

Oral History Interview #1 Transcription

Aya Aboshady

November, 2019

Aya Aboshady 0:01

This is Aya Aboshady and today we're going to talk to Yousreya Azzam, My grandmother and a 76 year old woman who went through so much in life and has a lot to tell about it. Especially about her daughters' failed marriages and divorces, of course. As well as how her own education and background life affected her life choices and decision making.

Yousreya Azzam 0:23

My name is Yousreya Azzam, I am 76 years old.

Aya Aboshady 0:28

Which social class group do you most identify with? Like, which social group are you among?

Yousreya Azzam 0:41

Medium?

Aya Aboshady 0:45

Middle, you mean?

Yousreya Azzam 0:47

Middle, middle yes.

Aya Aboshady 0:51

How has your education revealed what makes life worth living for you? Like, has your education affected what you love and what you don't love, and what you feel, what you enjoy doing and what you did after school in your life, in general? Has your education revealed that for you?

Yousreya Azzam 1:16

My school was Catholic.

Aya Aboshady 1:23

It was a private school, right? A private Catholic school, right?

Yousreya Azzam 1:27

Yes, here in Egypt, these schools are private. So all I think of is I loved, I loved God. I loved my sisters. The teachers who are sisters.

Aya Aboshady 1:55

The nuns who were at school?

Yousreya Azzam 2:00

Yes, yes. They were very, very good. I loved them. So I want to be like them. Not marry and stay with them and only be with God.

Aya Aboshady 2:24

Okay, so you wanted to be a nun, even though you're a Muslim, right?

Yousreya Azzam 2:26

Yeah.

Aya Aboshady 2:27

So that's how those sisters or those nuns meant to you. So those were the ones who influenced your life in school, right?

Yousreya Azzam 2:36

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 2:38

Okay, how has education helped you to discover your own convictions and to live by them? Like, how has education helped you find what you believe in and what you want to do in life?

Yousreya Azzam 2:55

I told you, I wanted to be a nun? Nun. I didn't think of marrying anyone. Just to be with God. They are very, very lovely and they are good and I feel very, very good when I was talking to God. I did not have friends, and my family was, my brothers, brother and sisters. We weren't friends. So only talking to God.

Aya Aboshady 3:58

So how has your education engendered a sense that you are capable? Like, when have you ever felt that you can do something, that you could do anything, that you have things that you could, you have the strength to do them? Did you feel that this came from your education?

Yousreya Azzam 4:19

Not in school. I think when I married to your grandfather, I was capable of taking care of a house, of children, but not in school.

Aya Aboshady 4:48

Okay, so your school didn't teach you how to take care of your children because that's what you did in life after you graduated, right? So it was all back to your family's house and the way you dealt with the situation after you got married, right?

Yousreya Azzam 5:02

Yes, yes.

Aya Aboshady 5:05

Okay. So, how has your education helped you feel connected to others?

Yousreya Azzam 5:14

I was connected to my family, I told you I did not have friends at school or in life, only my family. So I was connected to only my family.

Aya Aboshady 5:40

How has your education helped you discover your talents and capacities, and then bring them to life?

Yousreya Azzam 5:47

Aya, I told you I don't understand this question.

Aya Aboshady 5:52

Okay, what I mean by this question is, if school helped you learn something new about yourself or learn something new to do, or develop a skill. Did that happen at school?

Yousreya Azzam 6:06

At school, no. They teach us how to be good, you know, ethics, etiquette. How to be good people, how to be good girls. The only talent I always say I have is my language, Francais. I teach my children, especially Omayma and Iman. I teach them and I love Francais so much. And this is my talent that I love and I, this from School.

Aya Aboshady 7:01

Okay, so from school, because you were in a French school, so your language was good and then you you like, transmitted that to your children. You helped your children when they were in school to work on their French. Iman and Omayma were in French schools as well, right?

Yousreya Azzam 7:17

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 7:29

Okay, so um, how has your education fostered acceptance of yourself? I mean, like, how has your education. Like, did your education help you find it within you that you accept yourself? As a human being, as a woman who was going through life?

