

### Levantine Arabic transcript:

سارة: عم تدرسي إدارة أعمال و بدك تتخرجي، مفكرة انك تشتغلي؟  
نجاح: انا بحس حالي كثير، يعني كثير بحب الشغل، و الي مرآء يعني ايه، بتمنى ، بس يعني حسب ، يعني انا بصراحة خصب حياتي بالمستقبل، يعني هلا أنا و بس أتجوز، كيف حيكون دوام زوجي، يعني ما بدي يكون يأثر على حياتي، يعني ما بحب أنا الحياة إني أنا ويا ما نشوف بعض، يعني يكون دوامي مثل دوامه، أنا برجع تعبانه، ما بشوفو، بيمر ثاني يوم، أنا ما بحب هالحياة، بحب الحياة الكثير العائلية، فإذا كان بدي يكون دوامي يتعارض مع دوامه، فلا ما يعني ما ما يشتغل.

-سارة: اهههه

نجاح: و الولاد أهم شي الولاد، بحس أنو الولاد بدون جزء كبير من حياة الأم، يعني كبير، فكمان إذا بدي يكون وقتي على حساب ولادي فهي كثير مشكلة.

سارة: طيب هلا العلاقات الأسرية بسوريا يمكن يعني عمليا تعتبر أهم الشغلات  
نجاح: ايه طبعاً، عنا حياة أسرية كثير حلوة بسوريا، يعني هذا الشي بيميز تحنا في، يعني في كثير عالم بيطلعو و يبسافرو لدول أجنبية، فأنو بقولو الحياة كثير عندن حلوة، التطور، ال..، بس ما بلاقو الحياة العائلية، يعني أنا كثير عندي من الناس اللي يعرفون قرابيبي، سافرو لهنيك و تجوزو، ايه كثير انيسطو، و حياة حلوة و التعامل هنيك حلو و كل شي حلو، بس الشي الوحيد اللي بينقصون الحياة العائلية، بلاقوها كثير ما موجودة.

سارة: طيب، مظاهر الحياة العائلية مثلاً مثل شو؟

نجاح: يعني بتحسي انو مثلاً الأم، البنات دائماً بدون يروحوا لعند أمون و لعندون إخوانون، لعند عماتون، يعني بتحسي دائماً مرتبطين ببعض.

سارة: العيلة مجموعة.

نجاح: دائماً، و على الغداء دائماً كعيلة ، كعيل سوريا، بشكل عام دائماً الغدا بوجود كل العالم، يعني كل العيلة أعضاء  
سارة: يعني ما كل شخص بياكل لحالو؟

نجاح: لا

سارة: طيب لايمتى بضل الولد موجود عند أهله؟

نجاح: لحتى يتجوز بيضل مرتبط بأهله

سارة: بضل ساكن عندون؟

نجاح: ايه، بيضل ساكن عندون

سارة: و مرتبط بقوانين أهله

نجاح: ايه طبعاً

سارة: يعني لفرضاً ....

نجاح: ما عندون حدا كبير، يعني بتصير عمك مثلاً 20 سنة و بتقوليلن مثلاً أنا عايشة عندكن بس ما الكون دخل فيني، بدك تضل مرتبطة بكل قوانينون، حتى يحسوكي انك تجوزتي و أمنو عليك، حتى شوي خلص، يخفوا، حتى بعد ما تتجوزي، بضل الون تدخل خارجي على حياتك. ليش هيك عملتي. ..

سارة: طيب، يعني انتي بتعتبري هالموضوع من تجبرتك موضوع ايجابي أو سلبي

نجاح: لا إيجابي

سارة: إيجابي، مع العلم أنو مثلاً، لفرضاً ولد قاعد عند أهله عمرو 25 سنة مثلاً و لسه أهله الون تحكم فيه، ما بتخفف شوي من شخصية الولد و يعني من قدرته على الاستقلالية.

نجاح: يعني هلا عم احكيك على اللي انا الحوالينا اللي عايشين، بلاقيين أنو لا ، عاطين ولادون الحرية و عاطينون امم ، يعني بروحو و بيجو على كيفون، بس بحدود يعني، عاملين حدود نحنا عنا بحياتنا، يعني أنا المجتمع الي بعرفو بشكل عام، ما في حدا يعني، الا في ناس أهلن هني قوايا بكونو فييمنعون مثلاً انو لا تعملو هيك و لا تساووا هيك و هذا الشي كثير بأثر و عنا يا موجد، انو عنا كثير عيل ما بخلو بنتون لا تروح و لا تحي و لا تعمل غير هني معاها، ايه كثير بضعفها شخصيتها

