

ASIAN VOICES

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INTERVIEWEE: Mr. & Mrs. A.S. Khalid

INTERVIEWER: Andrew Jilani

(BEGINNING OF TAPE 10/1, SIDE A)

ANDREW JILANI: Today is Saturday. I am sitting in the home of Abdul Khalid and his family. Ahm.... They have a three year old daughter, Fatima.

ABDUL KHALID: And nine weeks old Mariam.

AJ: And nine weeks old Mariam?

AK: Yeah.

AJ: Okay. Where is Mariam?

AK: She is sleeping.

AJ: She's sleeping? Okay. And-, ahm.... er....we're about to begin our interview, and I thank you, Khalid Sahib, for your time.

AK: You're welcome. [to Fatima] Fatima, no!

AJ: [speaks in Punjabi] And-, er.... as we had decided earlier, we will talk in Punjabi. We can switch to English as and when required.

AK: Right. Okay.

AJ: My first question to you is how you decided to come to America, and when did you come to America?

AK: Mr. Jilani, the fact of the matter is that-, even if you ask a school kid where he wants to go abroad, the answer will be "America". The thing is, in simple terms, my brother-, when he was in eighth class (grade), he decided he wanted to go to United

States. We thought amongst ourselves that there is so much there (in US), why should we remain deprived of them, we should go and see for ourselves.

AJ: Your elder brother?

AK: My elder brother. Okay. Then-, one thing was that I had a medical background, and it was quite natural that I had this desire in my heart that for higher education you have to go somewhere. So, around ninety one I made up my mind to come to America. In the end, what happened was that—in those days, things were not favorable for doctors in Pakistan, to the extent that it was very hard to find jobs. People would study and even after getting good qualifications (in this field), and would still not find jobs. And if one did get a job, it was usually in rural areas and in villages that you would not even find on a map. The other important factor there is that those who are holding positions of professors, do not vacate their positions. And in our profession, the thing is that if you wish to obtain training, or a degree from Pakistan, it's those same professors will grant you the qualifications, because all the authority is in their hands in Pakistan. They are the members, and they are the ones to grant you the degree. And we see our seniors, who are not granted the degrees by these professors, fearing that if others acquire the same qualifications as them, they will become equals, and their (the professors') positions will be threatened. This is very discouraging. You can go on studying, at times for as long as twenty years, and still you're not able to get even a single job. So then I decide that it's better that one went abroad. And luckily for me, my parents were in the United States at the time. They filed for immigration for myself and my elder sister. We were lucky at that time, because we were unmarried, and our immigration went through in about-, just-, one and a half year. So--.

AJ: Uh-huh? So, when did your parents come here?

AK: My parents came here in eighty nine. But before that, my sister came here in eighty four-, sorry, eighty-one. They got their American citizenship, and they applied for our parents. When our parents came here, they applied for us. So, luckily for us, you can say that we "got to eat a pre-cooked meal" [literal translation of a Punjabi idiom] We did not have to even cook the meal for us. If one is already in a rather desperate situation, and in such circumstances you get an opportunity, one says you better avail this. So, that is how I came to America first in ninety one.

AJ: Okay. Uh-huh.

AK: And I have been here since then. And now the situation is that circumstances do not allow me to do anything but stay here. [quotes a Punjabi idiom saying, "I wish to leave the blanket, but the blanket wouldn't leave me"]. [laughter]

AJ: Ahm... When you came here--. Please tell me something about your early memories-, your early impressions about this country.

AK: Right. Mr Jilani it's a very--. When one gets on a plane and gets off at New York airport-, I can't ever forget that one thing that first impressed me most was to see the cleanliness here. I was surprised to see that they kept this place so clean. I mean-, even-, I cannot imagine like-, in-, Kennedy airport where plane is landing and taking off like, in just a matter of seconds--.

AJ: Matter of seconds.

AK: And, about-, I think, like, over one million people-, they-, you know-, travel all-, you can imagine, like in the airport, and this kind of stuff, and it was such a clean thing, and you can even look at your face in the floor. Say--. At that time, I recalled a

verse from the Holy Quran, "cleanliness is half your faith", and thought to myself that cleanliness is supposedly half the faith for us Muslims, but we have never--. That was one thing that impressed me most-, that people here are so conscious of cleanliness. The other important thing that happened immediately was that people treated you so politely, even (though) you're a foreigner. You're coming to this country for the first time, and how the people deal with you-, like "thank you", and "we apologize" for this or that, and this kind of stuff-, (that) we never hear in our country. I mean, over there you have to fight to get your rights, if you don't fight, you get nothing. Over here, if you get in a line--. Even-, even-, first thing that impressed me-, like this-, people are standing, like-, a hundred people are standing, and just making a straight-, row, and they're waiting for their turn. And-, I remember when in Pakistan we used to go to get tickets at a cinema, () [laughter]. I mean, you can compare the criteria--, even at that early stage (of arriving in this country), you start getting the impression--. Look at this nation—granted that they're a much bigger power, and have a much bigger economy—that's separate issue. I mean, we get (financial) aid from them. But they have very simple principles-, take cleanliness, for example. The Quran say cleanliness is half your faith, and I say to myself that these people have lived up to it. The other thing is that all people wait for their turn, although everyone is getting late, every one is in a hurry, but they stand in line and wait for their turn. I was impressed that simple rule people follow here, that if you wait for your turn, you can get your turn much quicker.

AJ: Uh-huh. Okay. Very good. Very good. And-, now you have been here about seven years--.

AK: It's been about eight years.

AJ: Almost eight years. What do like about this country now?

AK: Now--. I mean--.

AJ: We were talking about early impressions—cleanliness-, and such.

AK: Those were early impressions, cleanliness, etc., right. One thing is-, I mean-, if you wish t know how my experience for eight years has been, you can say that-, I mean-, I have seen a very hard time. That's-, no doubt about it. I mean-, even after seeing hard times for seven years, if I find a good job, then I'll say I'm lucky. Because I have seen that people have been here for as much as twenty years, and are still struggling--. Nobody gets "set" [means "settle down and have a comfortable life], you ask any American. Even one of my cousins, who is making close to three to four hundred thousand dollars a year. If you ask him, he will also say that I am not "set". I mean to say that nobody gets "set".

AJ: Nobody gets set.

AK: It's not that it's a greed for money, but everyone is not satisfied. The other thing, I mean, what's happened in seven years, one-, one-, other difference I have experienced is that if you want to work here, you can do that. I mean, a big factor is that nobody considers it odd that-, "you're delivering pizzas" or you're mopping floors"! In Pakistan, you would feel it an indignity, thinking that I am a qualified doctor, why should I do such menial tasks. *Me?* Why should *I* do such a job?

AJ: Yeah. *Me-*, deliver pizzas?

AK: I mean that we prefer sit back comfortably, and waste all the time.

AJ: Yeah! Watch a cricket match.

AK: Watch cricket matches! I mean, over here also that happens, but here, work is work. I have realized after coming here that punctuality is very important. Even when I was delivering pizzas, I did not like being late by even five minutes. Although-, even-, what have I to do at Pizza Hut? Just wait and-, you know, just wait for the turn. But anyway, you have to be there at [on] time. In Pakistan you have to be there at eight, and you get there by nine-, it's okay--.

AJ: Doesn't matter.

AK: Doesn't matter. I mean-, a little bit-, one feels that punctuality is very important here.

AJ: Okay.

AK: And the other thing is that I have done all sorts of jobs here. I mean, from pizza delivery, delivering newspapers, to working in hospitals. I mean-, you name it! But, the thing is that I never got disheartened, I always hoped for the best, and kept my faith in God. God has brought me this far, and all other needs-, I means, one's needs are never fulfilled, and everyone is not fortunate enough to have all needs fulfilled, but one should thank God to have brought us this far [in life].

AJ: Brought this far--. Tell me about your work-, what you're doing now.

AK: I--. I'm working with a pharmaceutical company in Research Triangle Project. It's called PPD Development. Their function is-, it stands for Pharmaceutical Product Development.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean, it's an international company, in the sense that-, offices like-, in Wilmington, Texas—Houston, in RTP-, in-, er..... in Thailand, in Europe. I mean, all over the world. You can mane it.

AJ: Uh-huh. PPD?

AK: PPD. I mean, it's a big, growing company now.

AJ: They advertise a lot in the newspapers-, for studies, etc.

AK: Right. Right. Right. Yes, studies, etc. I mean, our job is to-, I mean-, like other pharmaceutical companies-, we don't manufacture medicines. We don't manufacture medicine. Other companies make medicine, like Glaxo Wellcome. They make medicines. They make medicines, and first of all-, you probably know that when medicines are made, they're tried on animals, birds, etc. Experimenting is done in labs, data is collected from there. Then, when all the data is collected, it--. There are other companies like ours also. Like, Clintroil-, and one or two others like that. These companies take that data and say that we would like to see how these medicines work on human beings. You have experiments conducted on human beings. And then-, it's like a bidding process. And like-, we make a bid that we'll handle the conducting of experiments for so many million dollars, and another company will bid so many million dollars. Like-, we make a lower bid and get the contract.

AJ: Get the contract.

AK: Then we go and conduct experiments. It depends whether the experiments are to be conducted on healthy humans, or patients--. It's like that. Then we have the experiments conducted, get the studies done-, I mean, all over the world. We get that done, and collect the data, and then give it to the sponsors, with our assessment of whether

the drug is effective, and how much, or if it's not effective. They then submit all the data and findings for FDA. The FDA is the approving authority. The FDA, if it sees that all things are okay, they approve the drug for marketing. This is how it works.

AJ: Okay. Now I'll ask some questions about the community life. Over here-, please tell me-, what does your community consist of over here? If I ask you who are the people of your community-, or who do you interact with?

AK: Right. That's correct. Your community begins with your family. I mean, I consider my family-, I have my children, my wife, and I'm very happy. The other thing is that luckily my sister is also in this area. She has children also, my brother-in-law-, I mean, he's a very good man, and-, has always-, I mean, considered me like their own son. I mean, treated me-, like, in this way. I mean, since I came I lived with them—have moved away only recently when my family arrived here. But-, I mean, they always treated like one of their children. Other than that, my brother is also here. I mean, he's my best friend, and-, we always share whatever we have-, in any problem, and-, luckily my parents are visit here often. I mean, they live six, seven months here and four, five months in Pakistan. And then I have another sister, and they have also recently moved here from Pakistan. This brother-in-law is also like a friend. And-, besides that, we have other family-, we have a big family. You may probably some of them also-, in Raleigh. Baloch-, Doctor Baloch. They-, there are three more brothers-, like, my first cousins, sons of my father's elder brother. I mean, actually, Dr. Baloch came here first of all, in nineteen sixty seven, sixty six.

