

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinaah Sharrieff

Although the majority of the people in the Republic of the Sudan are not very wealthy and their materialistic possessions when compared to those available in western societies are few, they are a peaceful people and seem to be quite content with their simple possessions.

The poorer people make their living quarters from the natural materials available in the area they wish to settle. Those who live in areas of heavy vegetation use the wood and bush to construct their homes and fences. Those who live in and around the three city capital of Khartoum, Khartoum North, and Omdurman make their homes of sun dried mud and straw bricks. The walls in these mud homes are either white washed or painted with a pastel color paint of a chalk base. Many times this dried powder paint rubbed off on my clothing and skin when I brushed up against a wall.

These poorer homes in comparison to the poorer homes here are very spacious. No matter how poor the family, there is always a nice size yard or garden around the rooms of the house which is encircled by a high wall made of the same materials as the house. The compound usually has two gates: One for the men and guests and the other for females and children. Seldom is this second door locked.

THE AVERAGE person who has received a high school education lives in a more elaborate home with more rooms. They generally have two sitting rooms and a large dining room. Often they have electricity, and tiled floors throughout the whole compound. There are separate toilet facilities for men and women even in the simplest homes.

Often one will find a face bowl on a tiled veranda. These are mainly for the performance of the ablution for the preparation of prayer.

The country is so very hot, most of the year around that it is hardly necessary to use a towel to dry one's face and hands after an ablution, for water evaporates so quickly in the dry



A TRADITIONAL HEADPIECE called a "Tahara" is worn by a young Sudanese girl, who is approximately 12 years old. Picture was taken in the poor section of Omdurman, Sudan.

and hot climate.

I sincerely believe that the reason everything is so clean and uncontaminated is because of the very intense heat which kills off germs and prevents their spread.

Many homes have ceiling fans. Air conditioners are very rare and in some areas "unheard of."

THE AVERAGE Sudanese drinks very hot tea. This seemed very strange to me, when I was first offered tea, for I thought that it was too hot a country to drink a hot beverage. I was told however that drinking a hot liquid caused one to perspire and thus have a natural air cooler when the moist skin met with a breeze.

The tape recorder and radio are very popular and common household items. Even in some of the most humble homes one will find a tape recorder. Whenever there is a wedding or a large celebration one will find the people recording the songs of the popular singers and the music from the bands which entertain at the celebration to replay in their homes.

When I left the Sudan I traveled by train from Khartoum to Wadi Halfa, where I took a boat down the Nile to Aswan, Egypt. This trip took three days on the Nile. I had a one-quart canteen of water and therefore had to

ration my drinking to 1 1/3 cups every 24 hours. It was very hot and trying on this boat ride. The cabins were very hot in the day time. Yet this was the only place one could find shade from that intense desert sun. After the setting of the sun, we would go up to the roof of the boat to enjoy the cool breeze which would then be on the Nile, and observe the surrounding land masses. I learned to cool my water by dipping

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ping the canteen holder into the Nile, then tie it to the railing of the deck so that the breeze made by the moving boat would blow the holder thus cooling it. Through necessity, I learned the simple practicality of many things there in the Sudan, and I thank Allah for this experience.

The Sudan is yet a developing country. They are still trying to establish a government which will develop industries and natural resources so that the average man can improve his living status. They do have land to work with but for many years it has been used for the advantage of a select few or under foreign domination.

THE HONORABLE ELIJAH MUHAMMAD is guiding those who will follow his instructions to develop themselves so that they may improve their standards of living within this developed country. He is teaching us to unite and work together for the good of ourselves, so that we may develop our nation, the Nation of the Black Man, here in the Heels of North America. He teaches us that we must have land, and he has guided us into buying good farm lands so that we may produce the necessities of our Nation.

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