

Fatima's Interview – Part 1

SHIREEN: assalamu a'laikum. Welcome to Urdu Seekhiye. This is our second interview. I'm very excited for you to meet a very talented human being; a teacher, an artist and an overall pretty awesome person. She introduced me to this awesome park in DC called the Meridian Hill Park. So this is some footage from the park. Enjoy.

To ham hameša asān savālāt se šurū karte haiñ. to pahle hai āp kā nām kyā hai?

So we always start with easy questions. The first is what is your name?

FATIMA: merā nām fātimā hai.

My name is Fatima.

SHIREEN: “okay,” aur is vaqt ham konse šehr main haiñ?

Okay, and which city are we in right now?

FATIMA: ham is vaqt “washington, dc” main haiñ.

We are in Washington DC right now.

SHIREEN: aur xās taur pe ham kahañ haiñ...yih jagah kā nām kyā hai?

And where are we specifically? What is the name of this place?

FATIMA: yih ek “park” hai. is kā nām hai “Meridian Hill Park”.

It is a park. Its name is Meridian Hill Park.

SHIREEN: ačča to yih bataiñ, is šehr ke bāre main āp ko sab se ziyāda kyā pasand hai?

Okay, so please tell me, what do you like most about this city?

FATIMA: mujhe sab kuch pasand hai is shehr main. mujhe sab se ziyada yeh pasand hai ke idhar ke log har mulk se aate hain. har qism ke log hain, har rang ke log hain, to yeh bat mujhe bahut pasand hai. aur idhar har waqt koi shughul mile hote hain. jidhar bhī jāo kōī shughul hotā hai.

I like everything in this city. The best thing I like about it is that the people here come from all countries. There are all types of people, people of all color so this is the thing I like very much. And here, there is always some fun activity [taking place]. Wherever one goes there is some fun activity.

SHIREEN: aachha. kyā ap ko yeh mausam pasand hai?

I see. Do you like this weather?

FATIMA: mujhe garmī bahut pasand hai. mujhe is lie bhī shayad pasand ho gī kyon ke mere ammī abbū garam mulk se hain to shayad mujhe is lie garmī pasand hai. mujhe sardī bahut jaldī lagtī hai.

I like the summer a lot. Maybe I also like it because my parents are from a hot country, so maybe that is why I like the summer. I feel cold very easily.

SHIREEN: aachha, lekin yeh kuch ziyada hī garmī nahīn hai?

But isn't this a bit too hot?

FATIMA: nahīn, mujhe to bahut pasand hai.

No, I like it very much.

SHIREEN: aachha, thik hai. ap DC mein kitne sāl se hain?

Okay. How many years have you been in DC?

FATIMA: main DC mein... panch sāl mujhe ho gae hain.

I've been in DC ... it has been five years since I've been in DC.

SHIREEN: aachha, DC mein? yā "virginia, maryland"?

I see, in DC? Or Virginia, Maryland?

FATIMA: ek sāl main Virginia meñ rahī thī lekin merī “job” phir bhī DC meñ thī. aur phir main yahān hī “move” ho gā aur yih ačchā “decision” thā mere lie.

I lived in Virginia for a year, but my job was still in DC. And then I moved here, and it was a good decision for me.

SHIREEN: āp ke koi bhāī bahin haiñ?

Do you have any siblings?

FATIMA: merī ek čhotī bahin hai.

I have a younger sister.

SHIREEN: ačcha, bas do hī haiñ. āp dono?

I see, it’s just the two. Two of you?

FATIMA: jī.

Yes.

SHIREEN: farz karaiñ ke main sirf ek dīn DC meñ guzār saktī hūñ to mujhe us ek dīn main kyā kyā karnā čāhīe aur kyā dekhnā čāhīe?

Suppose I can only spend one day in DC, so in that one day what should I do and what should I see?

