

in the Sudan

How Sudanese Males Went to Great Lengths to Show Respect for Women

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

I received respect in the Sudan in so many ways, that it is difficult for me to convey in writing the abundance of this respect.

THE MEN always stood upon the appearance of females in the room in which they were found. At university functions the female students would always be served first. At the university library there were young boys who assisted the females in locating and securing books. Whenever we entered the administration building to conduct business we were shown the utmost courtesy and consideration. We did not have to wait in long lines, as the males did. We would be taken care of as quickly as possible.

One little story which I wish to relate to you is concerning our campus cobbler at the University of Khartoum, Sudan. He had a small little one room shop. It was dusty partly because it was made of sun-baked mud bricks, and partly because of the sandy plains around the capital. In it was one wooden case of shelves. Shoes were stacked in the corners and on a small bench bordering one wall. The cobbler had a young male helper, who sat at a table behind the wooden case. Newspapers covered the walls and were scattered on the floor. The cobbler was a man of about 70 years of age. He was short and had a kind face with a little soft goatee.

One day my sandle strap broke while I was at the campus. A female colleague took me to the cobbler's shop. She asked him to fix it, and he did while I waited. When I asked him the price, he said something to the effect of hoping that Allah would bless me. I asked my friend to ask him the cost for me, thinking that perhaps he did not understand my Arabic.

SHE TOLD me that it was customary for him to repair the

shoes of the university girls without charge. He seemed such a poor man, one in much need of money. I felt as if I was cheating him not to pay him something for his labor and time. He refused the money. This is so unlike people in Western societies. Here one never, or hardly ever, finds one who will turn down money. This society believes money buys anything and everything.

I offered this man money for his work, and he paid me by wishing me the blessings of Allah. He more than paid me for bringing work to him. One cannot compare the peaceful generous people comprising the Sudanese society to the greed and selfishness of the people of this American society.

After this occasion I often went to him, whenever my shoes needed repair. Not that I wanted to take advantage of him, but because I felt I could trust him. Often I left money with his helper to pay him for his work. He, as with many of the older men there, took us to be his granddaughters. I later learned he was the caller to prayer at the university's Mosque.

A female has such a strong sense of security in the Sudan. The protection we received made us feel very stable in this security. I must say that in Europe, except with my short visits with Sudanese families there, this feeling was completely absent. I went to Europe alone, and there realized how great the security is for women in the Sudan (Muslim women).

I HAVE found security here among my Muslim Brothers and Sisters, followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, within the Nation of Islam in America. This security I feel even more now than I did while in the Sudan, for here I am able to understand and respect it. When I was in the Sudan, I at first, felt imprisoned in a cage. It took

time, but gradually I learned to appreciate the respect and security women receive in the Islamic society.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad reminds us of the Holy Qur-an wherein it states that the men are the guardians, protectors and maintainers of women. That man and woman are a comfort to each other, (Holy Qur-an 7:189), and an apparel for one another (Holy Qur-an 2:187).

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad constantly reminds us (His followers) of the proper respect and treatment which due the believing women in an Islamic society. Those of us who practice and follow His teachings find an atmosphere of peace, love and happiness.

DAR ES SALAAM—A boost in Tanzania's air force strength, to include fighter craft, is a priority item with the ministry of Defense, headed by Vice-President Rashidi Kawawa.

APPEARING BEFORE Parliament recently, Kawawa disclosed that although Tanzania has a Ca-




WATERMELONS ARE in season the world over and here in Khartoum, Sudan, this buyer opens one in the street market. The Sudan this year had its biggest melon crops in two decades and had fruit to export.

nadian-supplied and trained air transport wing, "this is not enough. There has to be a fighter force."

Submitting estimates of funds needed by his ministry, Kawawa added that when plans ready, he would return to Parliament to seek authorization of additional funds for procurement of the necessary flight planes.

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