

Levantine Arabic transcript:

المرأة خلف الكاميرا: وكيف البيوت؟

المرأة بالحجاب الأسود: البيوت هلقيتها كمان رطوبة، ليش، لازمة على بعضها كثير. شباك الجيران في دار الجيران. البنت إدرسي، مش عارف أوخذ راحتني، ليش، الجار هذا فاتح مثلاً الراديو، بدو يسمع للأخبار او التلفزيون او المسجل او أبصر إيش. طيب اطلع على السطوح، السطوح كاشف بعضوا. طيب إطلعي لبره شوي، رطوبه، سكه، مكشفه البيوت. مفيش بيت يعني آمن، يعني الأولاد مش مؤمنين في بيتهم. والله بضل الأب يجري يجري وهو مخلوه. ليش؟ لانو الإشي غالي. بدل ما نتقدم لقدم صرنا نرجع لورا، بدل ما كنا نجيب الرز أبو الخمسه وعشرين كيلو صرنا نجيب بالكيلو، او أبو العشرة كيلو صرنا نجيب بالكيلو. كل شي غالي يعني، حتى ال..فش..مش قادرن نجيبهم التدفئة يدفوا، تنكة الكاز تسعين شيقل، يعني إحنا بندقي على الكاز، الكاز تسعين شيقل، صرنا نترجي جوزي. يعني وبعد كل ناس هيك، بدنا نهجم على الحطب، يعني صوبة الحطب بدنا نشتريها، غاليه. فقاعدين بلا تدفئة صدقي. يعني بتغطوا بحرام. مش كل وقت. الحرام إنبل بدك تغسله بدو أسبوعين ما بنشف. غسالة، عصاره، مفش. فالحمد لله يعني أكثر من هيك شو بدك.

English translation:

Woman behind camera: And how are the houses?

Woman (black scarf): The houses suffer from humidity -- why? Because they are so close to each other. A neighbor's window is in our house¹. If you tell a girl to study, she would say that she can't, because there is no privacy -- why? -- because our neighbor, for example, has turned on the TV to listen to the news or the radio or other things. Fine; if you go to the roof, it's close to others' roofs; if you go outside, houses are humid and very close to each other. There is no house, I mean, that's safe. I mean people are not safe in their homes.

A father would keep working, but stays in the same place -- why? Because things are expensive. We want to progress, but we keep returning backwards. We used to buy the 25-kg bag of rice; now we buy the one-kg bag, or instead of the 10-kg bag now we buy the one-kg bag. Everything is expensive, I mean. Even ... ah ... we can't afford heating. A can of oil is worth 90 sheqel. I

¹ This is an idiom. It means that houses are so close to each other that you can actually see your neighbor's activities from your window.

mean, we use oil for heating, and it's worth 90 sheqel. My husband and I, like many other people, started to use wood. We pay a lot for it. So we live without heating, believe me. We keep ourselves warm with comforters. If you wash a comforter, it would take it 2 weeks to dry as there is no washing machine or dryer. So, thank God, what would you want more than 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.

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