan—the area of which is approximately 1/2 the size of the U.S.A. The girls worked as a unit. They assisted one another in whatever they found the other lacked.

THE POSSESSIVE pronoun, 'mine' was practically absent in that Islamic society, i.e. among the girls, yet there was much respect for the possessions of others. If one was going out to visit a family or to a tea, that one would have all that she lacked and needed from the other girls before she left the hostel. The volume of sharing among the girls was immense, including money and gold.

They were aware of the weaknesses of one another but allowances were made for these weaknesses. The weakness of one was not exploited or publicized by another. There was a beautiful harmony found among my colleagues in the Sudan.

I did not find the girls there speaking about one another (gossiping) in the absence of the other. Unless one of whom they were speaking had or was violating the laws of their society. In such cases the matter would be

discussed, and one would go to that one whom they felt had erred (usually a relative or a girl from the same town) and inquire or advise her on a personal level.

THE FEMALE students at the university were under very strict observation, for this is the first time single males and females are together in class rooms, and in general.

For a very long period women did not receive formal education outside of the home, and I believe that it was as late as 1954 that women began to study in the University of Khartoum.

If one student does an incorrect act it reflects on all of the female students in general. So to keep a good respectful name and reputation for themselves, the girls work as a whole to keep a good name. I am speaking here only of the Muslim girls at the University. Their objective is to help one another to do right for the good of all, and they thus worked as a unit.

I do not say that there were not elements of personality conflicts among the two hundred and fifty girls living within the one wall, but I do say that these elements of conflicts were not apparent. As I said in the beginning of this article, allowances were made for the short comings or weaknesses of another.

THE GIRLS considered one another sisters, and this unity of family love was a beautiful harmony, which enabled the girls to work together for the betterment of all. Islam was the adhesive which provided the unity of family love and those who believed in the principles of Islam are looked upon as Brothers and Sisters and thus these girls were united and worked together for the good of all, and were a strong unit.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, has through his teachings of Islam given us a foundation to build a strong Nation (family). Once we believe in the one God,

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Life in Sudan

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Allah, Who Came in the Person of Master Fard Muhammad, we consider every other believer a member of our family. We even address one another as Brother and Sister. He, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, teaches us to work together as a unit for the benefit of our unit. He teaches us to keep peace through love in our family unit, and to help ourselves so that we can help our Brothers and Sisters.

I have seen the beauty of peace and love in the Islamic society among the 250 girls in the hostel of the University of Khartoum, and therefore can fully support the objectives of the Honorable Messenger—to unite us in the religion of Peace (Islam) so that we may work together as one unit with love for the benefit of all in our unit.

(to be continued ...)