

**English Translation:**

**Man:** I would like to talk about marriage.

**Woman behind camera:** Go ahead.

**Man:** Marriage in Iraq, in fact...

**Woman behind camera:** How does it happen?

**Man:** In Iraq formerly, in Iraq formerly, marriage was ... because the Muslim society in Iraq is a very conservative society, so it's considered a male dominant society. Men, men, men have the freedom of movement and full control in the society...

**Woman behind camera:** You mean...

**Man:** ...and in getting jobs.

**Woman behind camera:** You mean it's a male-dominant society.

**Man:** Exactly, it's called...

**Woman behind camera:** Male-dominant society.

**Man:** It's called a patriarchal society.

**Woman behind camera:** A patriarchal society.

**Man:** So the women's place is always at home, neither work nor even school<sup>1</sup>. They didn't send their daughters to schools...

**Woman behind camera:** Correct.

**Man:** ...so a woman used to stay at home. She would become old and live, die, have children certainly and live and become a wife and a mother and so on and grandmother until she dies. Aa... she didn't leave home a lot. She left for specific occasions, to funerals, to participate in women's weddings. When she becomes a grandmother, they allow her to leave a little bit. When she is still a mother, no. Aaa.... That's why a person

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<sup>1</sup> This fact is true regarding Iraqi society in the 40s and 50s, not in present days.

was not, I mean... and most people in the street, I mean most women wear *abaya*<sup>2</sup> and many of them wear *poshya*.

**Woman behind camera:** *Poshya* is...?

**Man:** *Poshya* is a veil, face veil.

**Woman behind camera:** A head cover, I mean a face cover.

**Man:** A face cover, yes.

**Woman behind camera:** Yes.

**Man:** ...and *abaya* is a cover, a big gown. I mean

**Woman behind camera:** Garment.

**Man:** A garment. It's in fact a cover like, like, like a shawl, very big...aa...and wide in a way that it doesn't cling on a woman's body and...aaa... show her features.

**Woman behind camera:** Show her features. Fine, regarding the...aaa... the process of marriage, I mean the process, the process of marriage when it happens, for instance I mean a man proposes directly or does he have to know her first, or what does exactly happen? First from your experience, and then I hope you tell us about the new changes that happened to the new generation.

**Man:** By God, as I was taught by Iraqi society and what I have read about the heritage of Iraqi society and what our fathers have told us and seniors in the society ...aa... marriage was not decided by a groom, I mean he has nothing to do with the subject and he would be embarrassed to mention it.

**Woman behind camera:** Correct.

**Man:** His father is the one to decide the time this man should get married. So if his father decides that this person should get married, he [the father] would ask the mother to look for a woman ...aaa... a good and honest woman, this is first. In the past, people did not focus on beauty.

**Woman behind camera:** True.

**Man:** They focused on the family, which clan, who's her father, who's her mother. Her family must be respected and honest

**Woman behind camera:** You mean reputation?

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<sup>2</sup> *Abaya*: a black long garment for women. It's common in Iraq and some other countries in the Middle East.

**Man:** It must, yes. They focus on the reputation more; on, on, I mean ...aa.. on the origin [of her family] mainly.

**Woman behind camera:** Yes.

**Man:** ...aaa. So the mother would go and start asking. In many cases, people have no, I mean no suitable women are available within neighbors and relatives...aa... or the mother would not be satisfied with some women to be a wife of her son. So she would ask a matchmaker. In the past, a matchmaker was a profession. A matchmaker is a woman who enters houses and sees women.

**Woman behind camera:** She knows...

**Man:** ...and she memorizes who's this and who's that, how old is this woman. Then she starts, this woman, to match-make. She would ask for instance, how old is your son? For example, he's 19 and we want him to get married. So she would look for a 14 or 15 year old woman. In the past, women were supposed to get married at that age.

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