MRS. KHALID: [calls from some distance] They came in seventy one.

AK: Came in seventy one Okay. He came and sponsored his brothers, and they all came here. I mean, now their families-, and they have children—and, praise God, some of their children are now getting married. I mean, you can say that the next generation has begun. And-, if we just count the children in the family, and count the family members, almost-, I mean-, we cannot invite all of them at one party. I mean, if you wish to invite the whole family on a dinner, that may be difficult-, almost-, we are about over fifty one, fifty two people.

AJ: Oh my God! Uh-huh.

AK: I mean, now they also have their children. I mean, it gets a little hard, so you have to split them [if one wishes to invite everyone over]. Besides that, we have a big Pakistani community. I mean, luckily, they are very good people, and they have very good background, and mostly-- about eighty percent—they are professional people, and they work for very good companies. And-, about-, you can say-, they're-, they're physicians, and they are doing very well, and a couple of them-, they are, like, cardiology surgeons, cardiovascular surgeons. I mean, they are in the top class. I mean, you consider like, who-, people-, you name () as doctors, physician. We-, we come under-, community-wise, you can say--. And-, I mean-, we-, being in a foreign place, we do miss Pakistan, but if we consider it, we feel that we are not alone here, there are many of us.

AJ: Uh-huh. Fifty-one--.

AK: Fifty-one are just family members.

AJ: Family members! And the community--.

AK: Communities--. I mean, now if we invite everyone-, in a hall--. It's very hard for us to arrange and call everybody at one time. We have to split them in two sessions. Other than that, Praise God, community-wise-, we have two mosques here. I mean, that our mosque-, imagine that our mosque in Raleigh turned out to be too small. We had to start a new Islamic Center, and-, by the grace of God, we created like-, actually, generated like-, about-, one point four million dollars-, in cash. In all our communities, like all our-, er... Arabic-speaking brothers and all-, all of those people, and this shows that we are like, we are very strong-, in one mission if you wanted to. Because--. You know, we cannot earn interest. We cannot build a mosque on earnings from interest, so we need cash. [Islam forbids earnings from interest, so it is considered sacrilegious to build a mosque with funds that include interest earnings]

AJ: Need cash--.

AK: And-, our cash-, about one point four, one point five million dollars, you can say, in less than one year-, we generated, and now you can see our mosque has been built. Besides, we have two Islamic schools. Our children go to these schools. And if one goes to our Islamic school till fifth, sixth grade, and then shift to a local high school, you are given credits for the studies at the Islamic. You don't waste the time of studies at these schools. [demonstrates the standard of education in these privately-run schools] Our schools are affiliated with the big counties--.

AJ: Uh-huh.

AK: I this way--. We have one school in Wake-, Raleigh, and one is in Durham.

AJ: Okay. Very good.

AK: And-, In Durham there are many families, Pakistani's, Muslim families, Indian families. I mean, there are a lot of them I mean-, you can say that-, I mean-, almost-, if you count-, as a community-wise, as a Muslim, as a Pakistanis, I mean-, there are a lot of them.

AJ: You were saying that sometimes you miss Pakistan--.

AK: Exactly.

AJ: Ahm... and--. You also told me you're from Lahore-- and I told you that I am from Lahore also—and-, I've been away for many years-, I miss Lahore a lot of times. Do you miss Lahore?

AK: Sir, I miss it a lot! It's like saying that the children are here, and the mother is there.

AJ: [laughs]

AJ: The things is, Mr. Jilani, the thing--. All we can think is that if there was no Pakistan, we would not have been here. That is the matter of fact. We are because of Pakistan. And the way things are now, if something happens in Pakistan, all our attention is there. You believe me, we go to the office and first of all read Pakistani newspapers, to find out if everything is okay in Pakistan. I mean-, even when this Kashmir issue flared up, it's okay we backed out, that made us-, but-, I mean-, I mean-, what happened is political, but it's their-, political intricacies-, and the politicians do these things, they are the big ones [people in control], and everyone—educated or illiterate-, everyone have their own views. But what I mean to say is that our heart beats for Pakistan. We are sitting in America, but--. We don't say we're sitting here, to say what has America done. Okay, we're sitting here, our feelings are like-, our home is lying open-, and is vulnerable

to attack. That's the fact. Because-, getting education there-, in schools there--.

Although we have gone to "jute mat" schools [schools where students sit on jute mats in class], but we are still proud of the education we got—we have not received education in air-conditioned schools. We-, our schools did not even have fans!

AJ: Not even fans--.

AK: We studied in open grounds, under trees. But we are proud--.

AJ: Proud--.

AK: That in those times the teachers were very sincere, I mean, teaching--. I mean, it's because them that we have becomes doctors, and have come to America [as professional].

AJ: Okay.

AK: And-, things about Lahore are unique to Lahore! I miss interacting with my friends. When I miss my friends, I call-, to find how they are. And-, but-, can't forget Lahore, and that's a fact. [laughter]

AJ: Can't forget Lahore. Ahm... And-, where you're living now-, in this apartment complex-, do you have a community here also? Any interaction with neighbors, or--?

AK: With the neighbors-, Mr Jilani, the fact of the matter is that, these people-, the neighborhood we live in-, Old Well, is a community of the labor class. Mostly! And most of them are Mexicans. One problem with these people is that they don't know our language. I mean, they can't speak English.

AJ: And you can't speak Spanish!

AK: We don't speak Spanish. They can speak neither English, nor Urdu. And-, the thing is that when you go out, you can say, "how're you doing", but, I mean-, as a-, () because there is somewhat of a cultural difference, because--. They think of-, drinking [liquor] is common for them, and we don't have that--. I mean, we have some cultural differences with them, because of which-, I mean that--. You can sat that, I mean-, they are very helpful. Even-, I remember when I had to move my furniture, I just knocked on the door of the people next door, they came and helped me move the entire furniture, although I had not asked for all that help. Okay, they did not understand English, but I explained to them with sign language that I needed a little help, and they came and helped. But--.

AJ: Spanish people?

AK: Spanish people. Poor people--. They're good people. I mean, they don't harm us, don't interfere with us. They're busy with their work, and we're busy with ours.

AJ: Okay. Beside them-, beside the Spanish, there are white people, there are African American-, any interaction with them? Have any of them ever invited you, since you live in the neighborhood-, live in the community, on any special occasion, like Christmas, New Year, or Thanksgiving-, have you ever, in seven or eight years--.

AK: At the office-, where I work, in my office, people do ask me to come over, but as a--. At the apartment complex-, I have-, it's been over a year, and nobody has ever invited me.

AJ: One--?

AK: One year, since we've been here. Nobody has invited me here, but at work, people often say that Christmas is here-, I mean-, I-, their-, what's that they have--?
[pause]

AJ: Church--. Christmas tree?

AK: Christmas tree! To come and eat with them-, the way these people celebrate. That-, I have been asked, and once or twice we have joined them, but at the apartment complex, nobody has ever invited us.

AJ: Office people--. Okay. Ahm... [pause] And-, you were also saying that the Pakistani community here is quite--. [phone interruption]

AK: Okay.

AJ: You were saying that the Pakistan community-, there are a lot of professionals in it-, there are physicians, and you know, people hold good jobs. Do you sometimes feel, while interacting with them, that all well-educated people-, professionals, leave Pakistan and come to the west, to Canada, America, and Europe-, and-, do you think that there is a feeling among this community, that they got their education from Pakistan, you know, went through hard times there--. That they have deep feelings for the country, but have left it to come and live here? That the country may need them? There is a lot of hunger, poverty, sickness-, so does this community-, or you personally ever feel that you should do something for the community in Pakistan that you have left behind?

AK: No--. Mr Jilani, there is a strong desire to-, I mean, go and work over there. Even I feel it strongly and want to go and work there, but the thing is that when you go there, and when you see that-, that your hands are tied. I mean, they don't let you work

there. That's the feeling you get, in a way. And-, when that happens-, that-, I mean, this is not a good thing, that you go all the way there, and they don't let you do anything. The matter--. I don't mean to say that they don't let you do anything. The thing is-, like I said before, those that have become professors there-, they don't allow you to come forward.

AJ: Don't let you come forward.

AK: Yes-, but you-, if you take-, you go there, but I would say that if you go there and say that you would like to treat the poor people—I have a strong desire to provide medical treatment to the poor, but-, when you get there--. Over there, you can see that people running these facilities as businesses-, and people have beliefs like, I'll get healed only if I go to such & such person or place. And, I mean-, over there () The other thing is, that—I'm not talking about myself—these people in this community, those that are doctors, are made (). Even though I told you that there are a lot of physicians among the Pakistani community, but there are a lot Pakistani businessmen here also. I mean, you can see over here-, if you go to downtown-, Raleigh, or Cary, there are -, a lot of grocery stores there are owned by Pakistanis. And-, I mean, they're quite happy. I mean, I have seen that a person started with one store and is now running twenty-two stores. I mean, praise God, his business has been running for ten years now. The other thing is that I-, you asked if I feel like going [to Pakistan]—I-, I'm not saying why the others are not going—my own feeling is that even though I'm a qualified physician, I'm working for pharmaceutical company, why don't I go to Pakistan and work as a physician. The first-, the biggest problem-, that I think I will face is, that I think I will not get a job.

AJ: Okay. Plain as that!

AK: Plain as that. The other thing is, that okay-, if you start-, I mean, even if you don't get a job, and start a private practice-, you-, you should have back-up.

AJ: Uh-huh.

AK: I don't think I have the resources to start something like that, and then wait a couple, or even four years, for it to start doing well. I don't think I have the resources [to sustain such a venture]. If I had that kind of resources, I think I would not have come to America at all.

AJ: Exactly! Exactly. Okay. Okay. Now-, er.... let's talk a little about the society-, praise God, you have two daughters, and they are quite young-, and by the Grace of God they'll grow up. When they grow up, they will see this society--.

AK: Right. Right.

AJ: When they move around in this society. You and I, we have grown up in Pakistan--.

AK: Right. Right.

AK: And-, er... our society is very different from this, our culture is different. And-, what will your expectations be—yours and your wife's—what kind of a culture they should adopt, what kind of values should they have-, er.... because you know that this society is very different from Pakistan-- will not comment on whether it's good or bad, that's your personal judgement--. First, tell me what your personal feelings are about this society and culture. How do you--? Is it good for you, or bad? And the second question is, when your daughters grow up, what kind of goals do you have in mind for them-, like how you would like to raise them?

