

## **Kahaani 4: Jusna's Story – transcript of all extracts included on slides**

### **Slide 4:**

#### **Watch 09.35 – 10.00**

**(09.35)** I find culture fascinating – because culture's always changing. The culture that I was brought up in isn't the culture that I'm bringing up my children in – nor will the culture be (the same) when they have their own children – they'll have their own hybrid culture which is amazing. I love it!

I love the fact that it does change ... and ... foods change it, experiences change culture – people coming in – people going out – all sorts of things – that's the beauty of where we are I think. **(10.00)**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Slide 7:**

#### **Watch 02.29 – 03.28**

**(02.29)** We were the only South Asian family, only family of colour actually, in Yeovil at the time...um and it was ... I think when you're growing up and you don't know any better, that's the norm. For us, that was completely normal – because you're growing up and everybody around you is white and you're the only family. So, it felt very normal. But I think there were instances where you just felt very different as well, growing up in school.

... Growing up, we were not allowed to do everything that other people were allowed to do; whether that was ... you know, going to the cinema or things like that in the younger days. As we got older, I think my parents got a bit more flexible with that ... but it was hard. I think growing up, I felt like I didn't really fit in everywhere/anywhere?

Always feeling like the outsider ... because we had different faith, we had different clothes, we had different foods. **(03.28)**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Slide 8:**

#### **Watch again 02.29 – 03.28**

**(02.29)** We were the only South Asian family, only family of colour actually, in Yeovil at the time...um and it was ... I think when you're growing up and you don't know any better, that's the norm. For us, that was completely normal – because you're growing up and everybody around you is white and you're the only family. So, it felt very normal. But I think there were instances where you just felt very different as well, growing up in school.

... Growing up, we were not allowed to do everything that other people were allowed to do; whether that was ... you know, going to the cinema or things like that in the younger days. As we got older, I think my parents got a bit more flexible with that ... but it was hard. I think growing up, I felt like I didn't really fit in everywhere/anywhere?

Always feeling like the outsider ... because we had different faith, we had different clothes, we had different foods. **(03.28)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Slide 9:**

**Watch 03:30 – 05:00**

**(03:30)** There was racism growing up, there was, no matter how much you say, people, you know, talk about, ‘Well, was there really?’ There was. And I think it’s different now to what it was back then.

“The racism back then was much more vocal – you know? You would hear people calling you the P-word sort of far away. Whereas you wouldn’t hear that so much now. I think now, it’s much more um ... systematic. People say things unconsciously – and they’ll say it in such a way that you can’t often pick up on it. But, back then, it was much more overt. So, I would say that’s probably my memories.

... But, I had good friends growing up, really amazing friends and I think that sort of helped... I actually do remember this one occasion when I was walking home with a friend from school – and someone was walking the opposite way... and this guy just spat at me.

I remember thinking at that time, not, ‘Why is that person spitting at me?’ but, ‘I wonder if my friend saw that?’ And, it was this feeling of embarrassment that somebody else would actually have to see what I kind of went through... the friend that I was walking with didn’t see it ... and it was just this absolute relief.

... I look back at that time and kind of go, ‘Wow – those thoughts and feelings are so different to what I’m thinking and feeling now. **(05:00)**

**05:00:00 – 05:19:00**

... it was just a part of everyday life... so there was this um... amazing friends, but also this society that we were growing up in that often didn’t accept who we were – um, because they didn’t have contact with people from our faith and cultural background.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Slide 10:**

**Watch 10:03 – 11:36**

**(10:03)** I think faith has been a journey for me , so from my early days being a child, you know, the faith was put on to me – as most faiths are for young children – um – There wasn’t a mosque nearby – the nearest mosque was in Bristol. My mum used to teach us on the weekends – you know, important lessons or suras from the Quran, and things like that, but there wasn’t really a deep conversation as to why we believed what we believed...

As time went on and as I grew, so I believed it because I was told to believe it. I think I got to ... probably when I went to university... I went to the University of Bath and it was my first ... first place really where I saw that multiculturalism, that cultural diversity and lots of Muslims.

