

How Sudanese Women of Islamic Faith Preserve Their Femininity and Homes

By Sister Christine

Living only with females, at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, gave me much time to observe them. From them I learned much concerning femininity.

THE SUDANESE females are very conscious of their appearance. Over a long dress the women wear a wrap of 10 yards of material, called a tobe, abiding the Islamic laws that the dress of women must cover all the body, concealing her femininity. In the tobe, only the face and feet can be seen. This is much like our proper Mosque robe.

The Mosque robe conceals the figure of the Muslim women with a cape. The head also is covered. The Sudanese tobe is worn in much the same way as the cape — to conceal the figure. The tobe is worn whenever a Sudanese woman comes in contact with men, or people other than members of her family. Much care is taken in wrapping the tobe, and in selecting the dress to be worn under the wrap: matching color and styling.

WHEN A woman is dressed in compliance with the laws for women in Islam — con-

cealing the body — clean and taking time to look feminine she acquires a clean and feminine manner. The clothes reflect the personality of a person, and vice-versa. A Muslim woman does not dress to go out to attract attention. Whenever she leaves the home to shop or visit, she is covered.

The women in the Western society are hard and rough. They wear pants like men. This affects their personalities, and they become more bold and even assume the rough mannerisms of men. The clothes of a person affect a person's personality. A woman is not to be in the superior authoritative place of a man.

Good grooming is a high attribute to the Sudanese women. They are very clean people, and give much care to their skin, hair and person. They use oils for the softening of the skin and they also take heat treatments (homemade) similar to a steam bath which they say is good for the bones.

THE WOMEN begin to cook the dinner after their husbands leave for work in the morning, about 7:00 a.m. While dinner is slowly cooking, the wife cleans the house,

washes clothes, etc. By 12:30 in the afternoon, she usually has finished her domestic chores, and prepares herself for her husband's return. She relaxes, bathes, and changes into a fresh dress. This is when she uses perfume. Muslim women wear perfume only in the presence of their husbands and families. They do not wear perfume when they go shopping, etc.

When the husband returns at 2:30 p.m., all is fresh. The children, if in school, return the same time as the father. The table is always arranged to be attractive, each dish decorated with green leaves, similar to our lettuce, sliced lemons, tomatoes and powdered seasons. After dinner, he is served coffee or tea. It is now that he relaxes.

As the Honorable Messenger, Elijah Muhammad, teaches us, the woman is a man's glory. Muslim women are to bring grace and splendor into their homes.

BY WHAT I have told you of the Sudanese women one can see how much the women try to please and to make comfortable their husbands. She is raised to do so. She has been taught her place and her duties as a

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wife. Failing to perform her duties are grounds for a divorce in the Sudan.

However, if she performs her duties, many rewards come to her from a husband who is pleased. The husband knows his duties and has been taught: to care for, to provide for and to please his wife.

Each uphold the other: she giving him love, affection and assistance to make his home comfortable, he in turn giving and providing her with the materials to make herself, as well as their home, pleasing and attrac-

tive. The respect that each holds for the other is very high.

AN ISLAMIC home is a beautiful home of peace and love. A Muslim woman has much to do about this beauty which lies in the Islamic home. Her grace and efforts to arrange and keep an Islamic home brings and demands the respect of a man. I am sure that every Muslim man is happy to see and return to a home of peace and love after a hard day's work. To relax with peace and love is a happy desire of all our people I am sure. I found

this so in the Sudan.

THRU his teachings, the Honorable Messenger provides the pattern for the mutual respect of husband and wife in the family bringing in love and peace to his followers' homes, minds and well being.

(To be continued)

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