FATIMA: main yih kahūñ gi ke agar āp...koī bhī dīn ho vuh "sunday" kā dīn ho. is lie kyon ke “sunday” ko bahut mailai aur mazai hote haiñ “Sunday” ko. yih ek mazā yih hai ke āj “drum circle” ho rahā hai Meridian Hill Park main. to ye hotā hai jis meñ log apne “drums” lāte haiñ aur sāre gāne aur “music” bajāte haiñ aur “dance” karte haiñ. to bahut mailā hotā hai mazā hota hai “park” meñ. to yih bhī āp dekh sakte ho Meridian Hill Park meñ.

aur ek “market” hotī hai, “eastern market” udhar sab čīzain miltī haiñ. har mūlk ki čīzain miltī haiñ. “art miltā hai, kapre milte haiñ, sonā-zevar miltā hai. to is tarah kī čīzain miltī haiñ udhar. vuh bhī bahut maze kī market hai. subah ko šurū hotī hai aur pāñč, čhe baje tak xatam hotī hai.

us ke ‘ilāva āp ko to patā hai yahāñ president rahtā hai to “white house” hai, “lincoln memorial” hai, “washington monument” hai, vuh sārī čīzain haiñ. to vuh dekhne ke lie bhī... mazā ātā hai.

I would say that if you... whatever the day may be, it should be a Sunday. That is because on Sunday there are many fairs and fun events. One fun thing is that there is the drum circle happening today in Meridian Hill Park. What happens is that people bring their drums and everyone sings and makes music, and dances. So there is a lot of fun in the park. So you can watch this in Meridian Hill Park.

Then there is a market; Eastern Market where everything is available. That is also a very interesting market. Other than that, you know, the President lives here so there is the White House, Lincoln Memorial and all those things. So it’s fun to see them, too.

SHIREEN: zarūr! to main ab āp ko apnī paṛhāī ke bāre meñ pūčhūñ gī. āp ne college meñ kyā paṛhā thā?

Definitely! So now I will ask you about your studies. What did you study in college?

FATIMA: main ne college meñ “elementary education” paṛhī thī.

I studied Elementary Education in college.

SHIREEN: ačchā, aur university meñ kyā paṛhā?

And what did you study in university.

FATIMA: vuh main ne “masters” kiyā thā, vuh bhī “teaching” meñ.

I did [my] Masters and that, too, was in teaching.

SHIREEN: ačča – “okay”, to āp baččoñ ko...čhote baččoñ ko paṛhātī haiñ?

Okay, so you teach small children?

FATIMA: hāñ, main ne sārī “grades” paṛhāī hūī haiñ. “grade” ek se pāñč tak.

Yes, I have taught all grades from grade 1 to 5.

SHIREEN: āp kā sab se pasandīda “grade level” konsā hai?

What’s your favorite grade level?

FATIMA: mujhe “first grade” bahut pasand thī. pahlī “grade”... us main bačče sīkhete haiñ ke paṛhnā kaise hai...paṛhnā aur likhnā kaise hai. to yih bahut yih un kī jo...jaise badalte haiñ nā... šūrū se āxrī...sāl jab xatam hotā hai “summer” tak...to bahut paṛh lete haiñ...to bahut mujhe mazā ātā hai ke inhoñ ne kitnā paṛh liā hai.

I liked first grade very much. First grade... in it children learn how to read...how to read and write. So as they transform/progress from the beginning to the end of the year until the summer, they have read a lot. So I really enjoy seeing how much they have learned.

SHIREEN: “right, hāñ.” ačchā. kyā koī aisī xātūñ haiñ jo āp kī “role model” ho?

Right, yes. Is there any lady who is your role model? (Do you have a female role model?)

FATIMA: log to yihī kahte haiñ ke “merī ammi merī “role model” haiñ.” to ammi *haiñ* merī “role model.” un se hī to main ne urdū sīkhī hai.

People normally say that, “My mom is my role model.” So my mother *is* my role model. She is the one from whom I have learned Urdu.

SHIREEN: ačchā.

Okay.

FATIMA: hāñ. to ammi haiñ. unhoñ ne mujhe khānā pakānā sikhāyā hai aur unhoñ ne mujhe ixlāq se logoñ se bāt karnā sikhāyā hai. islām sikhāyā hai. to vuh merī “role model” haiñ. aur merī choṭī bahin bhī merī “role model” hai. kyon ke, vuh mere se choṭī hai lekin vuh mere se...bahut čīzoñ meñ āge hai mere se.

Yes. She taught me how to cook. She taught me how to talk to people with kindness, taught me Islam. So she is my role model. And my younger sister is also my role model. She is younger than me but is ahead of me in many ways.

SHIREEN: ačchā. kitnī choṭī hai āp se?

Okay. How much younger than you is she?

