

CultureTalk Iran Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Religious Minorities in Khuzestan

Persian transcript:

آزیتا: من مدرسه که اونجا می رفتم دوستای [=دوستان] یهودی داشتم، دوستای ارمنی داشتم، دوستای زرتشتی داشتم. زرتشتی هم خیلی توی خوزستان زندگی می کنه [=می کند].

محسن: یعنی ما هنوز در خوزستان زرتشتی داریم؟

آزیتا: بله.

محسن: ارمنی؟

آزیتا: ارمنی داریم متأسفانه تعدادشون خیلی کم شده ولی هنوز هم هستند، بله.

محسن: هم ارمنی داریم هم یهودی! بعد شیعه و سنی چگونه؟ آیا ما تو خوزستان سنی داریم؟

آزیتا: فکر نمی کنم سنی داریم [=فکر نمی کنیم سنی داشته باشیم]، من فکر نمی کنم؛ ولی خب بیشتر شیعه هستند؛ عرب ها شیعه اند؛ بختیاری ها همه شیعه اند؛ آره سنی نداریم.

محسن: حتی عرب ها، [اگر چه] عرب هستند ولی شیعه هستند؛ عرب سنی نیستند.

آزیتا: آره عرب سنی نیستند حتی من شنیدم [=شنیده ام] که اون موقع هایی که حکومت شیعه تاسیس شد، یه سری عرب هایی که شیعه بودند، برای این که تو مملکت خودشون تحت فشار بودند، یه جورایی اومدند ایران؛ و اونجا زندگی کردند که حکومت شیعی بوده، برای این که راحت تر زندگی کنند.

محسن: از زمان صفویه.

آزیتا: فکر می کنم این جوری که من خوندم آره یه قومایی خیلی قدیمی هم داریم نمی دونم شاید شما هم شنیده باشید صائبی.

محسن: آهان، تو قرآن هم هستش [هست آن].

آزیتا: آره من اصلاً برام خیلی عجیب بود دیدم ولی اونجا زندگی می کنن و می گن طرف... پیروان حضرت¹ یحییان [=یحیا هستند].

محسن: حضرت یحیا.

آزیتا: آره، آدمهایی هستند قیافه هاشون، مرداشون مخصوصاً، خیلی می تونی تشخیص بدی که این ها صبی [=صائبی] هستند. بیشترشون [=بیشتر آنها] هم طلا فروش اند. بعد ریش های خیلی بلند دارند خودشون هم خیلی قد بلند و لاغرند.

محسن: بهشون می گند [=به آنها می گویند] صائبی.

آزیتا: ما اونجا نمی دونم به گویش محلی می گفتیم صبی ولی فکر می کنم صائبی اند که ما بهشون می گفتیم صبی.

محسن: اینها پیروان حضرت یحیی هستند.

آزیتا: آره من این جوری شنیدم.

محسن: خیلی جالبه من نمی دونستم.

آزیتا: خیلی تعدادشون خیلی کمه ولی محل تمرکزشون خوزستانه [=خوزستان است].

¹ حضرت is a title which is used before the names of prophets or sacred people. For example in Persian all the prophets and Shia Imams are called by this title: حضرت یحیا، حضرت عیسا، حضرت علی، حضرت محمد.

English translation:

Azita: [When] I was going to school there, I had Jewish friends, I had Armenian friends, I had Zoroastrian friends. There are also many Zoroastrians who live in Khuzestan².

Mohsen: You mean we still have Zoroastrian[s] in Khuzestan?

Azita: Yes.

Mohsen: Armenian[s]?

Azita: We have Armenians. Unfortunately, their number has declined a lot, but they still exist, yes.

Mohsen: We have Armenians, also Jews. Then what about Shiites and Sunnis? Do we have Sunni[s] in Khuzestan?

Azita: I do not think we have Sunni[s]. I don't think [so]; but, well, mostly they are Shiites. Arabs are Shiites. Bakhtiaris are all Shias. Yeah, we do not have Sunnis.

Mohsen: Even though Arabs are Arab, they are Shiites; they are not Sunni Arabs.³

Azita: Yeah, they are not Sunni Arabs. I have even heard that when the Shiite government was established, a group of Arabs who were Shiites [who] were oppressed in their own country somehow, in order to live more comfortably, they came and lived in Iran where there was a Shiite government.

Mohsen: From Safavid times.

Azita: I think [so]. As I've read, yeah. We also have some ancient ethnicities. I do not know, you might have heard of *Saebis*⁴.

Mohsen: Yeah, [they are] also in the Quran.

Azita: Yeah, it was very strange to me, but they are living there. And it is believed that they are the followers of the honorable John [the Baptist].

Mohsen: The honorable John [the Baptist].

Azita: Yeah, they are people who you can recognize from their faces—especially their men—that they are *Saebi*. Most of them are jewelers [gold sellers]. Then they have long beards. They are very tall and thin.

² A province in southwest Iran

³ The general conception is that Arabs are Sunnis. When one is Arab, it is stereotypically believed that he or she cannot be Shia. Here Mohsen is challenging the common conception.

⁴ Adherents to the Mandaean religion

Mohsen: They are called *Saebi*.

Azita: We, there, I don't know, in the local dialect we say *Sobbi*, but I think they are *Saebi* but we were calling them *Sobbi*.

Mohsen: They are the followers of the honorable John [the Baptist].

Azita: Yeah, I heard [something] like that.

Mohsen: It is very interesting, I didn't know.

Azita: Their number is very small, but they are concentrated in Khuzestan.

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 every day. 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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