Yousreya Azzam 7:48

No, no. School. I accept myself when after school, I was in a very, very small society. So no, I don't think school make me accept myself. It was, like I said, after school.

Aya Aboshady 8:25

Okay, so would you say that your education helped you discover skills that extended beyond your academic and professional life?

Yousreya Azzam 8:36

Same, Aya. I told you no, nothing from school. Just for the language, just God, and loving God and etiquette, ethics.

Aya Aboshady 8:55

Okay, in what ways would you say your education enriched or added to your life beyond the classroom? Like, apart from the academics, apart from you know, the books and all of that. What did you learn from school? What did your education add to you outside the school itself, or outside the classroom?

Yousreya Azzam 9:28

Yes, like I told you. I was raised good, in a good way because of the school, because of sisters. And that made me raise my children the same way. They are good people. They are. Everybody loves them and they say they are good, good person.

Aya Aboshady 9:53

Okay, so you're saying that the most thing that you learned from your education and from school is ethics. And that you transmitted that too to your children.

Yousreya Azzam 10:04

Yes, I believe that.

Aya Aboshady 10:08

Okay, did your education affect how you viewed yourself in relation to the world around you?

Yousreya Azzam 10:16

No, no. I...The question again?

Aya Aboshady 10:27

I mean that, how has your education helped you in putting yourself in the world and seeing yourself in the world, in comparison to others and everything you do?

Yousreya Azzam 10:41

I don't compare myself to others. I'm Riri.

Aya Aboshady 10:52

So like, you didn't even care how the world saw you and you didn't care to put yourself out there, right?

Yousreya Azzam 11:00

No, I'm, I don't compare. I don't look to other people. I only look to me and I do what I think.

Aya Aboshady 11:13

Okay. And would you say that your education equipped you with the tools you needed to navigate life's challenges and uncertainties? Like, has school helped you face all the troubles that you faced then, and everything that you went through in your life?

Yousreya Azzam 11:31

No. It's the opposite. Because this, no, school didn't do anything about that.

Aya Aboshady 11:49

Okay. Do you feel as though your education affected your sense of confidence and your abilities?

Yousreya Azzam 11:57

Yes, yes, That is why I told you before, school did not do anything about that. But confidence, no, I don't have confidence because of school.

Aya Aboshady 12:14

Okay, so they didn't teach you there to have confidence within yourself, in what you're doing and in who you are in life?

Yousreya Azzam 12:24

That thing, I teach myself after I marry and I had a family. But they did not give us, they always, they were good, but they always tell us, you know, I don't think that I can say no to anything. You have to say yes. Only Yes. And everything is don't do that, don't do that, don't do that. That is why I did the same with my children. And also Omayma and Iman, they go to the same school, Catholic. They say the same thing I say, that they don't have confidence because of that.

Aya Aboshady 13:30

Okay, in what ways would you say your education affected your ability to communicate your ideas to others?

Yousreya Azzam 13:41

Why communicate ideas with others?

Aya Aboshady 13:45

Share your ideas, or if you have any kind of project in your head, if you have any kind of...

Yousreya Azzam 13:53

I don't need to share my ideas with others.

Aya Aboshady 13:54

Even your ideas about God..

Yousreya Azzam 13:59

Oh, also, if I share my ideas about God or about anything, I share with my children, with my family. Nobody else.

Aya Aboshady 14:13

You didn't have many friends at all, right?

Yousreya Azzam 14:14

I don't have friends.

Aya Aboshady 14:19

Okay.

Yousreya Azzam 14:20

I'm okay. I'm okay. I don't. I don't need, I have my family. I have my, my children, they are okay.

Aya Aboshady 14:32

Okay, so now we're going to move to actually talking about each and every one of your children and what they went through in life, in regards to marriage and divorces.

Aya Aboshady 14:40

Do you have children?

Yousreya Azzam 14:45

I have four. Four children.