At that time, I wasn't wearing hijab or anything like that and I just felt I wanted to at that point – and I started seeking knowledge for myself... so I started ordering CDs and books – and really kind of started looking at my faith properly, rather than just believing something my parents told me to believe in... It was much more of a journey of discovery, and I started going, 'Oh, OK, that's interesting!' and that's just grown, I think from there on in... I passionately believe in learning and not people being told what to do, but in finding their own path as well... and um, yeah, I love learning – um – and I think that the more things that I listen to, it's just opened my horizons really! **(11.36)**

**Slide 10:**

**Watch 11.37 – 13.16**

**(11.37)** In terms of kind of mainstream faith, we do have a mosque here in Yeovil, but we never did. So growing up, there was no place to go and worship. On Eid, we – my family – would go to Bristol for the Eid prayers. And then slowly ... there was a church in Yeovil that used to have a room there we used to hire out on a Friday, just to do the Friday prayers ... which was quite interesting that it was a church – and then it was ... it was lovely that ... you know, faith, I guess... we believe in the same god – it was just a different way of worshipping the same god why I found really beautiful... and then slowly, there was a kebab shop in Yeovil and there was a place above the kebab shop that became the mosque – and now, there's a really beautiful mosque, not too far from here – and I think that's what I love about our mosque in Yeovil, that it is so multicultural.

Because I think, when you go into the cities, there can be silos of different cultural groups ... like ... this is the Somali mosque, and this is the Bangladeshi mosque, you know, going over that threshold, but because Yeovil is so small, and because it's so diverse – you've got the hospital with the range of cultures there – um – from consultants to caretakers, to nurses... and you've got the taxi drivers ... all these cultures – Turkish, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, you know, the African cultures have recently come over.

Just that vibrant mix makes me feel like – yeah, this is what Islam is, you know, being together as one family under the one roof is beautiful. **(13.16)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Slides 11 & 12:**

**Watch 05.25 – 16.32**

**(05.25)** I think my older siblings probably paved the way a little bit for me. So, there were lots of things that they weren't allowed to do, whereas, when it got to me, I think my parents were a

little bit more flexible about the things that we did. So I think that really did help. But it was just finding this hybrid culture, I think, in the end.

Kind of going, there are certain things I'm not allowed to do because of my faith, or because my parents wouldn't let me do that – but also, trying to push the boundaries a little bit – and kind of go, 'Oh, but if I get a lift from so-and-so's mum...if we went – so you know that place – they're really respected and trusted, would it be OK?'

And because, as I said, my siblings had kind of paved the way, it was a little bit easier for me. So, I don't think I missed out on an awful lot. I think, like I say, we had a – very much of a hybrid culture. There are certain things we could do, certain things we did as a family, certain things we did with friends, but you know, things like staying over a friend's house was always a no-no. Yeah, obviously I wanted to, but it was kind of like, 'Well, if I can't, I can't!'

Um... but yeah...I think, as a parent now, I'm a lot more flexible, probably, with my children – um – also, understanding the boundaries and kind of go, 'OK, I didn't get that opportunity, but I'd like to give you guys the opportunity, but within certain parameters.'

So, I think it's – I think my – everybody's childhood shapes us – um – and mine, in particular – um – growing up in quite a cocooned environment, I would say... yeah. I think it's quite seamless actually... **(07.00)**

**(07.01)** I think, over the years, what I've done is probably moved a little bit away from culture and a little bit more towards faith. On reflection I would say that's definitely there.

**(07.15)** and ... there are some amazing things about British culture as well, that I've sort of merged together. I remember... you know... lots of people mentioning when they first come to the UK things like, you know, politeness that comes across – you know – somebody opening the door, or always the 'pleases' and 'thank yous' that often isn't ingrained into our own cultures. Um... there are ... often 'pleases' and 'thank yous' aren't used – it's just the way you say something in a polite way ... or, just waiting in queues.

I think ... what I've done, hopefully, seamlessly and well, is pick out the positives and build my own little kind of family culture which is based on faith but includes all the positives that should be included from my Bangladeshi culture as well as my British culture, as well as my faith – as well. **(08.10)**

**(08.12)** They follow their own path – but I think ... so my eldest is nineteen (19) and my youngest is thirteen (13) – so I've got three teenage boys and I think they're pretty much grounded.

Sometimes, I feel like – they know the parameters more than I do (*laughs*) they kind of – er – they know where the boundaries are – and often they'll go, 'Yeah OK I'll do that,' but they stay within those boundaries.

And, I think again, it's about those faith boundaries, you know, if I explain to them, actually you know there are certain things that – whether it's going out drinking or things like that – I would, you know, put the boundaries on that; they know it's not even a conversation that we would have – it's something that's ingrained in the way they were brought up – um and they pick me up on things as well, 'Mum – oh – you've got to think about that.' So, yeah... it's interesting, and the most important thing that I've found with my children is we have lots of conversations about it.