سارة: معظم الوقت هالعيل اللي عم تحكي عنا هل هي أغلب الوقت محافظة أو مالا علاقة الموضوع بالمحافظة دينيا

**نجاح:** و الله، طبعا يعني نسبة 90% هي بتكون محافظين دينيا، طيب في نسبة بكونو عندون متحريرين و كل شي بس كل شي لحال.

**سارة:** يعني ممكن تقولي إنها تقليد عن بعض العالم أو مجرد فكر، طبيعة مجتمع، ما بعرف، يعني المجتمع هوني كثير بيحكي على بعضه، يعني المجتمع كثير متداخل ببعض، ما حدا تارك حدا بحاله، هي هيك عملت، هي هيك صار معاها، هي حكيت مع هاد، فهذا الشيء بيخلي دائما الال، بي بكرة بيحكي عليك، بي بكرة بقولو هيك عليك انتي. يعني لهلا الال خيفانين و انا بقدر هدا الشيء فيون يعني، انو بزعلو، ما بحبو بنتون انو والله حكو عليها، هيك صار.

**نجاح:** يعني الفكرة معظم الوقت هي انو مشان حكي الناس، فلذلك بحاولو يوقفو هالشغلات .حتى يجيروا، يجيروا هي، انو انا بصراحة بلاقي هون عنا حكي الناس كثير متأثر على حياتنا، يعني يجيروا كثير عالم أنو الوحدة بتحب واحد مثلا بتحكي معو بالسر من أهلها، و كل شي بالسر، انو ليه هيك يعني و انا هدا الشيء كثير بعارضو، يعني هي لهلفتنا عندنا ياها موجودة رغم أنو عنا صار معروف انو كل بنت بتحكي مع شب، انا برأيي ما في بنت ما بتحكي مع شب يعني، هدا رأيي الشخصي أنا. بس مع هيك، بيعملو حالون ما بيحكوا، فأنو هي طبيعة حياتنا، هي هيك طبيعة حياتنا، عم تخلينا هيك نصير، و هدا الشيء غلط.

**سارة:** بالمستقبل بتتخلي انو يتغير هدا الموضوع و يبيلش الموضوع يصير علنا و لا برأيك عطول العالم بدون يضلو عم يحكو مع بعضون

**نجاح:** لحتى يمكن نحنا تكبر و يخلص جيلنا، يعني بدو جيل تاني تماما لحتى يبيلش هالموضوع يتحسن، حتى نحنا عنا البنات اللي بتحكي مع شب معنا بنت ما منبجة، بشكل عام، ما كل الطبقات، بس هي نظرة العالم.

**سارة:** مع انو كل البنات عم يحكي مع شباب.

**نجاح:** مع انو و لا بنت ما بتحكي مع شب الا البنات اللي كثير محافظة بس ما في بنت ما بتحكي مع شب بالنهاية، مع هيكي اخدين فكرة انو بيه هي بتحكي مع شب

**سارة:** طيب لذلك كل العالم بتحاول انو تحكي و تخبي و هدا الشيء كثير غلط، يعني معنا المجتمع عم يآثر على صدق الأفراد فيه.

**نجاح:** طبعا، حتى البنات بتكون شخصيتها قوية، انو ايه ما بتفرق معي بحكي، بس فعلا هي ما بتقدر تحكي لانو بعد شوي بتلاقي كثير ناس عم يحكو عليها كثير صعوبات فبتضطر انو تسكت.

### English translation:

**Sarah:** You are studying business administration and you are graduating. Are you considering work?

**Najah:** I feel that I am very ... I mean that I like working, and I have interest in it. I wish... but it depends, I mean, frankly, it depends on my life in the future. I mean now ... but when I get married, how my husband's job is going to be, I mean, I don't want it to have an effect on my life; I don't like a life where we don't get to see each other. I mean if my job is the same time as his job, I'd come back tired. I wouldn't see him; another day passes. I don't like this life. I love family life very much, so if my job will conflict with his job ... so, no, then I wouldn't work.

**Sarah:** Aha.

**Najah:** And the kids ... the most important thing is the kids. I feel that the kids should be a big part of a mother's life, I mean huge -- so if my time was affecting my kids, then that is a big problem.

**Sarah:** Okay, so family relationships in Syria, I mean, practically are considered one of the most important things?

**Najah:** Yes, of course, we have a very beautiful family life in Syria; we are distinguished by that thing. I mean, there are many people who leave, and travel to foreign countries, and they say that life there is so beautiful ... development, etc. But they can't find the same family life. I mean, I have many people that I know, my relatives, who traveled there, got married, and, yes, they enjoyed it, life is beautiful, and the treatment<sup>1</sup> is very good, and everything is nice, but the only thing they lack is family life. They find that it doesn't exist much.