AK: Mr Jilani, where the society is concerned—since you've asked me to comment on the society—one's society depends very largely on one's own faith-, and upon what perspective you judge it from. Whichever society you go to, there's good and bad. But, you have to decide on the direction you yourself wish to take. I mean, if you say that a complete Islamic system is dominant in Pakistan. But, I think, if you-, I don't say that in Pakistan-, but considering things that have happened in Pakistan, I don't think that there is an Islamic system in Pakistan. Because I remember, the number of people that consume liquor on New Year's eve—and end up in hospitals—I think that--. Here in America, where liquor is available openly-, I mean that-, I have never felt like drinking liquor even here. The thing is, it depends on how you understand the society and yourself. My opinion is, considering my point of view, okay-, this society has some traditions that are alien to our culture, but the thing is, that it's quite natural that whenever you go to a new place, you will find things that are good and bad, right? So, it depends upon how you establish yourself over there. And-, as far as my opinion is concerned, when I came in ninety-one-, we had seen such things in movies-, or used to read about them that society is this or that, but once you get here, one thinks what is this--. I mean, liquor is available openly, women are going around in shorts, I mean-, kissing is a commonplace-, I mean, you name it! I mean-, okay, we consider these things as bad, but luckily, I think that our families over here have maintained such an atmosphere in their homes that, praise God, our-, er..... my nieces, my female cousins-, I mean, you look at them, and I mean-, in their homes-, I mean-, I mean-, all the time-, they say prayers five times a day, read from the Quran daily. They go out with a "hijab" [traditional Islamic headgear for females]. Other-, like normal people-, they are good in their studies. Like,

one (female) cousin of mine in Washington—we were just talking about her—she's studying law in Washington University, she wears hijab. [interruption by child] [to child] Okay. Okay. [to AJ] I mean-, I mean-, it depend on how you handle yourself.

AJ: How you handle. Exactly.

AK: Like, I mean-, like-, my daughters-, I mean-, I would definitely want them to follow the teachings of Islam. Islam doesn't forbid you from going to another society. Right. It doesn't say that-. Doesn't say--. Although I think—I don't remember correctly—but God-, I don't know, I've read this, and I'm not sure if what I'm saying is correct-, that when you go into a different society, you have to adopt some traditions from that society. But the thing is, sir-, that I would never say that my daughters go to clubs, and do this or do that-, That-, I don't think I would ever want that-, for that matter, I wouldn't want that for anybody's daughters. This is my opinion, that it depends on what kind of atmosphere you create in your home.

AJ: Uh-huh.

AK: And-, I think that our community-, my cousins' daughters, my brothers' daughters, my sister's children-, I think it's a big enough community, that if they want—I mean, considering the atmosphere they have in their homes—I hope, in the future, that-- may God grant me life—I don't think that they'll do much around Islam. My personal opinion is, that-, I-, believe it, Mr Jilani-, the children that are being raised here, know a lot more about Islam, and their religion than any children in Pakistan.

AJ: They won't know--. Over there--.

AK: Because these-, they are-, I have seen children that go to school, to get education-, they read each and every thing to make it clear in their minds.

AJ: Yes.

AK: When they clear each and everything, then-- Take the example of a cousin of mine-, I have a cousin-, who has-, I mean-, er..... converted and American who was studying in UNC-, the one in Raleigh.

AJ: Uh-huh?

AK: I mean, he must have been impressed with something, that he decided to convert! I mean, raised and born in-, American society, and he turns in Muslims. I mean, the thing is, you-, I mean-, you have to show something in yourself to reflect-. I don't say that you should convert everyone to Islam, or everyone should get Americanized, but-, the thing is-, how-, how you do it.

AJ: Uh-huh. Very good. Ahm.... You mentioned about your parents, that they go to Pakistan for four to six months, and spend the rest of their time here-- So-, their-, how do they manage that, I mean, six months here and six months here? How did they decide on this course?

AK: The thing is-, as far as the decision is concerned-, I mean that-- My elder brother, Abdul Rauf Khalid-, and-, he-, God willed, that-, I mean, he died in ninety five.

AJ: Oh.

AK: And-, he-, I mean-, he was only forty two years old--.

AJ: Oye.....

AK: And-, he--.

AJ: Here-, here--?

AK: No. In Pakistan. And-, he-, I mean-, he had three children. Then, I mean-, then-, we-, I mean-, our-, I-, when I was studying in medical school, I had constructed my

house, in Defence [a Lahore locality]. And then-, we-, decided that those children should stay there. And-, I mean-, our brother is no more, but his children are like our children. In fact, we love them more than our own children.

AJ: Yeah.

AK: And-, then-, mom and dad-, since all of us are here-, and my father is retired, so there is some-, for them there. When they are here, they miss those children, and when they're there, they miss us and our children. Then we decided that okay, they should spend three or four months here, and live there for four or five months-, or spend four or five months here and three or four months there. I mean, they remain occupied. I mean, when a person retires-, what happens in the Pakistani society is that I have grown old now, and I've done all I could. [laughter] Over here, they keep themselves occupied with the children, and have fun. There's all kinds of newspapers on the internet. I mean, for them to pass some time, that they have a happy life.

AJ: Between two families--.

AK: Two families. They shouldn't think that all our children have gone and settled in America and left us alone, so they keep visiting frequently.

AJ: Do you have any personal hobbies, that you pursue?

AK: Personal hobbies-, I think that my-, the main thing right now-, the children take a lot of time. The children are small-, and either we are out of diapers for them most of the time! [laughter] You come from work, and there are so many things to do. Other hobbies are-, the main-, you can say-, that-, one is eager that if you have some time, or if you have a weekend, I would prefer that I go to my family and spend time with them.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean-, even-, whether they're living in Raleigh, or Cary, my preference is that I spend as much time as possible with my children, my brothers and sisters and their children, and our parents-, to spend more time with them.

AJ: Okay. That's good. Ahm.... very good. And-, Now, if some friend who's living in Pakistan, asks you for your advice, now that you have come to America and are well set here-, and asks for your advice, that he also wants to come here. What would you advise your friend? First of all, whether he should come here or not? And if he wants to come, how should he prepare for it? What advice would you give?

AK: A lot of my friends call me, and say-, ask me to call them here-, they're even willing to mop floors here. I ask them if they have a job there, and when they say yes, I ask them how they like it. They invariable say that they find it hard to make ends meet. But I say, as long as you have a job, you're better off there. But if you are jobless in Pakistan, then you should try to come here. Because once one comes to America--. In Pakistan, we have a mental picture of America. We say, we've reached the age of twenty five, and have become a doctor, so we stop studying, saying that we have gained enough education.

AJ: Had enough education!.

AK: Now to find a job! When I first came to America, I thought to myself that I'm twenty six and I have passed all my exams-, I'm twenty eight and have passed all my exams, but I can't find a job. I was very worried that I was twenty eight and still I had no job. I was almost twenty nine, and very soon I was going to be thirty--. I mean, you can say that so much-, now that I compare it with that time, I think that living here, age has nothing to do with it. [laughter] And-, I advise them that look, if you want to come to

America, be aware that in the beginning you face a lot of hard times. You can't come here with the intention that things will be easy for you [quotes a Punjabi idiom "receive pre-cooked meals"]. This never happens. I tell them to believe it that it could take ten-, yes ten years before you can settle down. But, I always advise them that if you want to come to America, come in a legal way. Never come here using illegal means. I don't advise them to come here on a visit visa and overstay.

AJ: Overstay!

AK: They say that we'll come on a visit visa and disappear. I tell them that if you come on a visit visa, you cannot do anything. I mean, you cannot work-, okay, you can stay with me, or stay with some other friends/relatives, and stay here for five years, or say, even eight years, but you can't work. Okay, even-, if you-, some doctor friends of mine asked and I said, you can come and stay with me and do what you like, and even if you pass your exams, you will not get a residence permit, because you'll be on a students visa. So I tell them that if you wish to come, you are most welcome. But, come in a legal way.

AJ: But from there, it's very difficult to get a visa from there.

AK: No. Why not? Usually-, yes--. That-, is a long process that you first pass your exams here, and then apply for residency, then go and obtain the proper visa. But, a lot of times, people come here on the lottery visas-, for immigration.

AJ: Okay.

AK: Among them, two of my friends have come here.

AJ: On lottery visas?

AK: Yes, lottery visas. They get immigration. In fact, one friend of mine came, he's in Louisiana, and another friend of mine is living in New Jersey.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean, if they come in the legal way, it's all right. They got their green card, and everything is straightened out. So, I mean, that okay. I advise them that America is a good place. Because-, one big thing is that-, I still remember when I used to go to pay the utility bill, it used to take me a couple of hours to deposit the money for my bill.

AJ: In Pakistan?

AK: In Pakistan. Now over here, all you do is write a check and it's done. And since I've come here, my wallet is always empty. We don't need to carry cash here. In Pakistan, if you don't have cash, you can't go anywhere. These are some differences, and I tell them that there are a lot of advantages, but you have to work really hard. You can't say that--. I-, I leave the house at seven and get back home at seven. It's almost a twelve-hour job. Work never finishes. It's not that you don't want to work. There's a lot of work. In Pakistan, when we go looking for a job, you know in advance that you will not find the person you want to see at his desk. [laughter] And I tell them that you are holding public service jobs which you don't attend, and have private sector jobs also. You people have your fingers in two pies--. You can forget that you can come to America and work like that.

AJ: Yeah.

AK: You are a qualified doctor, that's okay, but if you come on a visit visa, just look around and go back. But if you say that you will come on a visit visa and overstay, you are aiming at spoiling your life.

AJ: That's not a good thing!

AK: I tell them that whenever you come--. Because when you come here, you realize the importance of doing whatever you want to do, legally. When you come here, you will find out that if you don't become a part of the system, you will remain outside the system.

AJ: Exactly.

AK: In Pakistan, it's--. Those friends don't know what a system is. We come here and realize what a system is. We advise them that the system-, even when you're driving a car and speeding--.

AJ: You get a ticket.

AK: You get a ticket. In Pakistan, if that happens, you know that you can get away by giving a five-rupee bribe to the policeman. Right? I mean, that's what our mentality is. But over here, you can't do that.

AJ: Can't do that here.

AK: And that's what I tell them-, that they don't have a comparison of the two lives. And when you do compare, I've arrived at the conclusion that whatever you want to do here, do it legally. If you want to come to America-, I would say that the whole world wants to come here, they can!

AJ: Yes. Exactly.

AK: But you-, you have studied for twenty five, thirty years. You have good jobs. The first thing is that when you come using illegal means, you cannot see your family again. I mean, you lose your parents, brothers, sisters.

AJ: Yeah. Exactly.

