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**[0.00]**

*For the record can you say your name age ethnicity and generation please?*

Hi, my name is Jakir Khan I'm Bengali and I'm from the 1<sup>st</sup> generation.

*Can you tell me a little bit about yourself Jakir?*

I just graduated from university and I'm a student of religion. I do Hifz where you memorize the Quran and I do part time work in an Islamic shop for the time being.

*Okay, so what got you into the degree and to learn about the Quran?*

The university degree or Hifz?

*Both.*

Both university I just, its something I just needed in life you know as a career maybe get something. Memorizing the Quran it's something I've had that desire from when I was really young to memorize the word of God and yeah I'm thankful for God that he gave me that opportunity and yeah everyday going to the classes and before I start Quran I thank him for giving me this opportunity. Then I start recital to be honest, my ultimate goal is to obviously go to heaven; everyone wants this and through memorizing the Quran I feel that I'd become a better person as well and I'd serve the community hopefully.

*So what's a day like in the life of Jakir?*

Quite boring you know. It's that you wake up and read obviously. You have your 5 prayers where you have to fit into your daily routine, and then I'm active. I do play football a lot and generally I'm into sports. I'm really good at it, I do go out with my friends and at times I do go cinema and I like to eat out, apart from that its just praying and sitting at home with my family.

*You pray 5 times a day?*

Yeah I've gotta say the first one is hard, the early one you do tend to miss it sometimes.

*And where do you go and eat at?*

Where I live there are a lot of takeaways. I just go to any takeaway. There are some cheap ones and some expensive ones. The cheap ones do some good burgers so that's really good, but at times we do go out of town to other restaurants like you don't wanna stay in your own town. You get bored of the food and you want to try something else, probably like Bradford or Leeds or Bolton.

*Are they halal restaurants?*

Yeah, most of the restaurants have a HMC certificate. It's a halal organization, or Islamic organization where they go to the slaughter house and check it if they are doing it the Islamic way. If not then its not gonna be halal. If a takeaway or restaurant you going to and you ask them if its halal or not some say its halal these days but you can't take their word for it as they'll just say that its halal just to take your money. These days you cannot trust them because you know trust was something important back then now its nothing, I think that's why we have those halal certificates as it's all about trust.

*What's it like living in Oldham?*

Actually I love living in Oldham.

*Do you?*

Yeah, because all my family is in Oldham. I do have cousins across the UK like London and Bristol and all the way down in Edinburgh. It's just you know like close family, if they staying here you feel good and even my mum sometimes goes like we are looking for a new house, but I'm like mum no I don't want to leave this place.

*Really?*

Yeah because I fell in love with this place and I don't want to leave.

*What is it about that you love though?*

I don't know, its just because you grow up and in that place. The childhood was amazing, I can still remember the days I used to play football on the streets straight after school and forget eating. Just straight football, play with your friends, have water fights and I use to do a little bad but you know, its the memories. All your friends are still there, so I feel like I go out and I do not really know anyone and can't really hang around with my friends that much so that's that.

*So your social network there with your friends is really important?*

Yeah.

*What does it feel like to be a Muslim living in Oldham?*

It feels good you know. I know some people in different towns where they have to hide their actual identity, but in Oldham you can be yourself. It's just a minority of people that are racist but the rest are happy, like my next door neighbour he's not a Muslim but a Christian and I get on good with him. We give him curry sometimes, he likes it and stuff and he's really friendly so its good living in Oldham. I don't feel threatened or anything like that, I can walk into any area and that's a good thing about Oldham. I know there have been riots and stuff in the past but the community, the Muslim community has grew strong and people can see it its really good.

*What does Islam mean to you?*

It means everything to me, what you do in everyday life, even if I'm for example playing football still means a lot to me.

