



CASE STUDY: LOCAL SHAMAN

Much of the Muslim world does not practise “pure” Islam, but some mixture of Islamic and folk/animistic religion. This case study tells of an event that happened to a Global Interaction staff worker serving in such a context.

The event: One afternoon as you are coming home, you lose your footing and fall in front of your neighbours' house. They quickly come out to help and take you inside their house. After seeing that you've injured your ankle badly, they send for help.

The woman who arrives begins to massage your ankle so firmly that the pain you were already experiencing becomes excruciating. You are afraid that she may be doing more damage than has already been done. Someone brings a bowl and sets it down beside her. You can see what looks like water and some other things you can't identify in the bowl. The woman dips her hand into the bowl. When she brings it out, she holds it near her mouth, mutters something you can't understand and then blows on the water. She then puts it on your ankle and returns to the firm massage.

It occurs to you that this is probably the local shaman (witch doctor). You suspect your ankle may be broken.

Going to the hospital (an indirect statement that the shaman's powers were not strong enough to help) will cause the shaman to lose face in front of the neighbours. What do you do?

How would you respond in this situation?

1. Stop her massage and prayers after you conclude she is the local shaman.
2. Let her continue the massage and prayers after you conclude she is the local shaman.
3. Leave for hospital from the neighbours' house.
4. Leave for hospital from home.
5. Don't go to the hospital
6. State that this is ridiculous/evil and you won't have any part of it.
7. Thank them.
8. Pray silently.
9. Pray audibly.
10. Tell them that Jesus is more powerful.
11. Other _____

Mix and match, and add your own to describe how you would respond to this situation. (After discussion, look at the next sheet together.)





GLOBAL | INTERACTION

LOCAL SHAMAN: CONTINUED

Real life response: I allowed the shaman to continue. As she did her massage and prayers, I prayed audibly in the name of Jesus. When my family arrived, we left for hospital from the neighbours' house. Not long afterwards, we were awakened two nights in a row by the smell of hair burning outside our bedroom window. We have strong suspicions that the shaman placed a curse on us.

What we could have done in hindsight: It might have been better if we'd gone home first and then gone to the hospital from there.