FATIMA: mere se sārhe tīn sāl choṭī hai.

aur merī ek aur “role model” haiñ. merī jo bačpan kī dost hai us kī...un kī ammī. un kā nām hai “gul afšā aunty” aur vuh merī bahut bahut ačchī “role model” haiñ. ūnhoñ ne pehlā “girl’s scouts troop...america” meñ, “islamic girls scouts troop” kholā. us meñ har “friday” ko ham sārī laṛkiyāñ miltī thīñ or vuh ham ko islam kā koī “topic” sikhātī thīñ.

She is three and a half years younger than me.

And I have another role model: my childhood friend’s mother. Her name is Gul Afshah Aunty, and she is my very very good role model. She formed the first Islamic Girls Scout Troop. Every Friday all of us girls would meet up, and she would teach us some Islamic topic.

SHIREEN: “girls scouts” meñ islam kā “topic”?

Islamic topic in Girls Scouts?

FATIMA: hāñ, kyon ke vuh “islamic girls scouts” thā. pahlā unhoñ ne...itnī muškil se unhoñ ne pahlā “islamic badge” bhī nikālā. yih bhī mujhe bahut pasand thā. aur vuh abhī tak merī bahut sakkī (saggī) dost haiñ.

Yes, because it was Islamic Girls Scouts. With much difficulty she created/made official the first Islamic badge. This was also something that I liked very much. And she remains my very fast friend to this date.

SHIREEN: “Nice. Okay.” aur koī ādmī hai jo āp ke “role model” hai?

Nice. Okay. And is there any man who is your role model? (Do you have any male role model?)

FATIMA: merī zindagī meñ sirf ek ādmī hai aur vuh mere bābā haiñ.

There is only one man in my life and that is my father.

SHIREEN: ačchā.

All right.

FATIMA: jī. mere abbū bahut mahntī haiñ aur unhoñ ne mujhe bahut kučh sikhāyā hai. aur ek čīz main ye kahoñ gī ke unhoñ ne mujhe aisai baṛā kiyā hai jaise main betā hūñ. unkī sirf do beṭiyāñ haiñ lekin unhoñ ne mujhe... jab se main čhoṭī thī mujhe kahā tha ke jo merā dil čahe main hāsil kar saktī hūñ.

My father is very hardworking and he has taught me much. I would say one thing, he brought me up as if I were a son. He has only two daughters, but ever since I was young he told me that I could achieve whatever I wanted.

SHIREEN: Awesome. baṛī...bahut ačhī bāt hai. to vuh konsī čīz hai jis ke lie āp sočtī haiñ ke “kāš mere pās is ke lie aur vaqt hotā?”

Awesome. That’s very good. So what is that thing for which you think, “I wish I had more time for this.”

FATIMA: merā...āp ko to ye patā hai nā ke main baččoñ ko paṛhātī hūñ. To main us ke sāth baččoñ kī kitābeñ bhī paṛhtī hūñ. to merā dil čāhtā hai ke mere pās “time” ho ke main xud ek baččoñ kī kitāb likh sakūñ. us kā “time” mīle, kyon ke āp ko patā hai ke is mulk meñ... “america” meñ... bahut qism kī kitābeñ haiñ lekin itne pākistānī “authors” hī nahīñ.

You know that I teach children. Along with that, I also read children's books. I wish that I had time to write a children's book myself. Because you know in this country, in America, there are many types of books, but there are not many Pakistani authors.

SHIREEN: Bilkul.

Absolutely.

FATIMA: bahut kam hain... to hamare bacchon ko... pakistani bacchon ko bahut mazā ātā hai ke vuh dekhain ke yih kitāb hamare logoñ ke बारे में hai yā jis ne yih likhā hai vuh pakistani hai. is lie merā dil hai ke mere pās "time" ho ke main ek kitāb likhūñ.

There are a very few. So our children, Pakistani children really like it that they see that this book is about my people or whomever has written it is Pakistani. That is why I want to have more time to write a book.

SHIREEN: main āp se hai nā...kuñ vaqt guzar jāe gā, to main pūchtī rahūñ gī ke vuh kitāb likhī yā nahīñ.

I will ... after some time passes, I will keep asking you if you've written that book or not.

FATIMA: āp mere lie ye kīyā karen.

Please do that for me.

SHIREEN: zarūr. zarūr.

Of course. Of course.

kyā koī aisī čīz hai jis ke बारे में āp bahut fikr kartī hain?

Is there anything that you worry a lot about?