AK: I mean, this-, this is a very big sacrifice. You don't realize it there, but-, when I was studying here, and in a way my sisters and brothers were also here, but it was difficult for me to spend a weekend, thinking where I should go.

AJ: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

AK: And-, people don't realize how big a thing separation with loved ones is. When you come abroad, think well about it. Separation is a big thing, and it's a very difficult thing. And you should--.

AJ: Think about it.

AK: Think about it.

AJ: Tell me, you faced a lot of hardships when you came here. What kind of hardships did you face? One is separation, as you explained--.

AK: One is the separation. The biggest hardship for me was, that despite being a physician, I had to study here again. I mean that-, I couldn't go to a school here, because I had studied under a different system. In the library-, just imagine-, that ten hours to twelve hours I had to study, and privately-, on my own initiative. I would appear for examinations and was not able to pass them. That became a hardship, and I became very tense, wondering where I should go, and what I should go. At times, I even considered leaving everything and going away. I used to feel like going away to-, where my family wouldn't see me. And-, the other big hardship was that I missed my friends a lot.

AJ: Okay. Uh-huh.

AK: You miss friends a lot. Friends are friends.

AJ: Friends are friends.

AK: And I would miss them a lot. I used think how we used to go around on our motorbikes, how we used to go out to eat "nihari" [a spicy Pakistani dish], and how-, at times we'd go out to eat "haleem" [another Pakistani dish]. I mean-, we'd be just sitting around, and would just on an idea, to go and eat something. I remember that-, another big thing is that over there, the sound of "azaan" [the Muslim call for prayers].

AJ: Yes.

AK: I don't hear the sound of azaan here. I miss that a lot!

AJ: I too remember from Lahore, the sound of azaan.

AK: I miss that a lot! It's so silent, you look at the watch and pray when it's time for prayers. I mean, there's no fun in it.

AJ: No fun in it.

AK: And-, especially when it's "Ramzan" [the Muslim month of fasting (lent)]. I miss Ramzan a lot, too. We cannot make arrangements for Ramzan here like we used to over there. Over there, it's a whole atmosphere that's created during Ramza. And-, I miss "Basant" [spring festival—celebrated by flying kites in Pakistan] a lot.

AJ: Miss basant a lot! Okay.

AK: Basant-, I actually don't feel very much like flying kites, because my late elder brother was very fond of kite flying. Now that he's no more, I don't feel like flying kites any more. But-, one does feel--. I miss cricket a lot. But anyway, things go on! I miss the dust and the dirt, too. [laughter] I miss the smoke [pollution]. And-, I miss the

horns! I mean, in Pakistan you cannot drive a car or a motorbike without the horn.

[laughter] And over here, we hardly hear a horn. And also, especially, I miss riding the rickshaws-, the bumpy rides! [laughter] I miss the roads filled with potholes.

AJ: [still laughing] Okay.

AK: No, no. I don't mean to joke about these things. I *do* miss them.

AJ: Do miss them. You're right.

MRS. KHALID: Load-shedding [power outages in Pakistan at peak hours].

AK: Load shedding. I mean-, part-, part of the life, I mean-, that one misses. You imagine that these things will happen.

AJ: That's true. That is true.

AK: And you would accept there that once in a while you will get involved in a brawl with someone. I mean-, ().

AJ: That's true. I recall the vegetable and fruit vendors calling out in the streets.

AK: Exactly! My wife complains every day that we don't get fresh vegetables here. And I tell her where I should those from? And one more big thing, I miss mangoes. We hardly ever eat mangoes here. I mean, the varieties that are available here are those from Mexico, or they are--. But those are not like--. We miss the "Anwar Rathore" and "Chaunsa" [species of mangoes] [laughter] None of those are available here. My wife says she want guavas, but where do I go & get guavas for her from? I mean, these little variations, make you-, I mean--.

AJ: "Jaman" [a fruit]

AK: I mean--. You don't get jamans here.

AJ: "Falsay".

AK: Falsay, and bair! I mean, you can't get those here. I mean-, but--.

Sugarcane juice is not available here. You can get sugarcane in New York, but you can't get sugarcane juice.

AJ: Can't get sugarcane juice.

AK: And among other things, You'd miss nihari from Waris.

AJ: Yeah, nihari.

AK: Used to be in Baansa Bazaar. I mean-, we used to eat "naan haleem". I remember-, I miss (), like, things were lying outside. Even when I had passed my medical degree, I used to sometimes go to (). Eating things there was fun. One knows it's not hygienic food-, there are "tongas" in that area, and their--.

AJ: Dust and dirt--.

AK: But-, I mean-, it was just for the fun of it. You may recall that in "Rang Mahal" [a Lahore old city neighborhood], there was an old man who used to sell "qulfi" [ice cream]--.

AJ: Okay.

AK: Near the bazaar where they sell spectacles--.

AJ: I was not a frequent visitor to the Rang Mahal area.

AK: Anyway, if you go in the Rang Mahal area-, it's really not in Rang Mahal, but a little before you enter Rang Mahal--.

MRS. Khalid: Near the orphanage.

AK: No. Not near the orphanage. Over there, an old man used to sell ice cream-, "qulfi".

MRS. KHALID: Near the orphanage there were a lot of shops selling qulfi.

AK: No, no. () near "Shah Alami". I can't forget the qulfi [from the old man's shop]. And I can't forget eating "batooray". You can imagine what I'm talking about only if you've eaten "batooray". [laughter]

MRS. KHALID: There was so much fun at the university.

AK: We used to go to the university--.

AJ: Please join us, I would like to ask you some questions.

MRS KHALID: I did my Master's from the Punjab University. I can never forget that time.

AJ: Okay.

[Mrs. Khalid's name is not revealed. She is therefore referred to as MK]

MK: One of my good professors was here for his Ph.D. I don't know where he is now.

AJ: Which language--, which subject did you do your Master's in?

MK: I did it in Education-, second division.

AJ: In Education?

MK: Yes.

AJ: Hunh? My field is also Education.

MK: You are also in Education?

AJ: Yes. I did my Ph.D. here.

MK: Did you Ph.D.?

AJ: Yes, in Education Anthropology.

MK: We used to have a professor named Syed Waqar Ali. Ours was research--.
My basic field was research. My thesis was research--.

AJ: What--? What was the topic of your thesis?

MK: Mine was in computer--. I don't even remember. I left all my books in Pakistan. But it was computers and math, because I did my BS in double math. We made a disk on the computer and we demonstrated how we can teach math to children through computers. It's not so common in Pakistan yet. They used to teach games. So, we did it on matrices. Development of a disk-, or something. I completely forgot the topic.

AK: She remembers children! [laughter]

AJ: So, when did you come to America.

MK: I came here one year ago.

AK: If you ask about (), she'll remember it better. [laughter]

MK: I've been here one and a half year.

AJ: Shall we talk in Urdu, or Punjabi?

MK: I can't speak much Punjabi.

AJ: Can't speak Punjabi? No problem, we'll talk in Urdu.

AK: Ask her about the separation issue, she'll tell you!

AJ: What were your first impressions when you came here?

MK: I was-, nothing impressed me much over here. When I came here, he used to tell me the roads are very good here, and I said we also have very good roads there now. I went and saw in Islamabad, and the motorway. I was not impressed by any roads here. We also have "same-to-same" [very similar] roads there also, and all these things are there also.

AJ: Motorway?

MK: Exactly. There is no difference in that and the roads here. If you talk about speed limits, it's forty, or eighty five. Even though most roads there are not meant for high speeds, but our motorway can be compared with any road here. If you compare, it's [motorway] as good. And about the stores, etc., here. We have those also over there now. The same things are available there also. If you can get frozen meat in packets here, you can get exactly the same in Liberty market [Lahore] also. The packing is just like it is here, and even the prices are about the same level as here. But they do seem expensive when you buy there, because you are spending in rupees there, and in dollars here. So, because of these things, nothing in America has impressed me. Yes--. I am impressed by one thing here. The education level is much better than Pakistan. They [American] are far ahead of us [Pakistan] in computers and education.

AJ: Okay.

MK: I must acknowledge that. Their systems are very good. They do everything "to-the-point" [systematically], while working in offices, etc. You know, the way things are over there [in Pakistan], the clerks that are sitting there, they don't let you get anything done. Those people are like dirt, and Pakistan should be wiped clean of them. And-, in addition-, the system is good there-, especially our professors in the university--. Those of our professors who have acquired their qualifications from here [United States]-, their teaching methods are good, and there is no difference between them and the Americans. Our education system--. Our department [in the Punjab University] was started by Americans in [nineteen] sixty-five. From sixty five to seventy they had their teacher--. Our department is still affiliated with the Indiana University. Indiana sent their own staff to teach there. So, those who studied there in those days, have maintained

the same standards [of the Indiana staff]. I have seen here-, one of my cousins here, who is studying here-, I have coached her in maths. She often comments that my teaching method is better than the American professors here. Because we Pakistanis are much ahead in Mathematics. If we make a little effort, our nation can make very good progress. We can do a lot. All we need to do is to do things systematically. When I make a comparison, I feel that we are ahead in Maths-, Physics and Maths are our two good subjects. Other than that, I am not at all--. If someone tells me America is this and that-, I ask them is this the America that everyone talks about? Oh my God, if you ask anyone on the roadside--.

(END OF TAPE 10/1, SIDE A)

(START OF TAPE 10/1, SIDE B)

MK: But I have a little bit--. We used to ask our professors who taught us what America is like. And our teacher that used to teach us-, the one whose name I mentioned earlier, Syed Waqar Ali, () I think he used to live six months over [US], and six months over there. I think he couldn't get long term leave from the Punjab University-, I don't know why-, but this is how he used to teach us. So, we used to ask him, sir, what do you-, and he would say that earning money there [in the US] is not very difficult. You know that if you make a thousand dollars here, and sent two hundred of them back to Pakistan, it was more than enough for the family to live on

AJ: Yes.

MK: The price of dollar here [in Pakistan] is very high.

AJ: Very high.

MK: So, these are the things that--. And yes! One more thing that I'm impressed with the American system is that if you're living here with your family, and you are studying and making do with odd jobs, one day soon you will get somewhere. This system we don't have in Pakistan. One more thing that I like very much about America is that students are able to support themselves through their studies. In Pakistan, we-, our parents do things for us all their lives, paying fees for us, etc. They have not developed any system in Pakistan under which kids can work and study at the same time. This would be a very good system, if it can be developed there. This should be started over there. These are the one or two things that-, that I have seen and think that they're good, and we should have them in Pakistan.

AJ: You are from Islamabad, or Lahore?

MK: No, I am from Lahore.

AJ: From Lahore. Do you miss Lahore?

