

BMCM Community Conversation with Rafik Imaki

2011

BMCM: Peace be upon you

RI: Peace be upon you.

BMCM: Could you please introduce yourself?

RI: Rafik Imaki, I'm nineteen years old.

BMCM: Where did you exactly come from? And what are your origins? Do you currently live in Casablanca?

RI: Yes I do...Exactly in Ben M'sik.

BMCM: Why did you specifically choose Casablanca and not another city?

RI: Actually it wasn't my choice, it's rather my parent's and it's them who decided to live in this area in Casablanca.

BMCM: And why do you think they specifically chose Ben M'sik as a neighborhood instead of another one?

RI: Well, because it's a popular area which corresponds to their needs which they might not find elsewhere.

BMCM: Have you ever been to L'Msid?

RI: Oh yeah! In childhood we spent great moments in the Mosque.

BMCM: Do you speak any other dialects like *Tariff it* or *Tamazight*?

RI: No! I just speak the Moroccan Dialect *Darija*.

BMCM: Your parents came from Marrakech, didn't they? And did they use to tell you some stories about this area, or some fairy tales like "Hayna"?

RI: Not necessarily stories, they were just sayings...I don't remember any story.

BMCM: Is this area from where your parents came famous for any folkloric arts?

RI: It is known by a group called *Dakka Lmarrakchia* which has its own rituals which are very famous here in morocco frequently in celebrations.

BMCM: How did your parents benefit from this new dwelling? Is it by financial help or by rent?

RI: No, just a purchase thanks to a simple trade.

BMCM: Does your father work?

RI: Yes he does.

BMCM: Did he buy this flat or...?

RI: Yes

BMCM: Do you consider yourself living in a luxurious neighborhood? I mean of rich people or just a popular neighborhood? And what are the possible reasons which made it a popular neighborhood?

RI: Well... all the people here are simple and it's clear that there are not any great circumstances.

BMCM: What is your perspective about the popular and luxurious neighborhood? How do you imagine them?

RI: How do I imagine them...is how they are in real life. The popular neighborhood is known by its popularity, by its people and it's quite the opposite of luxurious ones.

BMCM: These characteristics... like what for example?

RI: Well, it means that the middle class is considered with these circumstances

BMCM: Do you want to spend the rest of your life in Ben M'sik. If yes why?

RI: I'm trying...I wish God willing to go away from this area to another one for better conditions.

BMCM: Hum...do you think that there is a sense of solidarity between neighbors, in celebrations... like wedding?

RI: That's what make popular areas unique, especially in this region of Ben M'sik, there is solidarity in celebrations and they are united in good times as well as bad ones... there is a lot of things that make popular areas unique from other regions.

BMCM: When your parents came to Ben M'sik, did they ever tell you some stories about people's experiences...For example the ones who came from Marrakesh or elsewhere, lived, and constructed their life in this region?

RI: No!

BMCM: Do you think that your surrounding somehow influenced you or the opposite?

RI: the surrounding is characterized by many things that try to influence people of this district. There is a minority which I belong to. We don't let ourselves get influenced by the surroundings. That means I'm trying to impose my personality on it, and I try just to take the positive things and get away from the negative ones as possible as I can.

BMCM: You, as a person living in Ben M'sik, can you tell us about some experiences you have been through in Ben M'sik which you still remember?

RI: It was a bad experience... there was a conflict between our district and another one. There was hatred between them, and the police heard about it. I really want them to be as one hand with no conflicts.

BMCM: Do you still have any good memories that are still engraved in your mind of Ben M'sik, which made you love this place?

RI: The good thing about it is that I grew up here surrounded by my friends. This is what makes this region important to me.

BMCM: Now let's move to questions about the United State of America. How do you view the U.S.A?

RI: As a simple country, like other countries.

BMCM: Ao there is nothing special?

RI: No, just like other European countries. Yeah, though U.S.A figures the top of several domains when it comes to the world like economy for example, it is still like as the rest of the world. A country where both positive and negative things meet.

BMCM: What is your opinion towards the U.S.A or let's say what are the things that you hate about it?

RI: Hmm, nothing specific, I'm just trying to view it as developed country which is taking over the world.

BMCM: Do you have any American friends?

RI: No

BMCM: Do you wish to have them in the future?

RI: Yeah I do wish to have foreign friends not only from U.S.A but from all around the world especially the Arab world (laughing).

BMCM: Have you ever been to the U.S.A or rather wanted to go there?

RI: Yes I would if ever the opportunity is given, and would try to know different people out there.

BMCM: What might be the cities you would visit if you were there?

RI: New York

BMCM: Why exactly?

RI: The fact that it contains huge buildings is one of the reasons additionally the civilized way of behavior of its people which I learnt through books I read about it.

BMCM: What was your impression towards the United States just after the 11<sup>th</sup> September events?

RI: It was and it's still the same old negative impression either before or after what happened that day.

BMCM: Concerning Obama's election, did they change somehow your impression towards U.S.A?

RI: No. It's still the same.

BMCM: You mean nothing has changed?

RI: No, it hasn't. Everything that used to be with G.W.Bush and also Bill Clinton is still alive. Tracing back the history of the USA from 1911 [?] or 1912, shows that it was a powerful country that survived economical crisis and great serious wars and got out of it victorious. So far the USA is still powerful and taking over the world.

BMCM: Do you think the Muslims over there face any kind of obstacles?

RI: Based on what I've heard, I think there are some obstacles that women face. They look at them in a negative way and think that they are terrorists which are a wrong idea since these people are civilized, and I disagree with them. They blame Muslims for what happened to them, but Islam is a religion of forgiveness, love and peace not a religion of cruelty and...

BMCM: I would like to thank you for accepting our invitation

RI: It's my pleasure

BMCM: Thank you once again.