FATIMA: to āp ko patā hai main bacchon ko paḥātī hūñ. To us ke sāth bahut mere ūper zimaidārī hai bacchon kī. mere čālīs bačče hote hain.

You know that I teach children, so with that there is a huge responsibility of the kids upon me. I have forty children.

SHIREEN: čālīs!?

Forty!?

FATIMA: jī.

Yes.

SHIREEN: ek “class” meñ?

In a single class?

FATIMA: nahīñ, nahīñ, nahīñ ...main do clāsain paṛhātī hūñ nā. to vuh bīs ek clās meñ hote haiñ bīs dūsri clās meñ hote haiñ. kabhī čālīs se bhī ziyāda hote haiñ. to un kī zimaidārī mere ūpar hai.

jab main “job” se nikaltī hūñ to main phir bhī fikr kartī huñ un ke bāre meñ ke inhoñ ne ye čīz sīkhī? āj kā din ačchā guzrā? kal ham kyā kar sakte haiñ?

koī bačče haiñ jo...jin kī...jo ixlāq se nahīñ bol rahe ek dūsre se. to phir main sočtī hūñ ke, “ab in ko ixlāq bhī main ne sikhānā hai, “manners” sikhāne haiñ, bolnā sikhānā hai ke logoñ ke sāth kaise ačchī tarah bolte kaise haiñ.”

No, no, no. I teach two classes. So there are twenty in one class and twenty in the other one. Sometimes there are more than forty. I have their responsibility [upon me]/ They are my responsibility. So when I leave my job [for the day], I still worry about them, “Have they learned this thing? Was today good for them? What can we do tomorrow?”

There are some kids who do not speak politely with one another so I think, “I have to teach them kindness as well, have to teach them manners, have to teach them how to talk to people, have to teach them how to have a polite conversation with people.”

SHIREEN: hān, nahīn baṛī zimedārī hai yih. agar kabhī āp kā din būrā guzre to vuh konsī čīz hai jisko karne se āp ko yaqīnan xušī miltī hai?

Yes. No, it's a big responsibility. If ever you have a bad day, what is that one thing that is sure to make you happy?

FATIMA: to ek čīz hai jo mujhe bahut pasand hai aur vuh mīṭhā hai. mujhe mīṭhā bahut pasand hai, har qism kā mīṭhā. to mīṭhī čīz se main xuš hotī hūn.

aur us ke sāth koī maze... maze ka koī gūlūkār jo mazāxiā (mazāhiā) ho šoxiā ho us ke "show" main dekhnā čāhtī hūn. jaise vuh "malron wayans" jo "wayans brothers" hai. vuh baṛe mazāxiā (mazāhiā) hai. main un kā "show" dekhtī hūn. "marlon show" bahut maze kā hai.

to jo bhī čīz jis se main haṁsūn. merī bahin bhī bahut mazāxiā (mazāhiā) hai. vuh bhī mujhe bahut haṁsātī hai. itnā haṁsātī hai ke mere...merī sāns nahīn ātī. to...mere ūper bhī mazāq kartī hai, mujhe bahut mazā ātā hai. in čīzon se main xuš hotī hūn.

So there is one thing that I really like a lot, and that is deserts/sweet dishes. I love deserts a lot: all kinds of deserts. So I become happy with deserts.

And in addition to that, any singer who is funny and humorous - I want to watch their show. For instance Marlon Wayans who is (part of) Wayans Brothers. I watch their show. The Marlon Show is very funny.

So anything which makes me laugh. My sister is also very funny. She also makes me laugh a lot. She makes me laugh so much that I can't breathe. She makes fun of me as well, and I enjoy that a lot. So these things make me happy.

SHIREEN: āp ko apnī bahin se aksar bāt karne miltī hai? (āp apnī bahin se aksar bāt kar pātī hai?)

Do you get to talk to your sister often?

FATIMA: hān miltī hai, bāt ham karte hai aur main ghar bhī bahut jātī hūn. to us se bhī ham phir milte hai aur mazā kar te hai.

Yes, I do. We do talk a lot. I go home frequently as well. so also because of that, we meet and have a lot of fun.

SHIREEN:

“that’s important”. ačchī bāt hai. koī aisī kāmyābī jis pe āp ko faxar ho?
kyā āp us ke bāre main hamain batānā čāhain gī?

That’s important. It’s a good thing. Any accomplishment(s) which you are proud of? Would you like to tell us about it?

END OF PART 1