

Yemeni Arabic transcript:

- ج:** أي شوفي بالنسبة لي كراي شخصي، البننت هي اللي تقرر أنه يعني أيش المناسب له أو أيش اللي مش مناسب.
ل: لا بس يعني في فترة الخطوبة، يعني كم الخطوبة هي يعني؟
ج: في ناس يسوونه بعض أحيانا شهر، في بعض أحيانا حسب.
ل: يعني البننت كيف بتقدر تعرف الليد مثلا في شهر واحد بتعرفه ...
ج: في بعضهم لا، في بعض العائلات ما يخلوش مثلا خطيبه يجي للبيت.
ل: شفني يعني ...
ج: الا بفترة العقد وهذا العقد خلاص يعني قدك يعني زواج يعني رسمي.
ل: وهي ماتعرفوش بالخالص من قبل.
ج: أيوه بس نعم يتعرفوا بالتلفون. يعني مخطوبة بس بالتلفون أيوه، بس تشوفيهو يعني أنه يجي للبيت انك تشوفيهو مثلا أو تهدري معه لأ مثلا. أمم، بالنسبة لي أي أشوف أنه أحسن أحسن عقد.
ل: من غير ما تعرفه؟
ج: حتى لو من غير ماتعرفيهو. أصلا يعني لأنه حتى لما يجي خطوبة مثلا، لازم تلبسي مقرمة، تمام. طيب بعد العقد بالنسبة لي أشوفه أنه صعبة أنه واحد كنتي تلبسي مقرمة منه بعدين بعد العقد تحلي المقرمة عادي وحفلة يلبسوا..
ل: عاري.
ج: يلبسوا عاري يعني وموديل يعني أوروبي، تمام، فجأة يعني كده يعني يعتمد على العايلة وعلى الناس وعلى يعني العروس وعلى العروسة، يعتمد على حاجات كثيرة. لأنه مثلا أنتي لمن بتهادريه بالتلفون بس، برضه أي أشوف أنه هادي لحد التلفون يعني ما بتعرفيش شخصيته، بعكس لما يكون واحد أمامك. أفتهملك؟ يعني مثلا تعابير الوجه يعني تكشف الشخص، صح ولا لا؟
ل: أهه.
ج: فلما تكلمي واحد بالتلفون أيش يعني التلفون ممكن يعني... مش مافيش يعني اتصال مثلا، مافيش يعني كيف...
ل: يعني ماتشوفيهوش، ماتشوفيش شخصيته صح؟
ج: ما تشوفيش شخصيته الحقيقية لأنه الإنسان تعرفيه من خلال أيش؟ من تعابير وجهه، من تعابير حركاته من تعابير...

English translation:

- G:** As for me personally, I think that the girl is the one who decides what's good for her and what's not.
L: But in the engagement period, how long is the engagement period?
G: There are some people who set it for a month, it depends.
L: I mean how can the girl get to know the guy in one month...
G: There are some families that don't let the fiancé come to the house (to see his fiancée).
L: See? This means...
G: Until the time after signing the marriage contract, when it's already an official marriage.
L: And she doesn't know him at all from before.
G: Yes, but "apparently" they got to know each other through the phone. I mean she is engaged, and she can only talk to her fiancé through the phone, but he can't come over to the house to see or talk to her. As for me, I think that it's better to sign the contract directly (without engagement)
L: Without knowing him?
G: Even without knowing him. I mean when he comes for the engagement in the first place, she has to put on a *makramah*¹, okay? Then after signing the contract, for me I think it's hard to take

¹ Makramah: the Adeni term for the Islamic headscarf. It usually refers to the headscarf style of one long rectangular piece of cloth that's wrapped around the head.

off the *makramah* to see someone that one has been wearing the *makramah* for (in order not to see the hair and body). And there is a party where they were...

L: Sleeveless [clothes] (not necessarily modest clothes)

G: They were sleeveless [clothes] in the European style, I mean all of a sudden like this. It depends on the family, the people, the groom and the bride and on many other things. I mean even when you talk to him on the phone, I think that through the phone you can't determine his personality, not like when someone is [talking] in front of you, you get what I say? I mean facial expressions tell many things about the person, right?

L: Aha.

G: So when you talk to someone on the phone, what does this mean, I mean, there is no communication, there is no...

L: You mean you don't see him, you don't see his personality, right?

G: You can't see his real character, because how can you know people? Through their facial expressions and gestures and....

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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