

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

One afternoon around 4:30 p.m., as we (my female colleagues and myself) were sipping hot mint flavored tea (as is the custom in the Republic of the Sudan after the intense heat of the day) a guard from the gates came in calling for Ayesha Sulliman.

Before going to the gates, Ayesha quickly wrapped her **tobe** (their national dress) around her to cover her dress, and hair.

It was her father, who was in town from the western region of the Sudan. Knowing that she liked apples, he brought a whole crate of apples for her and her friends. When she returned with the guard carrying the crate of apples, I laughed for I could not believe this.

SHE WAS offering and telling the others in this area to help themselves to the apples. Many of the girls came and

took apples and sat around to hear the news of Ayesha's father. They were all happy and talking about her relatives as if they all knew them personally.

I, being raised in the selfish society of North America, in the industrial cities, was not accustomed to sharing outside of the immediate family (mother, father, sisters and brothers), and remarked in ignorance, "Did he really think that you could eat all of these apples?"

She looked at me and hesitated, then replied, "He brought these for all of us, not just for me." Then she laughed. I later learned that she thought it strange for me to ask her such a question.

I observed this being the pattern among all of the Muslim girls within the hostel, that whenever their relatives came, they brought items and food in abundance to what one could consume, and, that it was shared by all of those who wanted in their areas.

WHAT REALLY took me by surprise and caught my attention everytime was how they shared one whole by dividing it into parts. I have sat in rooms and gardens

where one would have an orange. That one would divide the orange into its slices and pass around the slices in a dish for those who wanted to help themselves. I had been accustomed to hearing the selfish American habit of "only have one," but this was not the practice among the Muslims in the Sudan. They shared without any apparent second thought. They were not selfish. They shared the happiness and joy of one another.

I questioned one of them who was very close to me about how they talked with Ayesha after her father's visit. She said that they did not all know her relatives, but that they knew Ayesha would be happy to hear of them and they would be happy if Ayesha was happy. She said that they all felt as if they were all relatives.

THIS IS what the Honorable Elijah Muhammad has been teaching repeatedly for nearly 40 years, "want for your own kind what you want for self."

This unites us and gives us a peace among ourselves which is not a utopia, but a reality. This is Truth, Come and see for yourselves, follow the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.