MK: Yes, I certainly do. I miss "Ichhra" [a Lahore neighborhood]. [laughter]

Women, as you know, are most interested in shopping, and I miss the cart vendors of Ichhra, and the vegetable vendors. Nobody comes here in the street to call out the rates of potatoes and spinach.

AK: You should go and live in New York. You'll find everything there.

AJ: In New York?

MK: Maybe. I keep asking about it.

AK: Yes. Every thing is there. There's a complete Pakistani market there.

Those same things; the sweet meats, vegetables, fruits, etc.-,

MK: But I really miss those things.

AJ: "Karela's" [a vegetable native to the Indo-Pak subcontinent].

MK: Yes, karela's. I miss karelas very much. I miss the vegetables--. And also "teenda's". those are not available here. And-, you can get pumpkins here, but not teenda's.

AJ: There's a market on Saturdays, do you know about that?

MK: Flea market?

AJ: No, vegetable market.

MK: Vegetable market, okay.

AJ: In Carboro.

AK: Is that right?

AJ: Yes. You should go there. Every Saturday from eight in the morning till about twelve noon. You can get fresh vegetables. I once got karelas from there.

AJ: There's a farmer--. They're small farmers.

MK: Okay.

AK: They grow [vegetables] in their homes.

AJ: They have small fields. () Fresh vegetables-, you can get fresh vegetables there. I have bought karela's, etc., from there.

MK: Okay.

AJ: It's near the town hall--.

MK: I'm trying to recall the name of one of my professors. I usually forget his name!

[child talks in the background]

AK: [to child] Okay, I'll get for you.

MK: He was a very intelligent teacher. Very intelligent. He had done his Ph.D. from here.

AJ: Pakistani teacher?

MK: Pakistani. His name--. He examined my thesis. He-, us-, computers--. He-, that teacher of ours, used told me that he had worked with the blind. And he used to tell us that his teachers blind-folded them to experience first-hand how a blind person manages--. To experience the feelings of a blind person. How they touch things to make out the shapes-, you feel that--. So, he did his Ph.D. on that subject. I have told you these two things. Their method of teaching-, the way they teach-, in this way-, they start

something and *finish* it. That is great. That is great. I wish our education system also improves like that, and we become systematic. Then we will not be behind anyone.

AJ: What are your plans? What are your plans for the future?

MK: I have many plans! So far, we have two kids. [laughter]

AK: Ask her how she misses her family.

AJ: Yes, family--.

MK: Yes. I miss them. Especially, I miss my mother and father, and my sisters and brothers, and the friends I had. Actually, I had only one good friend. We did our M.A. [Masters] together, we did our thesis together. I miss her a lot.

AJ: She is in Pakistan?

MK: Yes. I get letters from them.

AJ: What do you do when you miss them?

MK: I miss them a lot. I miss them a lot. Especially--.

AJ: Do you call them?

MK: I call them, I write to them.

AK: Then she fights with me! [laughter]

MK: Yes, that I want to go to Pakistan.

AJ: Okay. Do you want to go to Pakistan?

MK: Very badly! I had a (), who died. I think of her every day. I have learnt a lot from her.

AJ: Okay.

MK: I've learnt a lot in life from her. My family is such that-, some people are-, everyone has a different-, but in our family, elders are given a lot of respect. A lot of

respect. Like, a person who holds your hand and leads you -, that was the kind of role she played in the family. She died less than a month ago.

AJ: Oh! Very sad.

MK: I miss her a lot. She is the one who taught me and my mother the translation of the Holy Quran—word by word—which is uncommon in our community, in our society in Pakistan. Almost all the children in our family has been taught by her.

AJ: Okay.

MK: Like-, all my mother's brothers that live here-, she has taught the Holy Quran to all of them, with translation. Word by word--. Then she taught us sisters—we are three sisters. And-, she taught my mother. In my family () [child causes interruption]. We give a lot of importance to our religion-, like, what our origin is. My [female] cousins that are here, are all going to the university, and all of them read the translation [of the Holy Quran]. Thank God that we have--. That we have to teach our children. This Etna-, what's that--? Etna! I mean, all go there. Go there every year. And it's not recent, we have been going there for many years. My uncle is a member there, and his daughters go there. () [child continues interruption]-. My children did this, did that. And-, it surprises me a lot that all these thick books--. Children nowadays are not interested in religion much. In our family we have a lot, and we do--. So, this is it. And I must name another person here--. My father has two sisters, one elder and one younger. They are like grandmother to me-, they-, in Kot Addu-, you might have heard the name of the place-, it's a small locality of District Muzaffargarh [in Pakistan]--. She has taught the Holy Quran to three generations-, at least-, there.

AJ: Wow!

MK: And the boys from there—they used to come to Punjab for studies—would proudly say that she was their teacher. My mother's sister also teaches—she conducts “hifz” [learning of the Holy Quran by heart] with children—it surprised me that when I asked her-, since she's from Kot Addu also-, about my father's sister, she said, who doesn't know her, all of us are her students. Then I asked her about some student of hers who is now studying in Punjab University in the Zoology department, and she said, yes-, she's a student of mine. So, this is how our family is.

AJ: Uh-huh.

MK: And-, when my uncle came here twenty eight years ago-, gradually the whole family began immigrating here-, obviously--. The whole family may be here, but our roots are there [in Pakistan].

AJ: So, where do you think your roots will be twenty years from now.

MK: I don't know that. [laughter] What the roots will be-, because one cannot say much about the future. The atmosphere here is very depressing.

AJ: Depressing? How?

MK: Certainly. You can see that there is not so much of Islam here in America. Every day you hear some [disturbing] news about things that are happening in schools, etc. So, one is a little scared. But when I look at my family, it's a big consolation that our generation that was born and raised here, have held on very well to the religion.

AJ: Held on to their religion?

MK: Yes. All of them-, boys and girls included. At this time, we are an example in the whole Pakistani community.

AJ: Okay. Praise God.

AK: Even-, () I mean-, even-, Mr Jilani, I mean-, even now that we try to speak to the children in Urdu or Punjabi, so that they don't forget our language. Because, we don't emphasize on them learning English, because they'll learn that anyway.

AJ: They will learn English anyway.

AK: We place emphasis on the effort to keep them from forgetting our language. We make sure we tell them about fourteenth of August [Pakistan's independence Day], the community organizes functions on fourteenth of August, so that they know the importance of that day. Similarly, we celebrate Eid. They get to take day off for Eid. And for Ramzan, our kids here are more enthusiastic about it than those in Pakistan. I mean-, even-, my six year-old niece-, even she observes fast on two or three days. I mean, the thing is, what you teach them and how you teach them from the beginning.

MK: In fact, since the beginning, our older nieces that are studying in the university, they observe fasts other than during the month of Ramzan, too. Although they're going to the university, but I mean, saying the "nafals" [Islamic prayers], performing the "tasbeeh" [Islamic equivalent of rosary]-, the girls realize that they must do these things. They go to the mosque, and pray there. All my cousins are of the same age, and I mean, they go and sit in the mosque together. With their other cousins--. Rabia, my uncle's daughter, has in fact, established a small Islamic association, and all girls join in-, I mean-, telling other girls in the university about our religion--. And-, learning themselves about the religion together. I mean-, that's the way it is done. My

uncle's son, Hassan, and his [husband's] nephew, Omar-, they do a lot, and they at times embarrass us elders in the family that they're doing so much.

AK: Even-, even-, my nephew, Omar Baloch—he's turning twenty, twenty-one—I mean, he is against us buying property, because we have to pay interest [paying and receiving interest is considered a sin in Islam]. He says that we should prefer to live in rented apartments [to avoid paying interest or earning income from interest].

MK: Imam [Muslim equivalent of pastor] says the same.

AK: Imam says the same. He says, interest--. We will not receive interest. We should neither pay or interest.

MK: I will say one more thing about the Imam. He's a very good--. And-, he does a lot of research. And-, the things he says about religion surprise me because you would never hear them in Pakistan—I have been a member of the Jamiat [left-wing Islamic party in Pakistan]--.

AJ: Okay.

MK: He would talk about things after a lot of research. Imam said a few things which are very--. Like, Imam told us that-, his [husband's] elder sister-, my sister-in-law-, she's my aunt also. She told me that Imam has said that when ladies change their names after marriage, taking up their husbands' names, has been forbidden by Islam. Because, basically-, even after we get married, our () with the father. We cannot change our names, because our heritage comes from our father. I had heard this many years ago in the Jamiat. And I told her that I have heard this also, and she told me that Imam had backed up this statement with a lot of references. And I agreed with her. This

man [Imam] is a great person, and the way he leads the Raleigh community by the hand is really commendable. It is really praiseworthy, and I sometimes feel--.

AK: No, even--. She's right. All the children, always quote the Imam, that he told us.

MK: And they go and consult him.

AK: That's a very good thing. That's what I was telling you--.

MK: () [both speak at the same time]

AK: That's what I told you. It's a matter of knowledge. I mean, how you expand your horizons, you have a curiosity to have your questions answered. And-, to get their answers, they go to the authentic person. And the authentic person is--.

MK: The Imam.

AK: The Imam. The Imam--.

MK: The child will not go to his parents to ask for an answer to their questions. They all go to the Imam. Like it is over here-, like, when girls and boys grow up and they want to find a partner for themselves, they go to the Imam even for such things.

AJ: Okay. Uh-huh.

MK: And he says you should ask your parents about it, if you like a particular girl. Now, over here--. Go on dates, etc., doing this and that. But the Imam--. We don't consult our parents on such things--.

AK: No. Absolutely correct. Absolutely correct. Even--. There are one or two families here--. They consulted the parents, and they got married. It happened just like this.

MK: They said--. Our--. Recently there was a marriage here. The boy-, he didn't even know the girl's name, he just liked her. He talked to his mother, and he told her the area she [the girl] lived in, and said that he knew only her first name, but not her last name. So, the mother went herself to see the girl-, the families were total strangers-, they met, she saw the girl, and now the couple are married and the girl is here.

AK: Like this-, I don't know-, there's one-, once a year there's a gathering in Washington-, the Muslims, all Arabs, all over the United States--.

MK: It's not held in Washington. They gather in the city where Saleha Apa lives.

AK: Okay. I'm not sure, whether it's done in Washington, or--.

AJ: In Maryland?

MK: No, no. In one the states north of Indiana.

AJ: North of Indiana-, Illinois? Chicago?

MK: I don't remember.

MK: Chicago--. Somewhere near Chicago.

AK: Anyway. It happens once a year and I mean, all Muslim communities from all over America, Arabs, Pakistanis, Indians, they gather over there. Alamost-, it's like a-

AJ: Convention.

MK: Convention.