*In football?*

I don't know, it just means everything in life, I don't know how to explain this. People see Islam as a religion of terrorists and they think it's a strict religion and stuff like that, but Islam isn't really like that, Islam is in everything to be honest. One of the things in Islam is meeting your brothers, having that love between yourself so you can do anything; for example I said football before where you know all the brothers meet up. Even if it's Friday prayer, the whole community meets up with football, you come together and you hug, you smile, you enjoy yourself. That brotherly love is still there, it's like Islam's not about what people think, its terrorist group and stuff like that, it's actually a peaceful religion if you

look at it also. If you look at the number of people who are converting into the religion, I read the other day that it's a Guinness world record and it's the fastest growing religion in the world and 80% of the Muslims are out of Saudi Arabia, so yeah Islam means a lot.

*And how do you put Islam in your life?*

What Islam means to me, well its in everything I do every-day in life. As in like, even when I'm eating I'll start with the God's name and obviously the Sunnah as in what the prophet used to do. So, I'll go through them and even when I go if I enter the toilet I recite something which would protect me with the stuff, and yeah that's it, its everything in my life basically.

*So you brought a gift today, what's the gift?*

Its my phone new phone S4.

**[10:00]**

*Okay, when did you get that phone?*

I got it in December.

*For?*

For my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

*Who brought it you?*

My brother's wife.

*Your brother's wife?*

Yeah, basically I had it with me I'm not really into phones but if I get a phone I keep it for at least 3, 4 years and the last phone was really rubbish so everyone knew I had a crap phone, sorry rubbish phone and so yeah she thought she'd give me this one and I loved it.

*How did she give it you?*

She kept it as a secret.

*Did she?*

Yeah, she told everyone that I'm going to surprise him with this phone and obviously she paid for it everything like £300 she paid and err yeah everyone knew about it I didn't really know and then err I later found out coz there's always one person that gives it away in the family yeah it was something good though I didn't really expect that.

*So how did she give it you? How was the surprise done to you?*

Oh alright, I just went round to her house and then she goes here's your birthday present all wrapped up. She goes you are not getting one for another five years [laughs], she gives me a lot of presents and she treats me well, that's what I'm grateful for. My brother's wife does all this yeah.

*What does the phone mean to you?*

It means a lot you know.

*Why?*

Well it doesn't. I won't place it as number one on my list. It means a lot because I do Hifz. I memorize the Quran and I have an app, a Qur'anic app, where my Quran is 15 lines. So I've got an app that's 15 lines exactly so it's same as mine. I do Hifz over my stuff, it's like you've got an exam coming up in university and you have to go over and revise your stuff. It's the same, I've got to go over my stuff but there's no exam and that app helps me because if I'm on the bus I don't have a Quran on me, I don't have any wudhu on me so I could just go to the phone and read my stuff, so that helps. That's a big help and obviously I have another app where there's reciters and I can listen to them as well so it means a lot. Also, staying in touch with your family that's important. I don't have a phone then you're stuck so it means a lot but then people use it in a bad way and get into bad stuff. I'm not saying I'm into the wrong stuff, I just use it well.

*How did you feel when she gave it you?*

Oh, I was happy. I was really happy about and was one of those smiles that stay for a long time. It's like of those things that you know, like a new baby you want to protect it. If there's a scratch you get a stab to the heart, that's how much it means and that's why I got this case. I don't care if people think it looks big but I don't care because I've dropped it so many times so it's still protected.

*Was it just a present or was there something else behind it?*

No, it was just a present.

*Okay.*

Even though I didn't get any earphones, I don't know why earphones were missing.

*In the box?*

Yeah I think she robbed it [laughs].

*How does that make you feel?*

It's good, I didn't want to say did you steal my earphones, it's a gift so you can't really say it.

*Why didn't you just take it back to the shops and say that the earphones are missing?*

No I don't, I am just so much in love with it I just leave it.

*Where do you keep your phone?*

In my pocket, it's always in my pocket.

*So what about when you go to sleep?*

Next to my bed, next to my pillow sorry. I hate it when it starts buzzing though.

*Why do you keep it near to you all the time?*

I don't know. It's just a habit, I've always kept it in my pocket. Obviously I don't have pockets when I'm sleeping so I just keep it next to me even though that feels like a pocket to me. I do not know, I just take it as something precious. If something's precious you always keep it next to you and close to you.

