

Male Respect Follows Islamic Custom

By Sister Christine

Transportation in the capital of the Sudan is quite simple and regular. Taxicabs have direct routes and function much as the buses do here in America. They run as frequently as the American subway trains. For 2½ piasters (Seven cents) one can ride in a taxi from one end of the city to the other. The men are not mixed with the women—not even in the taxis.

A CAB IN the Sudan takes five riders. If one or two women take this form of transportation, they sit in front. If three women, they sit in the back. Generally, if the driver has three women passengers, he takes on no male riders.

I believe that one of my first rides in these public taxis was with a colleague named Leila. We had been shopping in the suk (market place), and having spent most of our money shopping, decided to take a taxi.

The taxi, which stopped, already had two men sitting on the front seat, so Leila and I sat in the back. They were young men and Leila thought them to be university students. We told the driver where we wanted him to stop—at the university—and were swiftly off.

THE NORMAL route passes behind the girls' hostel. The driver was so pleased to have female university students in his car that he turned from the regular route and took us to the front of the hostel. What's more, when we tried to pay for our transportation, the two young men had already paid for our ride.

I tried to pay the driver, for I thought that perhaps these men were trying to be aggressive. Coming from the Western society made me suspicious of their generosity. Their being university students led me to think that perhaps they were trying to make "a play" for us.

I thought they might meet us later. We did not talk to them and I could not recognize them, even if I saw them again, for they were sitting on the front seat. They did not demand anything in return. We said only a thank you.

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LEILA TOLD me to come with her inside the hostel and not to say anything. After the car drove off, I asked her if she knew those men. She told me that it was just a courtesy extended to us by the male students. I was not to be offended, and that it always happened.

As time passed I found this to be true. Whenever I rode in one of those taxis and university male students also were riding, I never paid for my ride.

The females in general ride on the rear seat of the automobile in the Sudan. There she is safer and can be more relaxed and comfortable.

THIS WAS another example of the respect I received as a university student in the Sudan.

I have mentioned this and the example last week as proof of the respect a female receives in an Islamic society. These may seem little unimportant happenings, but I want to stress how, even to the smallest detail, a female is respected in an Islamic society.

Our dear leader and teacher, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, has provided through his teachings patterns to follow which will bring to both male and female the degrees of respect which they should extend and receive in order to make their lives peaceful and pleasant.

To be continued