AK: There are different speeches, different--. Over there, all the Muslim communities come and see--. It's a way-, you can find out how Islam is doing in this

country. How they are living as communities. And when all these communities get together, a lot of marriages are arranged.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean-, it's a-, it's a-, good way to do it.

AJ: Good way to do it.

AK: I mean-, if you see-, go on dates, etc.--. Living together for ten years before getting married, I mean-, we don't have that in us, and it's not among our children also.

AJ: Exactly.

MK: I mean, instead of the children going astray-, the Imam is leading the children by the hand. He guides the children in everything. Like my aunt Amna, who came here a few years ago-, she comes from Kot Addu. She was very surprised to see how things are over here. We people-, it's like in Pakistan, especially, these things are not liked among us. Our young generation has a problem of (). Parents never keep their children with them, if you notice. What you call that-, that-, er.....

AJ: generation gap?

MK: Generation gap! Exactly.

AJ: Communication gap.

MK: Call it communication gap, or generation gap-, both are the same here. But, the way the Imam has done it here-, the atmosphere of openness-, he conducts classes for children. There are separate classes for ladies, separate for children-, I'll call them children, because they're all younger than me—I am the oldest among my cousins here--. My mother was the eldest also, and all the children of my uncles are younger. So-, they have a separate class. Boys have separate classes. So, that's it. And-, there are so many

Pakistani and Indian families. It's very good. My aunt says that we should not consider all of America, all places have different atmospheres, but I have seen a very different atmosphere here. Very different. All the boys that are the same ages as my uncle's sons, they are all very fond of the Imam-, and with him--. They are all like his sons--. And the Imam--.

AK: I mean-, their-, even-. The young ()--. I'm not saying just the family, I mean, all their friends, I mean-, you can say it's Friday night, or something-, but it doesn't matter to them if it's Friday night. What they do on Friday night-, they go for Isha [evening] prayers together, and sometimes just play basketball. They may come home at ten or eleven in the night, but the parents are not worried, because the parents know that the boys either in the mosque, or with friends that the parents are satisfied with, that the boys are in the wrong society or something. Never.

MK: And my aunt even says-- and this is not a lie—that all our boys in our families stay at home. Their-, their-, and my aunt says that-, they have raised their boys like girls. The daughters are supposed to spend their time at home, and the sons do the same. That's our system-, we had the same system in Pakistan also. In this respect, we had the same in Pakistan, and they have continued it here. And for all this, I will say this, that it's because my aunt was like that. She used to say to my grandfather that-, I don't know if he [the husband] has mentioned or not—Dr. Baloch—was the Qaid-e-Azam's physician [Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan]-, he has treated Qaid-e-Azam many times. And-, he has taught in the K.E. [King Edward's College of Medicine], and he has taught in FG [Federal Government College], and like, he has taught in Nishtar [Nishtar Medical College] also. So, basically, he was like this. But he died, so his elder

sister-, all the families that are here-, have been raised in her hands. All of them are trained by her.

AJ: Very good. One question I would like to ask you. You had mentioned about the language-, that you will teach Urdu and Punjabi to the children-, what do both of you think-, that, er.... What would you wish your children to learn first, Punjabi or Urdu?

MK: Punjabi is not our mother-tongue. We are basically from-, Saraiki [language spoken in Southern Punjab] is our language. We are--.

AK: Both are Saraiki speaking.

AJ: Both are Saraiki speaking?

MK: We are from the Saraiki belt. But as you know, Islam teaches us that it is not good that we go forward with our--. Er.... Go according to our country. Now Omar-, I'll talk about Omar-, that-, although we say, "hub-ul-watani min-al Iman" [Arabic]-, we learnt that-, my-, when I was taking Arabic language. My-, when I was taking Arabic lessons, I read that "the love of your country comes with your faith". But-, we-, now see what Islam say, "Al-mulk mulke-maat, mulk-e-khuda-e-maat" [Arabic], meaning that "every place that you call yours is God's".

AJ: Exactly.

MK: So-, like-, it's mentioned in Persian. This is what Omar say. Omar says why do you call any place your country, or your-, the whole earth is ours because it belongs to God. Islam-, and-, this-, I mean, like, our two elder boys, Hassan and Omar-, they fight about this matter. We discuss this a lot. The other day I had a discussion with Hassan, and he wanted to know why I sat that, because our Imam has also said that every thing is ours, because it belongs to our God. That's Islam's basic thinking. But, I was

telling you that these children-, who are growing up here-, how they are following the correct path. They follow [teachings] as they really should. They can also say that we are from Pakistan, so Pakistan is ours, but they also say that we are from Islam, and Islam is ours.

AK: No. I am interrupting her. In fact-, even that-, my cousin, Hassan Baloch, he is a graduate from here-, he was born and raised here, but I think nobody knows Arabic, and also the Holy Quran and our religion better than him. And even-, he did his internship in Duke. He saved some money from there, and went for Haj [holy pilgrimage to Mecca].

AJ: Wow!

AK: After performing the Haj, he went to learn Arabic. He has now gone to Syria to learn Arabic.

MK: He's there now. Hasn't come back.

AJ: Syria?

AK: Syria. Syria. He'll learn Arabic for three months, and hell do that and then go to medical school. I mean-, the thing is-, how you mould the child's thinking. I mean, he saved money, and when asked what he'll do with it, he said, "I'll perform Haj". His parents didn't give him a single penny for it. He went to learn Arabic--. I mean, the thing is, why you--. If you say that--. We can also say that our cousin has gone to watch a concert, but-, I mean that-, you name it. The fact of the matter is how you are utilizing your time, you-, what I mean to say is that you're living in a society--.

MK: What of atmosphere you create in your home. It's up to us to create that.

AK: That's what I'm saying-, it begins from your home, what kind atmosphere you have in your home. That's the atmosphere we have grown up in, and we will want our children to be raised in the same atmosphere.

AJ: Okay. Okay. Any-, Pakistan songs-, poetry?

MK: Our family. Yes, my father is a poet. But--.

AK: Her father is a famous poet.

AJ: So, let's hear some of his--.

MK: I don't remember any of it. But my father's--. My father even got a prize from England. He got a prize.

AJ: Does he write in Urdu?

MK: He writes in Urdu.

AJ: Not in Saraiki?

MK: No. Maybe one or two, but I don't think so. He basically writes in Urdu. Many books--. The book my father wrote on Iqbal and Zafar Ali Khan-, for that he got a prize in England-, Nobel-, or whatever they call it.

AK: Pakistani singers-, Pakistani songs-, I mean-, the cassettes are Pakistani-, Urdu or Punjabi-, I mean, even they are Saraiki. But the thing is that even the songs my daughter sings are the "qawwalis" [mystic songs] of Nusrat Fateh Ali. She always wants to hear that.

MK: She thinks of it as dance music. The "Allah, Allah" cassette, she calls it.

AK: She calls it "dancey". Allah, Allah--.

MK: Or the () one--.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean-, I mean-, you--.

AJ: I have that too.

MK: You have it? ()

AK: Yeah. Me-, I-, I basically like Nusrat Fateh Ali, his old numbers. But even those-, I mean, he did not have a very long life. But, I mean-, it's your own choice-, all singers represent-, but over there-, one doesn't really appreciate when you're in Pakistan, but when you come here, you want cassettes of all singers--.

AJ: Abida Parveen.

AK: Abida Parveen. I mean--.

MK: ().

AJ: Your favorite, too?

AK: I mean, you do miss them. I mean, she's not fond of--. My wife is not very fond of it. The thing is, frankly-, the fact of the matter is-, in Pakistan there weren't too many cars-, and neither you drove so much-, to listen to songs. The other thing is-, even here we don't sit in front of the TV to listen to songs, which we didn't do in Pakistan either. And-, over here, you drive a lot, and when you drive a lot, you play cassettes. And when you play cassettes, you play the Pakistani ones. Whenever I'm driving, I tune in to NBR 91.5, the news channel. I always hear that, and have never heard anything else. And when my daughter is in the car, she plays the Nusrat Fateh Ali cassette. No other music. The other main thing I miss from Pakistan--. What was I going to say? I forgot.

MK: Dramas?

AK: We miss the dramas from Pakistan [Television]. I mean-, I mean-, there we used to sit around-, over there, I mean-, even-, over here you have many important things, you never see them, but in Pakistan there was an atmosphere-, like eight o'clock is the time for a drama [on TV]-- [laughter]

MK: Yes. That's a big luxury there.

AK: A lot--. In Pakistan-, In Pakistan also, we have never sat and watched movies, and e don't watch them here also. Even-, we have this TV here, but I don't think I've ever sat here and watched any program. My daughter watches it-, and she also watches only channel four--.

AJ: Okay. Okay.

AK: From the University of Chapel Hill. I mean, whatever she has learnt, she has learnt from there.

AJ: Huh?

MK: In fact, she didn't know anything, but even now if you ask her, she'll tell you each word-, that this is 'a', this is a 'c', this is a 't'. All this she has learnt from channel four.

AK: It's a learning, I mean--.

MK: Now she can say sentences.

AK: Even-, she wants to watch learning things. She doesn't like watching cartoons. She never watches cartoons. Only when-, like-, Barney is teaching something, or--.

MK: She like Sesame Street a lot.

AK: Sesame Street-, teaching. The thing is, how you-, learning, I mean-, it's the same thing again, what atmosphere you raise the child in.

AJ: Yeah. Exactly.

AK: If I start playing disco songs here, or-, start programs like that-, the child will naturally start watching those.

AJ: Exactly. Uh-huh.

MK: Our--. In fact, I'll say about my uncle-, my uncle that came here before (), and because of whom the family has come here. He's the first one to come here, in nineteen seventy one. My uncle's daughters used to tell us when they came to Pakistan that my uncle said-, my uncle's wife used to say that! She said that my uncle used to ask her to check what the kids are watching. She said that she even had to check cartoons-, I mean, what kind of cartoons the children watched. If they were reading a book, he used to ask her first see what's written in the book. I mean, they were not allowed to read any books. Whatever was brought into the house, was thoroughly checked to see what the children-, what's coming into the house. So, that's the way the atmosphere in their home was created, and it had its effect on the generation. And she-, she says that our children know our religion better than us. We struggled for them, we checked everything they did, and today the results are there. This is it.

AJ: Uh-huh. very good.

MK: So, there's a little hope that the next generation-, in fact, the third generation that will come here--.

