

Kahaani 5: Atiff's Story – Transcript of all extracts included on slides

Slide 3:

Watch 00.08 – 05.31

(00.08) ...So my dad came here in the late 70s, early 80s. He was brought up in Birmingham. He moved to Birmingham when he was five years old.

My granddad was one of the first, well the first generation Pakistanis who moved to England and moved to Birmingham into the – working into the factories after there was a lot of displacement in the area of Pakistan where ... he was brought up in; he was brought up around the Azad Kashmir region – they were building a dam there, the Mangla Dam*, and when they made that dam, he obviously moved over to Birmingham, and then he brought my father over here.

So, my father was schooled – er – in Birmingham and he moved to Swindon after his schooling, for work basically. So in the late 70s early 80s he moved to Swindon. He didn't know anyone here, so he met a few people at the local mosque who then took him in and that's how he came to settle in Swindon and eventually ended up buying a house here and then my mum came here and we were all born here – my brothers and sisters and myself – including myself.

01.20

It was very er – there were hardly any facilities. I remember my dad used to tell me that when it was a time to fast, the month of Ramadan used to come, they never even used to know that the month of Ramadan was here because there was no calendar. The mosque facilities wasn't great at that stage and slowly, slowly those sort of systems and everybody started to realise when the month of Ramadan was starting etc. etc. so those are the sort of difficulties that people faced – they couldn't do their prayers or they couldn't offer their monthly fast because nobody knew when the month of fast used to start back then. Um, but slowly, slowly, things started to change and you see a lot more people coming into Swindon, a lot more community developing over the time – and that's what formed the community basically.

02.08

And I think if you look at immigration as a whole, you would say I'm third generation, because my grandfather, my father – my dad moved here. But in this town, I would say, in Swindon specifically, second generation because my father was the first generation that moved here and that made me the second generation of – er Pakistani diaspora in the town.

02.35

It was a very different experience I would say to someone who may be growing up in the area say, like Birmingham Small Heath or in Southall. Our schools were very – um – predominantly English people – you could say, in the school. The amount of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indian people were a handful at that stage – er – in the schools that I went to and I went to pretty – er – er – the schools that were most of the Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi diaspora will go to in town like Drove Junior School and what is now called Lawn Manor – er, Churchfields School, that's where I was, where I studied and I think from that, from living in Swindon, going out of town to places like Birmingham, in Small Heath or Broadway, it would be almost like a culture shock because here there was one mosque, one meat shop, no halal food places to eat. You would go to Small Heath, and you'd go to Southall Broadway, and it would be so much choice, so much food, so much hustle and bustle. And here, if you converse in your own language, in Urdu, nobody understood you. And when you used to go there and start conversing, you'd have to be careful, because there was probably hundreds of people, or if not, scores of people who would understand exactly what you were saying. So from that perspective, it was a bit of a culture

shock when you would go into Asian – predominantly Asian areas despite you being – or someone from an English or from a Pakistani background.

04:12

How I integrated into English community – I think it’s mainly through school and also through common shared interest – like I, when I was growing up, I used to love football – I was a big – I am a big Man United supporter, so we used to go on and on about watching Man United play, and watching the games, and also watching – playing football outside etc.. etc and playing cricket - and that’s what brought us together as a community and helped us mix with some of the – er... well, helped us integrate into the community by having a common interest which was predominantly around sport I would say.

04:49

In terms of racism, it was a bit difficult to start with, when you were growing up and going to school etc, you were always conscious about someone making comments on your – er – on your colour, on your skin and stuff, and there were occasions where some people would call you certain unwanted terms, like um – racial slurs at you. But I think, generally speaking, I think living in Swindon, it wasn’t as bad as maybe some people may have faced in other towns and experienced – I think may have experienced further racism. **(05.31)**

Additional information for understanding Atiff’s grandad’s migration context

**The construction of the Mangla Dam in the early 1960s displaced over 100,000 local people in the Mirpur region of Azad Kashmir. Hundreds of villages, farms and homes were submerged. Many families emigrated – some to the UK.*

“Mirpuris started settling in Britain on the 1940s, transferring their workmanship on British merchant navy ships to the industrial needs of the growing British economy. Migration accelerated after construction of the Mangla Dam began in 1961, submerging vast areas of farmland in the Mirpur district.”

Source: <https://jhelum.punjab.gov.pk>

Further info about impact of Mangla Dam <https://kashmirwelfare.org.uk>

Slides 5, 6 & 7: Watch 09.32-14.25 (Slides 6&7 include repeat watching of some extracts)

Slide 5: Watch 09.32-14.25 (Watch whole extract)

(09.32) ... I think around when you were choosing your subjects and stuff for GCSEs and stuff, I think there was a traditional focus on you must study maths and science etc and trying to make sure that you do the right sort of options when you’re choosing your GCSEs.

