

English Translation:

Man: As a personal opinion, many tribes started, I mean started to obey the [civil] law¹. They started to ...aaa... I mean they started to resort to the law and they were persuaded to resort to law in solving their problems except for the conflicts when they feel that the law wasn't fair to them.

Woman behind camera: Uhmm.

Man: So if, if they see that the law wasn't fair to them, the conflict must be solved tribally. I mean if a person kills a man and the person, with a good attorney, is found for instance innocent or got out for example after three years or four years imprisoned. The tribe that feels it was unjustly treated, the tribe would rise up; and it would demand the murderer's tribe to compensate. So they go and threaten them. They would fire few shots in the air to say that they intend to kill.

Woman behind camera: Uhmm.

Man: Just like [if] you killed one of us. So the tribal sheik would meet with his people and say what shall we do now? They would tell him for instance, let's compensate them. So he tells them that we want a *farsha*². *Farsha* is an invitation call. The invitation call is paid for by the murderer, the murderer's tribe.

Woman behind camera: Correct.

Man: So they would send a sum of money to the tribe to prepare food. And men come from both tribes and sit facing each other and both sheikhs sit facing each other, and their sons also may sit facing each other. It's not allowed to use guns during the tribal meeting.

Woman behind camera: Because they came to solve a problem.

Man: They are already here to solve problems. So they cannot use... there might be yelling, there might be anger, word-fighting, but using guns isn't ever allowed within the tribal system. As long as there is a *farsha*, shedding blood stops, shedding blood stops. So they would agree; they have to agree. For each sheikh... the sheikh, certainly the family, the murderer's family, he [the murderer] brings with him the important people in town, well-known sheikhs, professors, Muslims or Christians or Jews, it doesn't matter, I mean, but they are merely known people that have an effect on the other tribe. They [the murderer's tribe] would ask, "Who has an effect on this tribe to help us solve this issue?" he brings with him these important people.

¹ As opposed to tribal law

² *Farsha*: a call for a meeting between two tribes to solve a problem.

Woman behind camera: Fine...

Man: So when the sheikh of the deceased's family demands a certain sum of money, a large sum, they would intervene and say for instance, "for this sheikh's sake." Of course other sheikhs or important people are present. He would say, "I will reduce the sum for this sheikh's sake because he came. And for this professor's sake and for the mayor's sake."

Woman behind camera: He respects everyone.

Man: Yes, he would respect their presence and the sum gets reduced from, for example, if we count it by dollars, for instance from \$20,000 gets reduced to, for instance, \$3,000.

Woman behind camera: Really? It's a big reduction.

Man: It's a big reduction.

Woman behind camera: A strong reduction.

Man: Because tribes rely on importance and importance means their network with people so they don't want to harm their network with people and society...

Woman behind camera: And in the future...

Man: So they would appreciate people.

Woman behind camera: ...in the future if the deceased's tribe, as we say, experiences a problem...

Man: Exactly.

Woman behind camera: And goes through the same thing...

Man: Precisely.

Woman behind camera: ...it would also expect from the other party to...

Man: ...to treat it the same way.

Woman behind camera: ...to treat it the same way, exactly.

Man: So this is the practice within the tribal law. Treating others the same way is common. It's true that you³ are angry and upset and you lost a loved person but problems happen and clashes happen.

Woman behind camera: True.

Man: It's not like something that has never happened before. So they consider it a predestined matter that must be solved. And it's solved peacefully with symbolic or materialistic things. In the past it was, in the past it was, I mean in the past, there was the practice of *fasel*⁴. *Fasel* is...everything we talk about now is called *fasel*. *Fasel* might escalate to give women from this tribe to the other tribe. So they would give ...for example if someone killed a man's wife premeditatedly or not. He would be told for instance to give his sister for example, the killer's sister...

Woman behind camera: Mmm...

Man: ...to give her to the man whose wife was killed.

Woman behind camera: Regardless of her consent or not.

Man: Regardless of that.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use everyday. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

© 2003-2012 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated

³ He means the tribe of the deceased.

⁴ *Fasel*: an Iraqi term for a compromise between two tribes.