Whereas, growing up, there wasn't that deep conversation between my parents and myself. It was very much, 'You do this, and this is the way you should behave.' But there was no real – um – conversations or reasoning about why those things should be done – but it was just, 'You do it because that's our faith and that's our culture – and you don't do it.'

Whereas, me and my children, it's about, 'Let's have a conversation, let's talk about why, how...' and then find, kind of, a middle ground if there is a problem or issue so yeah, like I say...

**(09:35)** I find culture fascinating – because culture's always changing. The culture that I was brought up in isn't the culture that I'm bringing up my children in – nor will the culture be (the same) when they have their own children – they'll have their own hybrid culture which is amazing. I love it!

"I love the fact that it does change ... and ... foods change it, experiences change culture – people coming in – people going out – all sorts of things – that's the beauty of where we are I think." **(10.00)**

**(10:00)** I think faith has been a journey for me, so from my early days, from being a child, you know, my faith was put on to me – as most faiths are for young children – um – There wasn't a mosque nearby – the nearest mosque was in Bristol, so my mum used to teach us on the weekends – you know, important lessons or suras from the Quran, and things like that, but there wasn't really a deep conversation as to why we believed what we believed...

Um, as time went on and as I grew, so I believed it because I was almost told to believe it. I think I got to ... probably when I went to university... I went to the University of Bath and it was my first ... first place really where I saw that multiculturalism, that cultural diversity and lots of Muslims.

"At that time, I wasn't wearing hijab or anything like that and I just felt that I wanted to at that point – and I started seeking the knowledge for myself... so I would order CDs and books – and really kind of start looking at my faith properly, rather than just believing something that my parents told me to believe in... It was much more of a journey of discovery, and um, going, 'Oh, OK, that's interesting!'" and that's just grown, I think from there on in... I passionately believe in learning and people not being told what to do, but actually finding their own path as well... and um, yeah, I love learning – um – and I think that the more things that I listen to, it's just opened my horizons really! And I found that way. **(11.37)**

**(11.37)** In terms of kind of mainstream faith, we do have a mosque here in Yeovil, but we never did. So growing up, there was no place to go and worship. On Eid, we – my family – would go to Bristol for the Eid prayers. And then slowly ... there was a church in Yeovil that used to have a room there we used to hire out on a Friday, just to do the Friday prayers ... which was quite interesting that it was a church – and then it was ... it was lovely that ... you know, faith, I guess... we believe in the same god – it was just a different way of worshipping the same god which I found really beautiful... and then slowly, there was a kebab shop in Yeovil and there was a place above the kebab shop that became the mosque – which extended out, and now, there's a really beautiful mosque, not too far from here – and it's so multicultural, I think that's what I love about our mosque in Yeovil, that it is so multicultural.

Because I think, when you go into the cities, there can be silos of different cultural groups ... like ... this is the Somali mosque, and this is the Bangladeshi mosque, you know, going over that threshold, but because Yeovil is so small, and because it's so diverse – you've got the hospital with the range of cultures there – um – from consultants to caretakers, to nurses... and you've got the restaurants, you've got the taxi drivers ... all these cultures – Turkish, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, you know, the African cultures have recently come over.

Just that vibrant mix makes me feel like – yeah, this is what Islam is, you know, being together as one family under the one roof is beautiful. **(13.19)**

**(13.19)** I think the key to integration is being open-minded. I think ... yeah ... it's accepting people for where they are. It's respecting other people's cultures, but also, kind of saying, 'This is my culture as well, and give me that respect.' But I think that open-mindedness is really important... it comes across because I think a lot of the times – sometimes – people can be a bit more, 'Well, this is my faith and this is my culture and this is the way it's going to be and I'm not going to change.' Whereas, I'm much more, 'OK, this is my faith and my culture.' But again, there's that space for adapting that a little bit as well, and that importance of respecting other people's faith and other people's cultures – and learning about those faiths and learning about those cultures – and giving it the priority that it really deserves.

So, I think that's what integration is – people coming together... keeping what's valuable to them, what's true to them um ... yeah ... that's the key to integration - and that's worked in lots of things I've done over the years.