I think I was really into drama at that stage when I was growing up and it was coming to my time to choose my GCSEs, my parents was like, ‘What you going to do with a drama GCSE? It’s not going to help you in any way, you must study maths and English and science etc.’ And they had that traditional thought that these are the traditional subjects that you must work hard in, but then – er – I chose something else instead of drama, but I do feel that I should have chosen drama and maybe I would’ve got a lot better grades in my GCSEs. **(10.20)**

Balancing – er – culture with your heritage etc, I think one of the/(other?) thing is language. I think across say the third , fourth generation – er – diaspora, it’s very difficult to get that language – like, I’m multilingual, I can speak Urdu, I can speak English; if you speak Punjabi, I’ll understand Punjabi etc.

Whereas, if I'm looking at my children, looking at my daughter, she understands some of the languages that we speak and she understands if you say to her, 'Get up,' in Urdu or whatever, but she'll never ever speak it because as parents (my wife is also someone who's been brought up here) you don't speak it at home for some reason, we don't speak it amongst ourselves, the language. So I think – um – some of the challenges that face for the third, fourth and fifth generation is around losing touch with the language because it's not spoken at home as commonly as it was when we were growing up; like, my dad would tell us off if we spoke in English; he wanted us to speak in our Urdu language, but it was very difficult for him. He couldn't stop us from doing that because we would sit there and watch TV and our conversations would – er – eventually be all in English and that, so it was very difficult for him to fight that battle. **(11.36)**

Slide 7: 11.37-13.17

The religion's a very interesting topic actually because my lived experience of learning about religion, learning about Islam, was going to the Mosque on Monday to Friday – and it was a very sub-continental kind of like learning techniques that were used – er – at that time. You would just go there for two hours – you would probably read a little bit of the Quran to the Imam, which would be probably five or ten minutes, if that. And the rest – an hour and fifty minutes, or an hour and twenty minutes, would be spent just dossing around in the class, messing around and having that banter with the teach... with your friends basically – and everyone that I knew, that I grew up around the Broad Street/Manchester Road area in Swindon, would go to the same mosque, so we would all go to that one mosque and for us it would be like a social almost, going to the mosque. We used to hate the experience of going to the mosque, but in some ways, we used to love it because it was a time to come and spend with your friends and chat with them again after school, you know.

Whereas now, the experience with er, say, my daughter, trying to teach her about Islam, it's a lot different; there's a lot more modern educational techniques being used in terms of bringing them up and teaching about religion etc. etc. especially teaching about food and what's haram**, and what's not haram etc. in terms of what she could eat and stuff. She understands that, but then, growing up and learning the Quran etc, I think you've got teachers who are now British-born, who are now introducing modern education techniques to teach children in a lot more fun and a lot more modern way, you could say. **(13:17)**

Slide 6: 13.18-14.24

As a parent, I believe that it's still very important to teach your children about the religion – about the religion that you follow. Um – I feel that this country allows for religious freedom and for you to express yourself as you may wish to. So, I think that it's very important that you continue to teach your children about religion.

I don't think it makes me less British if I'm a British Muslim or if I'm not British Muslim, you know. So I believe that it's very important because, I think, our parents, when they came into this town, they carved themselves out an identity – they worked with the authorities and the community worked together to build mosques, temples etc they had to fight for their rights and to get those buildings – to get those mosques etc built and I feel that generation needs to learn about those sacrifices our elders made to have those mosques and centres established and we need to teach them about religion which is based in a very British culture. **(14.25)**

** *haram* means what *isn't* allowed for people who follow the Muslim faith; *halal* means what *is* allowed

(contd...)

Slides 9 & 10:

Watch 20.36-22.42

(20.36) Growing up in Swindon, when you used to say have parents' evening and stuff – I mean my dad was brought up here, he was brought up here since he was five-years-old, so his English was very good; but I think it was when – if you had to take your mum to the parents' evening – say your dad wasn't around or your dad was busy or something and he couldn't make it – you'd go there and you had to be, you had to be listening to what the teacher was saying, but at the same time, also acting as an interpreter – while the teacher was saying so, 'Oh, you've not done very well; he doesn't concentrate in class.' And you'd have to bite the bullet and try to translate that to your parents and saying that, 'Oh, the teacher's saying I don't concentrate in class etc' (*laughs*) – so it was quite a difficult one!

Um – but slowly, slowly, I think, like my mother herself – because her – she had her grandchildren, they speak English and I think that she's had to force herself to speak English and I think she just felt – I think it's also a confidence thing as well, amongst our parents, where they didn't feel confident enough to speak because they have a different sort of accent, or they may say something different um – but they can speak quite well, some of them; you'll be surprised how much their English has come since they first came into this town.

In terms of what you share with a future generation, or what you learn about life, um, basically, it's just to – er – do your best and try to mix in with as many people as you can. **(22.03)**

Slide 10: 22.03-22.42

No, don't ever forget your roots and your identity – it's what makes you; and be proud of your roots and your identity, because it's what's your fabric, it's what makes you who you are today – and – don't ever forget your roots, basically!

It's what's so beautiful about living in Britain; there's so many different people, different faiths, different faces, different communities, especially in this town – in Swindon, there's a large swathe of different people living here. They all come here for different purposes working here – and just try your best to mix in and celebrate your life and celebrate your culture as much as you can. **(22.42)**

(End)