*So Jakir what would you do if you lost it?*

Oh I don't know. I'd probably be depressed like till I get my next phone or something. But then you fell in love with the phone so much. Everything about it, the camera quality, how fast it is and how good it is. I just tell myself it just a phone but at the same time I'd be heartbroken.

*Have you ever damaged it?*

Oh yeah. I always get a heart attack when I have keys in my pocket. You put your phone next to it and you bring it out like oh my days what is this? That's the biggest heart attack you'll get. Even if you have a screen protector you start blaming the keys and you get angry at that point.

*How do you feel when it happens?*

Oh I feel angry every time. I just sit there looking at the phone and try to smudge it off.

**[20:20]**

*So your sister in law brought you this?*

Yeah.

*Who else is in your family?*

Got my mum and dad, 2 brothers and 2 sisters but they all married now.

*2 brother and 2 sisters?*

With me its 3 brothers and then 2 sisters, everyone's married and yeah I'm the youngest.

*And you all live together?*

It's just me and my mum and one of my brothers lives with his wife and the rest are all scattered around.

*And your dad lives with you?*

Yeah, mum and dad.

*What does your mum and dad do?*

Dad's got his own restaurant and mum is at home. They are old now so not really much. I like to sit next to my mum and every-time she's talking, she has bangles and I play around with her bangles sometimes. Your mom is precious, hold on to it and that's what I see it as.

*Did you ever buy her a present?*

Yeah. On Eid I was the one that paid for her sari. I told her mum I'm going to buy your sari this year.

*Is that the first time you've done it?*

Yeah. It's because I didn't really have a job before, but now I've got a job and she's been providing me for so long, so it was time to get her something. So it felt nice and I'm going to get my dad something as well.

*Yeah.*

She didn't want it and told me to keep my money and forced her to have it, so she has it now. Then, when she wore her sari and she was really excited that day. She was like listen, this is what I got and it's really beautiful and she went round houses wearing it.

*How did that make you feel?*

It made me feel happy to see my mum happy. That's the best thing and I don't think you'll get a better feeling than that, knowing that your parents are happy, even dad was smiling.

*Do you buy anyone else presents in your family?*

I bought my niece, her dad's ... We are a footballing family and we all follow football. Even though she's a girl and she's one year old, I bought her a united top and bottoms. Still doesn't fit her though, think I got the wrong size. My dad's a Chelsea fan and a West Ham united fan and so when she was born I brought her something from Manchester United again. I remember the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday because it was her 1<sup>st</sup> birthday and got her some united stuff and her father did not approve [laughs].

*And did do you buy anybody else like your brothers and sisters anything?*

No, not really.

*Why?*

The way we see it, once your little you get spoilt with presents and stuff. When you grow older it's like the buzz it's not there. I don't know, it's just treat it like happy birthday is just enough. Or we'll just go for a meal, it's not really a gift or present as we've grown old now and we just don't see it as.

*So because you're younger you don't expect to get gifts?*

When you are younger you expect to get gifts.

*What about on Eid? You give it to your mum or do you give it to your elder brothers and sisters?*

No.

*What about your niece?*

Yeah.

*So she gets Eid presents?*

Yeah, she gets Eid presents.

*What type of Eid presents?*

I just gave them money this year but I don't know what to get them as it's very hard with presents. Even with birthday presents its very hard, you don't know what they want and you think what if they don't like it.

*You know, when you give them a present do you wrap it up?*

To my niece? No.

*Why not?*

I don't think she'll understand it right now; the whole wrapping thing as she's only one year old and I give it to her parents.

*How did your parents come to the UK?*

It was my granddad that started it all off. He used to work in Oldham in one of the factories there and obviously he was here alone. I don't think my grandma was here so my granddad started working in the mills in Oldham, there are lots of mills there and my grandma was still in Bangladesh so he wanted he's family near him. I'm not sure how it was back in the day but yeah, they all came down and started our family here.