**Sarah:** Okay, what are some of the aspects of family life in Syria?

**Najah:** I mean, you feel that, for example, the mother ... daughters always want to go to their mothers and to their siblings, to their aunts, I mean, you feel that they are always connected.

**Sarah:** The family is gathered.

**Najah:** Always, and at lunch<sup>2</sup> always as a family; families in Syria, in general, gather, all eating lunch -- I mean all the family members.

**Sarah:** You mean, each person doesn't eat alone.

**Najah:** No.

**Sarah:** Okay, until when does the kid stay with his/her parents?

**Najah:** Until he/she gets married, they are still connected to their family.

**Sarah:** He/she still lives with their family?

**Najah:** Yes, he/she still lives with their family.

**Sarah:** And still abide by their family laws?

**Najah:** Yes of course.

**Sarah:** I mean, suppose ....

**Najah:** They don't have someone growing up ... I mean, you can be 20 years old and you say, for example, I live with you but you don't have a say in my life?! No, you have to abide by all their rules, until they feel that you got married, and they have secured you; until that it's a bit over, but even after getting married, they still have an external say in your life -- why did you do this or that? Etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> Refers to the way people treat each other, their friendliness and helpfulness.

<sup>2</sup> Lunch is the main meal in Syria, it is the equivalent of dinner in the U.S.; it is served around 2:00-4:00.

**Sarah:** Okay, I mean, from your experience, do you consider this matter a negative or a positive matter?

**Najah:** No, positive.

**Sarah:** Positive, knowing that for example ... suppose a guy is still with his parents when he is 25 years old, for example, and his parents still have control over his life. Doesn't that affect the guy's personality, I mean, his ability to be independent?

**Najah:** I mean, now I am telling you about people around me, living around ... I find them not ... they give their kids the freedom, and they give them, um, I mean, they come and go as they wish, but with limits. I mean, there are limits in our life, I mean, the society of people I know in general, no one ... except there are people, their parents are strict, they forbid them, for example, that they shouldn't do this, or do that, and that affects [them] a lot, and it exists here. We have so many families that don't let their daughters come or go or do, except if she were to be with them. Yes, that affects her personality a lot.

**Sarah:** Most of the time these families you are talking about, are they mostly conservative, or does it have a relation to religious conservatism?

**Najah:** *Wallah*,<sup>3</sup> of course, I mean 90% are religiously conservative, but there are a percentage of liberal people who think this is a separate thing.

**Sarah:** You mean you can say that it's a tradition for some people, or just a way of thought, the nature of society. I don't know, I mean here the community gossips about each other a lot; it is so intersected, no one leaves you alone. She did that; this happened with her; she talked with that. So that makes the parents ... ooh, they will gossip over you, ooh, tomorrow they will say you are this or that. I mean, the parents are scared, and I respect that about them. I mean, they would be sad; they don't want their daughter to be the [subject of] gossip, and it is like this.

**Najah:** I mean, the idea is most of the time just for people gossiping, so they try to stop these things. I mean, it forces you ... I frankly find that people's gossip affects our life a lot. I mean, they force people... a girl loves someone; she will talk to him secretly; everything is in secret -- I mean, why? I am against that a lot, and we still have this problem until now, although it is well known that every girl talks to a guy. In my opinion there is no girl who doesn't talk to a guy; this is my personal opinion, but, despite that, they act as if they don't. This is our life's nature, that is the nature of our life, and it is making us become like that, and this is a wrong thing.

**Sarah:** Do you imagine that this matter will change in the future, and it will become more public, or do you think people will keep gossiping about each other?

---

<sup>3</sup> Means "I swear by god [Allah]," but overused in speech as a pausing and thinking word meaning "basically" or "honestly."

**Najah:** I think until we grow old, and our current generation ends. I mean, it needs a totally new generation for this issue to get better, even among us girls. A girl who talks to a guy is not considered a good girl in general -- not all classes<sup>4</sup> think this, but it's the people's point of view.

**Sarah:** Although all the girls are talking to guys.

**Najah:** Although every girl talks to a guy, except the very conservative girls, but eventually every girl will talk to a guy; despite that, there is an idea that ooh she talks to a guy.

**Sarah:** Okay, so that is why all girls try to talk and hide it, and that is very wrong; it means that the society is affecting people's integrity and honesty.

**Najah:** Of course, even if the girl's personality was very strong, [so] that she doesn't care about it ... but really, she can't say anything, because after a bit she will find a lot of people gossiping about her, and a lot of difficulties, so she would have to be quiet about it.

**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.

© 2003-2010 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated

---

<sup>4</sup> Refers to different sectors of society, not to their social stand.