AK: In fact, it has started arriving. [laughter]

MK: () My mother used to say that the plants that are sown by good people, grow very well. Those that are sowing the plants are very good, but we don't know how the plants will come out. And the truth is that in the whole community, our generation that grew up here is appreciated. There's no doubt about that. In fact, I ask about that, and my aunt says that the Baloches are very well respected here. If you ask anyone about a Baloch, and they'll tell you where they live-, and all those who come here-, she said when she came here, I asked them, and she was told about the Baloches-, their last name is Baloch, and this is their number. And she says that the first word he heard when she came was Baloch. [laughter]

AK: Well, the thing is-, even-, it starts from your home.

AJ: Yes.

AK: How you want to do it.

AJ: Yeah.

AK: It's the same as having a factory. You can produce things of any quality. If your factory is not good, your production will not be good. Doesn't matter if it's cloudy outside, or whether it's raining. What matters is how your production is progressing. Right? If you venture outside-, even Pakistan is not secure. I mean children-, our main worry is our daughters-, and in Pakistan nowadays, you have a lot of problems.

AJ: Yeah.

AK: In fact, over there, you can't get them married till you have a dowry. Over here, we emphasize a good education, and make sure they are well educated, and-, you leave the rest on God. I mean, if you have given them a good education, and have taught them about religion, and Islam-, the rest is their fate. It not that for us-, if you ask us

today what we have achieved in America, and how much money have we saved-, we say that we don't want to make money, our aim is that our children get a good education. And our reason for coming from Pakistan is that we got our education with a lot of difficulties. And now we have come here with the aim of giving our children a good education. There are universities here-, if you want to get education here, you can. Even-, I mean, that if you can't study in America, then you cannot study anywhere in the world. I mean, the big sacrifice we made in coming here from Pakistan was--. When I came here, I said that I got me education there after going through so many hardships, I don't have a job, and I am so frustrated-, all I had to look forward on a day-to-day basis was what I was going to eat for breakfast, and what I would eat for dinner. We thought that it would be good for our children to get out of this environment, and get some good education. Because, you may know, in Pakistan, most of the schools have been privatized, and the standard of education has deteriorated. In fact, my father is a teacher-, a professor, he is very--. In seventy-five, and seventy-eight, when all this was happening-, when Bhutto [the then Prime Minister of Pakistan] did this--.

AJ: Nationalization.

AK: When he nationalized [educational institutions], things went so bad--. There was a lot of uproar against these steps, but just to achieve the political aims of the party-, all teachers--. And now, there are [private] schools-, in places several on one street, charging as much as five thousand rupees [per month per child]-, in government-run schools there are no teachers, no facilities--. You'll see that twenty years from now-, the generation that will come up-, there will be a huge gap between the highly educated and totally illiterate.

AJ: Illiterate. Uh-huh.

AK: How will you handle that? And we in Pakistan-, how could I think of sending my child to school, when my monthly earning is three thousand rupees?

MK: In Pakistan the education system has deteriorated--.

AK: Totally deteriorated--.

MK: Not that all the schools that have come up are of the same standard--.

AK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

MK: They have started schools in places where there's hardly room [for the children] to sit. They didn't think that-, government-, the government has no check on these things.

AK: And--. No check--.

MK: Government has no check! Let me tell you-, I have studied Education-, we used to say openly that the way we were taught English, one would think that they are afraid that we may learn it!

AK: May learn it!

MK: Believe me, over there the aim seems to be to keep the nation illiterate.

AK: Nation illiterate.

MK: Their preference seems to be to keep the nation illiterate. They have-, where-, computer-, they have opened schools in little sheds. They-, in America, this is so-, I'll say that again-, even if you go for baby-sitting, they require a certain square footage per child. When you go to rent an apartment, you are asked how many children you have. You are told that you have to acquire an apartment that measures a certain square footage. Because they assess your basic needs. You are not animals, that you can

squeeze into a small place. In Pakistan, human beings are treated like animals. At least-, even if ten people are living in a one-bedroom apartment, I would still say it's okay, but schools, where you are educating the next generation that's going to grow up and take the reins of the nation-, if you reduce it to zero, how can our country progress? Their own children—those that are our leaders—are studying abroad.

AJ: Exactly.

MK: Children of every one them is studying abroad, regardless of how expensive it is, but the children of us people---. But these children are destined to remain uneducated and do menial functions. Then how can you say that the country will make any progress?

AJ: And then there are [private] tuitions.

MK: Also tuitions. I was talking about schools. There are many kinds of schools there. One category is those that have opened up in small streets, and the other is our corporation schools-, the government schools, the third are, you can say, of the upper class, those that are located on main roads, etc. Those areas stink-, there's the stink-, the doors-, you can say that they have opened them right next to each other. Because, when we finished our Master's, we-, we were not trained teachers, but we were offered teaching jobs for three to four thousand [rupees] per month. There is nothing-, they are just making money. They have turned it [education] into a business. And then there are schools that offer 'O' levels and 'A' levels [British system of high school and early college education] classes. Or, you can say that-, I'll particularly mention the name of this school called "Crescent"-, and there's another school-, I can't recall the name now-. These schools have come up. These schools are operating in competition-, competing

against other schools of the Pakistani community. This-, this-, and-, above all-, and then there's the American school in Lahore. It has been operating for many years now.

AJ: ().

MK: And in competition to this one, there was another one that started in Faisal Town [a Lahore neighborhood]. Now, you see that there are so many schools, each one has its own system, own tuition rates, their own syllabuses, and the government has no check on what they are teaching the nation. There is no check them. [child continuously causes interruptions]. If in America, we-, we-, start a private school, even if it's an Islamic school, the government checks what standards you maintain. We will not be allowed to teach below American standards to anyone in the nation. They go and check every aspect of our school, they even test us. Our children cannot go to universities until () [child continues interruption] that the children are doing in their own schools. The government keeps a check to that extent. So, why is this check missing in Pakistan? The reason I say all this is because I have myself studied there and observed all these things, and because of this solitary point, we do not want to go back to Pakistan. You ask anyone who has come from Pakistan, and they'll say that one, the educational system, and the second is the employment system-, if these two systems are straightened out, I don't think any Pakistani would want to live in America;

AK: No. The health system.

MK: There's the health system also, but--.

AJ: You have graduated in Education, why don't you suggest to the Pakistani ministry--.

MK: What suggestions do you expect us to give to the Pakistani ministry? You sometimes study politics. What's happening in politics? Those that cannot even sign their names--. "Now we need an education minister! Give it to him-, get his thumbprint [on documentation] and give him the ministry". What can do we do in such a situation. If you place the ministry of education under a person who cannot even sign his name, what is he going to do for education? You tell me, what recommendation can we give, and what can we do? One person-, you could explain something to an person with some education, but what do you do with an illiterate person? Over there, these other systems are being run-, there's a lot of emphasis on family planning, which we don't need at all. You see in America, they are so worried that they are not having enough children. There's a campaign here that if a husband and wife are dying, they are asked why they are not leaving behind at least two children-, they should leave at least two in replacement. And they are anguished over why Pakistanis are having so many children, so that they can somehow finish the Muslim nations. Which cannot happen!

AJ: So, you think that these organizations get-, from America?

MK: Funding? The money you spend on these things, you should take it from them and spend on education in Pakistan. There are many ways to run a nation. Those that are not sincere to their nation, they-, these people don't realize that if Pakistan is no more, what will be their fate? And these ministers-, and the [political] parties-, in politics--. And if they finish off the Pakistani nation, then they will have nobody to rule over. Don't they think of these things?

AJ: Two years ago, when I was in Pakistan, there was in the newspapers-- in the 'Dawn' and 'Frontier Post'—there was debate going on in the letters to the editor, and otherwise also, that the army should be reduced in size. There is too much money--.

MK: Being spent--.

AJ: What is your opinion about that?

AK: No. I don't think that the army--.

MK: No. No. Regarding the army-, because it is said in the Holy Quran that you should keep your horses prepared-, and-, what is that verse? That is in this context. Our-, Pakistan is the only country that was created in the name of Islam. You read the histories of nations. One is Israel, and the second is Pakistan-, these are the only two countries that--.

AJ: On the basis of religion--.

MK: Were created on the basis of religion.

AJ: Exactly.

MK: That is why I will never say that [child still continuing to interrupt] [speaks to child] Fatima, ()--. [leaves with the child]

AJ: [to AK] Okay, tell us--. Let's talk about Saraiki for a while. Tell me what kind of a language is Saraiki, or-, Saraiki-speaking people--. How is Saraiki different from Punjabi?

AK: Well-, er.... You can say that Punjabi is basically the language spoken in Punjab. And Saraiki-, you- you can say that-, it's from the area of Multan--.

AJ: Bahawalpur?

AK: [speaks in Saraiki] I man, it's the language of these places. But-, I think that-, when you speak Saraiki-, when you say something in saraiki-, it's different from Punjabi in the sense that-, I mean-, the element of love-, I mean gentleness is very evident in it. A conversation [in Saraiki], when you say something-, gives you a sense of gentle familiarity. But if you-, I mean, like-, if you compare greeting, "how are you?" said in Saraiki and Punjabi [demonstrates in both languages]. I mean, it's a little bit different.

AJ: Okay.

AK: I mean, Saraiki-, this language Saraiki-, I like it very much. I don't like it simply for the reason that it's my parents' mother tongue, but-, the thing is, even at home-, with my parents-, [demonstrates the words in saraiki for mother and father] they are basically from Laiyyah [a Southern Punjab district]. They speak saraiki. Even all my cousins converse with each other in Saraiki. So, we also talk to them in the same language.

AJ: Uh-huh.

AK: I mean-, even my brother-in-law here-, he, I mean, loves to talk in saraiki. He always greets us in saraiki. And it-, I mean-, a lot--.

AJ: Feels good.

AK: Feels good! [pause] [MK returns]

MK: I wanted to say to you that-, I must have the name of my professor mentioned in this interview-, the one who taught me a lot. His name is Dr. Abdul Hameed.

AJ: Okay. Dr.--?

MK: Abdul Hameed.

AJ: Abdul Hameed.

MK: He's from the Punjab University. [child still crying and causing disturbance]. He did his doctorate from here.

AK: Okay. God be praised!

MK: From Punjab University--. I'm sorry, from America. So, I would say-, about the army, I would not say that their spending should be reduced, but-, I will say that when they loot the nation, and--.

AJ: For personal gains.