*Have you ever been back to Bangladesh?*

Yeah I've been a couple of times. I've been about 5 6 times.

*And do you take any presents back with you?*

When I go, I usually go with family and obviously you have relatives and stuff there and they think we are rich. We are not really rich, obviously they from poor background, so us taking clothes we don't really wear it's still is a gift to them. So yeah, we do take stuff they ask for like mobile phones and stuff like that we do give them because we've not seen them for a long time, and if you haven't seen someone for a long time you present them with a gift and you keep that relationship and bond with them. It makes them happy so you stay happy as well and when we come back we miss back home so we give them something from back home.

*When you give the presents how were they all given to them? Do people come or do you have a gathering?*

In Bangladesh?

Yes.

You go to your house and people come to visit you. Then, the close ones come to visit you and you know who they are so we already planned what we are going to give them and who you gonna give it to. You can even label the name so you give it to them. Even if it's not much they will always appreciate

it, so we give them anything as they'll accept it.

*Do your parent's give you gifts?*

To be honest ... What do you call a gift from your parents? Everyday in life they give you clothes ... Would you take that as a gift? Or is it a normal thing. They do give me stuff though, I wouldn't call it a gift, you are used to it. Gift is something ... My parents they went hajj, I've never been. They went last year so they brought this nice jubbah, what Arabian people wear similar to a scarf... I'll take that as a gift because it's from the holy land and that's something special and they brought it. I even call a water Zamzam water and I'll even call that as a gift. I'll say yeah they do give gifts what you need to understand obviously is that we are practising our religion so when it comes to something like a birthday we do give gifts but we don't celebrate the birthday. We don't have a party or anything like that were all these people come with gifts. My mates do organise a meal and stuff and give gifts, which I don't really like because I don't like accepting things from my mates. Family that's different... You get a gift, wrap it up and a cake, something nice but with family we've passed that stage. When your young, like my niece for example, we'll do a party for her and it's her first birthday and once you grow older we don't really do that party thing and we don't really wrap presents anymore. Once we are older we give it up.

*Do you celebrate Christmas?*

No, Christmas is not for me. It's just watching movies you know, all the Christmas movies.

*Easter?*

No, we don't because we're Muslims and we don't really celebrate that. If you were gonna give a gift, keep it till Eid or something. I could buy an Easter egg but I do not celebrate it. I just want to eat it.

*Okay, are there any other British celebrations you get involved in?*

Like?

*Mother's day?*

Yeah, mother's day definitely.

*Really? Why?*

I don't, I'm used to it now. Even though everyday should be mother's day, I'd always get her flowers and chocolate even though she doesn't like. Just to see her happy and she knows its mother day and she is probably thinking my son is not getting me anything, just that thing. Even though everyday should be mother's day.

*What about father's day?*

I don't.

*Why not?*

I don't know. Me and my father... With my mother its different, she has that love but with my father its different as I'm not on that level with him.

*What level?*

As in we speak to him and we talk about stuff but not the way I'll speak to my mum. I hug her and stuff but I don't know ...

*Why is it that different?*

Not sure really. Fathers' when you grow up you respect them. A scary figure that you don't want mess with. I think that respect still stays there and maybe because he's from that background of 1<sup>st</sup> generation, the older generation. If I have a son I'd be so kind to him and stuff but I will become he's best friend.

**[30:20]**

*Do you fear him?*

Yeah.

*What about your mum?*

My mum is amazing. You could joke around with her, like say I'm getting married tomorrow and you could just talk to her about everything, have a joke with her and tell her stuff ... Yeah, tell her secrets and she keeps it without telling dad.

*In your family do you have ...? Are there any traditions or norms in your family about gift giving?*

When a baby is born we tend to give gifts. We go around and that's something normal but apart from that I can't really think of any traditions we do. Weddings is another one but we give them money because it can help them with the wedding but any other ones ... Say someone just graduated or passed their GCSE's or something, we give them a little gift like a chocolate or frame thing or something like that, like congratulations, just to show and tell them well done.

