

Levantine Arabic transcript:

- سارة: كيف تعرفتي عليه و هو بالشام و انتي بحمص و اهلك من حلب
- نجاح: و الله، تعرفت عليه، كنت مرة بالشام طالعة فيعني كنا قاعدين اصدقاء رفاقنا و شفته يعني معاهن و اعجبنا ببعض.
- سارة: يعني طريقة الخطوبة ما كانت طريقة تقليدية
- نجاح: لا، و انا من قبل ما بفكر انو انخطب بطريقة تقليدية
- سارة: الطريقة السورية التقليدية بالعادة الاهل بكونو جزء منا،
- نجاح: طبعاً.
- سارة: يعني هني اللي بيخطبو للولد و هني بيخطبو للبنات ومع موافقة الطرفين طبعاً. بس برأيك حالياً، في نزة كبيرة من الشباب انو؟
- نجاح: هلا بلشت تتغير هالشغلة عنا يعني صارت العالم كثير نسبة كبيرة ياخذوا بعضن عن حب أو معجبين بالاقبل ببعض بس لحد الان تدخل الاهل موجود. حتى لو تتين بحبو بعض فما معناها الاهل انو هني رضيو يعطون لبعض، يعني لحد الان التدخل موجود، بس يمكن الشي اللي انفتح عنا انو صار عادي انو بنت تحكي مع شب، يعني انو صار و الله انو عم تحكي علاقة حب و هيك معد هديك المشكلة، و انا برأيي ماني مشكلة يعني، بس يكون هوي التتئين محترمين و التتئين انو عنجد حابين بعض يعني ما يكون الموضوع فيو كذب بس لحد الان تدخل الاهل. يعني مثلاً اهلي لما، لو ما عاجبون الخطيب مثلاً اللي اخترتو، كان حيعارضو، فلهلا في تدخل بس صار يعني تدخل مقبول يعني نوعاً ما عن قبل.
- سارة: انتي اذا تجوزتي و صار عندك ولاد بتحسي انو بدك تمشي على تخليون مثلاً بالمستقبل يتعرفوا على...
- نجاح: هلا الا ما الشي اللي تعودنا عليه يأتُر فينا، خلص نحنا تربينا على نفس الشي يعني نحنا عم ننتقد يمكن أهالينا بس منضل عايشين بهذا الجو لانو هي طبيعتنا. بس انا مثلاً ولادي بفكر انو ايه لازم، انو بحب انو بنتي ما بتفرق معي تحكي مع حدا و ثقيلي، ما عندي مشكلة. بس انا كمان يكون يعني حس انو في بيتان انسجام يعني هذا اللي بيهمني. بس ما اني حكون كثير انسانة متشرطة لا لازم يكون هيك لازم يكون هيك.
- سارة: يعني التقاليد السورية التقليدية بشكل عام بيكون فيها شروط كثير بينما يعني تعارف و حب و كذا بقلل الشروط كيف ما كان.
- سارة: طبعاً، بدنا نتنازل شوي، كمان الحب يعني احياناً مهم، فاذا احياناً بيتنازلو، اذا البنات وضيانة تتنازل عن بعض الاشياء فهي حرة بس ما يكون شي كثير مهم، اما اذا كان شي عادي الواحد بيمشي الحال.

English translation:

- **Sarah:** How did you get to know him? He is in Damascus, you are in Homs, and your family is from Aleppo.

- **Najah:** *Wallah*, I met him ... once I was in Damascus sitting with some friends who were his friends, and I saw him with them, and we liked each other.

- **Sarah:** So the engagement wasn't done in a traditional way.

- **Najah:** No, and I have never considered getting engaged in a traditional way.

- **Sarah:** The traditional Syrian way involves the parents as a big part.

- **Najah:** Of course.

- **Sarah:** I mean, they are the one who arrange engagements for their son, and they arrange the engagement for the daughter -- of course, with the agreement of both parties. But in your opinion, do you think there is a tendency for young people to?

- **Najah:** Now, this thing [the engagement arrangement] began to change here. I mean, there is a big percentage of people who marry each other out of love, or at least after liking each other. Until now the parents' involvement is still present. Even if two people love each other, it doesn't mean that the parents agreed to give them to each other.¹ I mean, until now the interference is present. But perhaps what has been opened up was that it became more normal for a girl to talk to a guy, I mean, a love relationship and such isn't that much of a problem. And it is not a problem in my opinion, as long as they are both respectable people, and both of them really love each other, I mean, it shouldn't be a matter of lies. But until now parents are involved. I mean, for example, my parents, if they didn't like the fiancé I chose, they would have objected to him, so there is interference, but it is somewhat bearable if compared to what it used to be.

- **Sarah:** Okay, now if you got married and had kids, do you feel as if you would go by letting them [meet other guys or girls, etc.] in the future.

- **Najah:** Now, the things we get used to must come back and affect us. That's it; we were raised on the same thing. I mean, we criticize our parents, but we keep living in the same manner because it's our nature. But I think, for example, that for my kids, that yes they should, like ... my daughter ... I wouldn't care if she talks to somebody and tells me; I don't have a problem. But I also have to feel that they have something in common, and that is what I care about. I won't be a very picky person; [I won't say] no, it shouldn't be this, it should be that.

- **Sarah:** I mean Syrian traditions are in general are very picky, and have so many conditions, while meeting, love, and all that would reduce these conditions [regarding marriage].

-**Najah:** Of course, we have to compromise a bit; love is important sometimes, too. So sometimes you compromise, if the girl is satisfied and wants to compromise some things, and then she is free. As long as it is not a really huge thing [compromise], but if it was normal, then one should just let it be.

¹ Allowing them to get married.

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