

**English Translation:**

**Man:** With the development of the legal system in Iraq and new laws emerging and life complications; societies needed...the Iraqi society needs its women to go to schools and colleges and, and jobs and work and interact with the society and a person is now able to see a woman, and propose to her and talk to her in public and both agree to get married, and later they let their families solve the rest of the social issues among them such as agreeing on the dowry and the things and the engagement and the...

Also, I mean, in the past a woman was unable to say "no"<sup>1</sup> to her family if her family tells her that a man proposed to her. She had no role. I mean she can't...

**Woman behind camera:** She has no right to reject...

**Man:** She has no right to reject a suitor regardless of what he might be like. But no, the modern society now takes a woman's opinion and the woman has the right to say "no" to any suitor and say "no" to her family and say "I won't get married" and her right is guaranteed by law.

**Woman behind camera:** True.

**Man:** And also even divorce, if it happens...divorce became a social phenomenon that people would accept normally, and it's possible for women to get divorced; and they may get married again and there is no problem and ...aa... I mean it doesn't represent a big social defect like it did [in the past]. In the past if women get divorced, their families would feel shameful and she would also feel a mental breakdown and social depression.

**Woman behind camera:** I think that this issue is attributed, Mister, to the fact that the society has changed and we have been through, honestly, many wars. I mean I remember that ...aa... many things became permissible after the war in '91, the first Gulf War.

**Man:** It became encouraging. One of the decisions was to encourage widow marriage and martyrs' widows as it is one of the solutions for the social problem that wars generate.

**Woman behind camera:** Correct.

**Man:** Of course, and this happened during World War I and World War II. Many of the European women stayed without husbands. Iraqi society started to accept this subject and started to change and...aa.... And there are complete rights...aa...aa... for the divorced woman. And women are not afraid of divorce anymore. I mean divorce is a very normal

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<sup>1</sup> 'No' here means to reject a man who wants to marry her

thing; if she doesn't coexist with a husband and sees that life is impossible with him, she would ask for divorce without hesitation. Aa...if she thinks that there is no other solution of course, and this doesn't represent a social defect in her. On the contrary, I mean, there are many divorced women in the society who found other husbands possibly better than their ex-husbands.

**Woman behind camera:** True.

**Man:** And vice versa for men.

**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.

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