*You know when your sister in law came into your family how did she know all the rules of giving gifts in your family?*

You know, she was already into that stuff.

*Really?*

Yeah because she was already there. I think by her coming in, I think we tend to give more gifts. She's the one with the ideas and stuff but we used to give gifts, it's not that as much now but she's the one who says lets do this and lets do that. She's the one that keeps this going but we're happy with it.

*Is she the one that got everybody like energised in giving gifts?*

Yeah.

*Okay how did everyone else react to that?*

They are all fine, I think. They want to do it but no one speaks out and she's the one that comes in and just rocks the place.

*Yeah, pulls it all together.*

Yeah, she's the one who says lets go out for a meal and lets do this and oh this birthday is coming up what shall we do ... She's the one that organises stuff and I think we started to learn from her as well.

*Like what?*

Like sometimes we'll take control of it, for her birthday for example and we'll all organise things and stuff so yeah.

*And how did you learn that off her?*

We just learned because we've been with her and she's the one organising stuff and we just take it in the way she does stuff.

*Yeah, so you watch her behaviour.*

Yeah.

*In your family Jakir, do you give cards with presents?*

Yeah, I used to. Most of the presents I have but some I can't be bothered with it. I leave it and just hand it to them and say happy birthday.

*And then what happens?*

Oh thanks for that, but they not really interested in the card so I can just text it to them to be honest. So I'll joke around with it but they won't take it to heart or anything like that to be honest. Once they take the gift they forget about the card to be honest. Other people might probably give them a card, anyway so they don't really say oh you didn't give me a card.

*But you didn't give them a card though did you?*

No because you know them and you gave them plenty cards in the past, you don't really have to give them every-day.

*Okay.*

Make a card on an A4 paper or something [laughs].

*Do you give friends of the same ethnic background presents?*

Same ethnic ...?

*Like to other Bengali's.*

Depends, if I go for a meal I do have friends who are girls and who I grew up with since primary school and we do go out for a meal and stuff. They will give presents and we all chip in for something but if its like my friend or anything like that I just wont really give it. Its just that thing, guys don't really give guys presents that much, we just go for a meal or something or ...

*What about your non ethnic friends?*

Same with them. I'm friends with them through phone or Facebook and we do hook up for football and stuff, sometimes go for a meal. I don't if its good but my mates just prefer local takeaway and stuff that you can sit down and eat and talk. We just do that and I don't really give them birthday presents, I wish them a happy birthday but don't really give them presents.

*Are there any gifts that you would not give to people that you believe are forbidden?*

My family and friends, even then I wouldn't really. Even if they are not Muslims or anything I wouldn't give them gifts that I believe that are forbidden. For example I don't think we are allowed gelatine but some are not allowed because its taken out from pigs so we don't really give that to my family or my friends because they know its forbidden. Obviously in Islam we believe in what Allah says and what God says and obviously we cant really go against that. If I wouldn't take it then why should I give it to them? If I wont accept it then I wouldn't really give it to them. Forbidden for me its something haram as in you must not go there its completely sealed off you just do not do that. Even my friends who are not even Muslim even, even if they do take according to me what's forbidden and if they do eat or whatever I still wont give it because as a Muslim you don't really do that to your fellow people. You just show love to them and what will harm them you don't give it to them. I think it was last season or something, premier league football and where basically in a football match after there is a man of the match award, what they used to do was to give champagne. So there's a football player that used to play for Manchester City called Yaya Toure who is Muslim. So they presented him with champagne and then he's like oh like oh no no no I don't drink. They changed the whole thing now and just give out a little trophy. They banned that because Muslims don't drink. Now they've realised I can't give someone haram, a Muslim person is same as me and I can't give something haram to them.

*So they changed the premier league?*

That present they changed into like a trophy now. You get a man of the match trophy now and they won't give champagne now even to a non-Muslim anymore.

*Oh okay that's really clever.*

Yeah.

*So Jakir, is there anything else you'd like to add to the interview?*

No, not really.

*Well, thank you very much for coming in today.*

Your welcome.

**[40:02]**