**(14:24)** I guess I enjoy the freedoms we're given – although politically at the moment, the way things are, I feel like we're getting less and less freedom, but I guess it's that you have the freedom to be who you are and practise your faith and who you are and the way it's known that it's enshrined by law that it's not in other places – and um, yeah, I think freedom... I think people (most people!) are amazing, open-minded and able to give you space and want to know about your culture so there's lots ... I guess I've never really lived anywhere else – like – the UK is my home, so it's just normal to me to kind of be here and live the way I do. But I would definitely say freedom and justice, and I guess systems actually... thinking about it ... you know, knowing that there are systems in place for things to happen and it's not, y'know, money under the table or something, that you know if you go through a particular system, your voice will be heard at some point. **(15.29)**

Um – and also, meritocracy, you can work your way up – a lot of the time, there's that space and ... um... the finances are given for people to go to university, even if they can't afford to go to university, there are student loans – you can go up that scale a lot more easier than you can in different countries – and that's really, really valuable – you've got passionate, intelligent people that don't often have that capability to be able to get to those positions – that step up from the government is really lovely.

**(16.08)** I see myself as um, a British Muslim Bengali, I would say – because that's who I am. If I package myself up, that would be the label on the package – British Muslim Bengali because I can't ... this is ingrained – like a stick of rock – if you cut it up, you find those three sort of things running through, because those are the three things that make me who I am – and will continue to make me who I am! **(16.32)**

**Slide 11:**

**Watch again 05.25 – 07.00**

**(05.25)** I think my older siblings probably paved the way a little bit for me. So, there were lots of things that they weren't allowed to do, whereas, when it got to me, I think my parents were a little bit more flexible about the things that we did. So I think that really did help. But it was just finding this hybrid culture, I think, in the end.

Kind of going, there are certain things I'm not allowed to do because of my faith, or because my parents wouldn't let me do that – but also, trying to push the boundaries a little bit – and kind of go, 'Oh, but if I get a lift from so-and-so's mum...if we went – so you know that place – they're really respected and trusted, would it be OK?'

And because, as I said, my siblings had kind of paved the way, it was a little bit easier for me. So, I don't think I missed out on an awful lot. I think, like I say, we had a – very much of a hybrid culture. There are certain things we could do, certain things we did as a family, certain things we did with friends, but you know, things like staying over a friend's house was always a no-no. Yeah, obviously I wanted to, but it was kind of like, 'Well, if I can't, I can't!'

Um... but yeah... I think, as a parent now, I'm a lot more flexible, probably, with my children – um – also, understanding the boundaries and kind of go, 'OK, I didn't get that opportunity, but I'd like to give you guys the opportunity, but within certain parameters.'

So, I think it's – I think my – everybody's childhood shapes us – um – and mine, in particular – um – growing up in quite a cocooned environment, I would say... yeah. **(07.00)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Slide 12:**

**Watch and listen again 13.21 – 15.29**

**(13.21)** I think the key to integration is being open-minded. I think ... yeah ... it's accepting people for where they are. It's respecting other people's cultures, but also, kind of saying, 'This is my culture as well, and give me that respect.' But I think that open-mindedness is really important... it comes across because I think a lot of the times – sometimes – people can be a bit more, 'Well, this is my faith and this is my culture and this is the way it's going to be and I'm not going to change.' Whereas, I'm much more, 'OK, this is my faith and my culture.' But again, there's that space for adapting that a little bit as well, and that importance of respecting other people's faith and other people's cultures – and learning about those faiths and learning about those cultures – and giving it the priority that it really deserves.

So, I think that's what integration is – people coming together... keeping what's valuable to them, what's true to them um ... yeah ... that's the key to integration - and that's worked in lots of things I've done over the years.

I guess I enjoy the freedoms we're given – although politically at the moment, the way things are, I feel like we're getting less and less freedom, but I guess it's that you have the freedom to be who you are and practise your faith and who you are and the way it's known that it's enshrined by law that it's not in other places – and um, yeah, I think freedom... I think people (most people!) are amazing, open-minded and able to give you space and want to know about your culture so there's lots ... I guess I've never really lived anywhere else – like – the UK is my home, so it's just normal to me to kind of be here and live the way I do. But I would definitely say freedom and justice, and I guess systems actually... thinking about it ... you know, knowing that there are systems in place for things to happen and it's not, y'know, money under the table or something, that you know if you go through a particular system, your voice will be heard at some point. **(15.29)**

**Slide 12:**

**Watch and listen again 16.08 – 16.32**

**(16.08)** I see myself as um, a British Muslim Bengali, I would say – because that's who I am. If I package myself up, that would be the label on the package – British Muslim Bengali because I can't ... this is ingrained – like a stick of rock – if you cut it up, you find those three sort of things running through, because those are the three things that make me who I am – and will continue to make me who I am! **(16.32)**

**(End)**

\*\*\*\*\*