MK: Personal gains. And if you see-, it's quite true. Why don't they-, why don't they follow the traditions set by our-, like in the time of Omar-, Hazrat [Saint] Omar Farooq-, he required the people he made governors, to take five oaths-, that they will not wear clothes from a thick cloth, will not ride a horse, eat whole wheat-, and-, I don't remember the other two--. And-, if people complained against them for breaking any of the oaths, these persons were removed from the governorship. They were sent back to their old lives-, camel grazing and such. The governors were considered to be servants of the people-, because they were there to serve the people. These things have never been reflected in our history-, the things that are going on in Pakistan. If you stick to your history-- and we have a great history-- you must have observed that we have a very strong history. So, why do our people forget all these things? Why do they act like this [the way they are doing now]. Do they happen to think we will make any progressing in this way? With all this corruption? They are sadly mistaken, that we can make any--. Can they make any progress when they forsake the religion? Whenever we stray away from our religion and history, we will always-, we will always be-, we can never make

any progress. Those that ruled the nation in those times always associated themselves with knowledge-, knowledge is our base--. You can see in the Hadees, the the Holy Prophet Mohammad (pace be upon him) said that I have been sent to earth as a teacher. If we make education our base, we can lead all nations-, we Muslims did that before, didn't we? Today America is leading, what do they have? They have education. They have knowledge. If you ask me to compare, it's only education is the field that they are ahead of us, otherwise we have all the qualities they possess. We also have two eyes, two hands, two feet.

AK: We have also conducted a nuclear test! [laughter]

MK: Yes! No, we too ().

AK: Yes. That's right. I mean, our education is lagging way behind.

MK: Way behind.

AK: When you don't have education, how can you make progress?

MK: And we consider them so lowly-, them-, their ministry. We give money--. You look at the budget, it get about one-point-five-zero something, I think. Ministry-, education.

AJ: To the Education!

MK: They don't spend anything on it.

AJ: Education and health get less than ten percent.

MK: Ten percent.

AK: Nine and something percent.

MK: They get very little funding. And by the time it filters down to the schools, all that's left is about point-two-two-two something. A very small portion gets actually spent on the education of our children. Then how can we expect our children to excel?

AJ: And higher education-- [child causing disturbance again]

MK: I will also tell you-, okay-, we-, like-, I told-, I also-, I have also been to a corporation school. Which-, absolutely-, which-, you can say that-, these are of the lowest standards. They only have jute mats [for students to sit on in class]. They have nothing other than the mats-, at times they don't even have buildings. We have taken classes in the sun-, in some schools, we were required to constantly move the mats [to sit in the shade].

AJ: Blackboards, chalks, etc.

MK: Now they don't even give those. But still-, our nation is still crawling ahead, at least! Although-, Yes! My parents were very highly educated. We- brothers & sisters-, whatever we have studied-, my father himself is an associate professor in the Science College, Lahore, and my mother retired as a deputy administrator. And in those times, when girls were given no education, my mother had done her Master's from the Punjab University, in Urdu. With co-education.

AJ: So-, so many difficulties and so many--. It looks like a very negative picture of Pakistan.

MK: It certainly does.

AJ: In education, corruption, and-, you know?

MK: Yes.

AK: So, in your opinion-- both of you--where does hope lie for Pakistan?

MK: Hope is there, because God has said hopelessness is blasphemy!

AJ: Uh-huh.

MK: How can we be without hope? If we lose hope, we will be considered heathens.

AJ: Okay.

AK: No, we have not lost hope at all, Mr. Jilani. The thing is that our country also has very good students, and it's only a matter of properly-, if-, in our country also-, all the educated people-, my personal opinion is that-, if we don't have very good facilities-, and we have reached where we are today, and our students have reached here-, but the thing is that-, if-, because nowadays our students-, they don't get jobs, after getting education, doing their Master's-, they resort to weapons-, and start stealing and things-, it's not that. So, my personal opinion is that if the government does something for them-, which I think is one aim of our prime minister-, and-, I mean-, in the next few years-, I mean-, you know the way planning goes-, but, I mean-, it takes maybe hundred years-, hundred years--. To change whole-, the system-, but the things is-, that you start a system.

AJ: Start it.

AK: It may take a hundred years, but you must make a beginning-, take initiative. And-, I mean-, it's-, over there-, if you go to Pakistan, you get the feeling that there is a lot of disorder there. Everyone has a problem, in the sense that they say we don't have anything. We have nothing. Because-, even when I was living there-, I also-, that's what I was talking to you, that there is a lot of discrimination there. Those that are rich, are very rich, and the poor are very poor. Now, there's one well-educated person—with a

Mater's degree—doesn't have money to buy a bicycle-, and in comparison there's those with no education, they're riding pajero's [a model of Mitsubishi]-, and in Pakistan people buy them on cash. Over here, you get them on credit. Over there, a vehicle like is worth two million [rupees]-, and they have as many as four in a household-, what will you think. You will, in a way, fight [against the system]. This will lead to civil war. And I'm afraid that a civil war will start. Then Pakistan will be nowhere. So, we hope that God helps them, and He puts it into the hearts of the rulers that they do something about our system-, I mean-, they do something about education-, and the discrimination is ended, and people can get jobs easily, and-, I mean-, it shouldn't be that everybody wants to live in Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad [major cities]. I mean-, there are--.

MK: What's wrong with this? Sorry for interrupting. It's the "wadera" [landowners] system comes in the way.

AK: Yes.

MK: They don't allow you to make progress--.

AK: Don't allow you--.

MK: Even now, the two basic things, education and health-, they're not available in rural area. Why? Because those people don't allow it! They are of the opinion that these people are the labor, and if they get some education, then we will be deprived [of the cheap labor]. So, if these people are not starving, they will cease to be under our [waderas'] control. If you see-, there are so many things-, if you look deep down-, there is a lot of this rubbish in Pakistan that needs to be cleaned up. But-, the two basic two things that we're talking about again and again-, one is education—we cannot do anything unless we have education. We can't do anything.

AK: The fact of the matter is-, there was General Zia [former military ruler]-, okay, regardless of what he did with the Peoples party-, but he brought Pakistan to a stage-, that-, which-, we need-, like-, we need one more Qaid-e-Azam, who can straighten out all our systems. That's the truth. We have no leadership. There is no leadership. Until we get a strong leader like Ayatullah Khomeini, we cannot come out of this. We lack in leadership-, and this-, leadership-, that-, they also get scared. The thing is we are scared of ().

MK: No. I do have a complaint in this regard, that-, I am not against any [political] party, whether it the Peoples Party, Jamait-e-Islami, or Muslim League. The reason I'm not against them is-, if you basically read the history behind them. One's uncle is in Peoples Party, another uncle is in the Muslim League, and the grandfather is in The Jamait-e-Islami. Regardless of which party is in power, it's basically the same clan in power that has its people in all parties.

AJ: Yes.

MK: Then-, you tell me, how can we correct our system? How will our country run?

AJ: Yes. That's true.

MK: And-, if you say-, like-, I've talked a few times-, I say that it's that such and such person is bad. Nobody is bad. All of them are sold to the Americans. [laughter]

AK: Anyway--.

MK: I'm telling you the truth.

AK: Nobody is sold in that sense.

NK: All our sold!

AK: Anyway--.

AJ: I have asked your husband also. Do you ever think of going to Pakistan and working there?

MK: Basically--. That's what I told you. That we have a lot of discussions amongst ourselves about going to Pakistan. Since both of us talk to-the-point, and then-, when all things said and done-, the final question that remains is, if we go back, where do we educate our children?

AJ: Yeah.

MK: Because there is hardly an education system there.

AJ: You'll have to start another school on your street.

MK: What-, school in the street? To me-, it is-, our-, er.... Family-, because we are Baloch, we are nomadic people-, I don't know where we migrated from originally-, when we study our history. A lot of-, you can say that about a hundred years ago, a migration to Pakistan-, when it being formed, or it was India, or whatever- was being considered-, even then my grandfather-, like I told you he's been teaching in KE [King Edward's College] and here and there-, he asked if our moral debts to the place they were living in then, had been paid. Where one lives, one pays his moral debts to the people there. He used to say that they are an illiterate nation, you must educate them. And my late aunt-, she started schools in Laiyyah.

AJ: Laiyyah? District--?

MK: District Laiyyah. Yes, exactly. We are from there.

AK: It's a district now.

MK: Now it's a district. Exactly. And over there-, when-, the government was English-, when the English were the rulers-, then-, it was then that she started schools there. First she used to teach adult women, then she started teaching children, and they continued to expand the school. And from Laiyyah, this school-, like, my-, they were two sisters-, who died very recently. And-, one got married and went to Kot Addu. She went and started a school in Kot Addu. And then-, she taught the Holy Quran to three generations there. And now, several generations are still being taught by aunt Amna. And the elder aunt-, she came to Lahore. I told you, my grandfather died-, he was against immigrating, and he said that she should continue to teach the Holy Quran to people where she was living. And-, the two ladies-, my aunts-, they were educated in those times. Believe it, they even knew the English alphabet. Recently, my younger aunt went from here, and she died. She was surprised here. She used to say-, she could read English. Who taught her? One was her younger brother, who is my father-in-law-, his [husband's] father-, they are four brothers and sisters. So, they used to say that our elder brother has even taught us English. Now, just imagine that so- so many years ago--.

(END OF TAPE 10/1, SIDE B)

(START OF TAPE 10/2, SIDE A)

MK: And the topic again comes back to our education system [phone rings continuously]-, if it is corrected, we can () our nation--.

AK: It's not being recorded.

AJ: Okay, please continue.

MK: I will say it again, that if we don't educate our nation, we will be finished. Because nations progress because of education. So, when there is education, and we don't make our nation an advanced nation, all we will have is this same insecurity. We-, if we sow wheat, we will harvest wheat-, and if we sow barley, we will get barley. So, whatever we sow-, if we keep our nation illiterate, then this is what we will get. It's this same picture we will be able to present, regardless of which angle you look at it from. It will be this same picture.

AJ: Yes. Yes. Okay. Thank you very much.

MK: Thanks a lot, Mr. Jilani.

AJ: You talked about a lot of issues. And-, when this interview is transcribed, we will show it to you, and you can read it on paper--.

MK: Okay.

AJ: So, if you have no objection-, will have no objection, then we will keep it in the university library, so that any other researcher wishing to learn about Pakistan, about Pakistan's problems, Pakistan's joys, its sorrows, and things you talked about-, to learn or read them, these will be in the university library, and-, researchers or students can read this and learn from it. So-, once again thank you very much.

MK: Thank you very much also-, you came and the way you interviewed us.

And-, I'm also very grateful that you Pakistan as a topic-, you picked a very good topic.

And-, like, if any American students-, if they see-, or read these-, they will find-, good-, that there is another country in this world that was created for religion-, and what is happening there. They will get good information.

AJ: Okay. Insha-Allah [God willing]. It is my desire-, our desire also-, we hope that people see this-, and read about Pakistan.

MK: Insha-Allah. Pakistan zinda-baad [long live Pakistan].

AJ: Pakistan zinda-baad.

(END OF INTERVIEW)