Aya Aboshady 14:47

How many daughters and how many sons?

Yousreya Azzam 14:50

I have one son and three daughters.

Aya Aboshady 14:57

What are their names?

Yousreya Azzam 15:02

Mohamed, Amira, Omayma, Iman.

Aya Aboshady 15:07

Are all of them married?

Yousreya Azzam 15:11

My son is married. My daughters divorced, all.

Aya Aboshady 15:18

All your daughters are divorced?

Yousreya Azzam 15: 20

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 15:24

Do you have grandchildren?

Yousreya Azzam 15:27

Yes I have. I have six.

Aya Aboshady 15:32

What are their names?

Yousreya Azzam 15:37

I have Menna, Ahmed, from Mohamed my son. I have Aya and Karim from Omayma. Malak and Youssef from Amira. Iman no.

Aya Aboshady 15:55

Okay. Your husband is still alive?

Yousreya Azzam 16:00

No, he died 25 years.

Aya Aboshady 16:04

Your husband died 25 years ago?

Yousreya Azzam 16:06

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 16:09

So all this time you were raising your children on your own. I mean, alone?

Yousreya Azzam 16:15

Yes, I take care of them alone.

Aya Aboshady 16:21

For all the past years, right?

Yousreya Azzam 16:23

Yes, until now.

Aya Aboshady 16:26

Why are your daughters divorced?

Yousreya Azzam 16:34

Their husbands were not good to them. Not good men.

Aya Aboshady 16:41

So all three daughters are divorced because their husbands were not good to them?

Yousreya Azzam 16:46

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 16:48

Can you take me through what happened to each one of them?

Yousreya Azzam 16:55

We talk about Amira? Amira, Ayman was not taking care good of his family. He did not try to have a good job for money for his family.

Aya Aboshady 17:20

So Ayman didn't...You mean like he was lazy or he was slacking? He didn't have a job because he didn't try to get a job. He was irresponsible, you mean?

Yousreya Azzam 17:38

Yes, lazy, not trying, not trying to be good.

Aya Aboshady 17:40

Okay, so his and Amira's children. How old are they?

Yousreya Azzam 17:48

Amira has Malak, 25. And Youssef, 23.

Aya Aboshady 17: 55

Who was paying for them all the past years? Who took care of them if Ayman was not good like you're saying?

Yousreya Azzam 18:03

Amira, their mother. She had a job to pay for the family, for everything.

Aya Aboshady 18:23

Okay, that's for Amira. What about Mohamed, your son? I know he's not divorced and he's still married. Can we talk about him a bit?

Yousreya Azzam 18:33

Mohamed, yes. But, he's not, he is not he is not happy. He's not happy.

Aya Aboshady 18:45

So Mohamd is not happy in his marriage, you mean? Or in his life?

Yousreya Azzam 18:52

No, he's. Everything!

Aya Aboshady 18:58

Why is Mohamed not happy?

Yousreya Azzam 19:00

Because he's like Ayman, Amira's husband. Not having good job to take care of family.

Aya Aboshady 19:16

Okay, so what about Omayma? Omayma is next in line, right?

Yousreya Azzam 19:19

Yes, Omayma is second daughter.

Aya Aboshady 19:25

She's the second daughter but the third child, right?

Yousreya Azzam 19:30

Mohamed, Amira... Yes, yes.

Aya Aboshady 19:37

Okay, so what happened to Omayma? Why did she get a divorce?

Yousreya Azzam 19:43

Omayma, you know...

Aya Aboshady 19:48

Yes, I know. She's my mother, but I need to hear from you.

Yousreya Azzam 19:52

Oh, he married her friend, you know, secret. Secret, he married her friend.

Aya Aboshady 20:01

Okay, so he was cheating on her.

Yousreya Azzam 20:07

Yes, but it wasn't new thing. He did that all the time when they engaged.

Aya Aboshady 20:18

Okay, so he was cheating on her on her before marriage even, right?

Yousreya Azzam 20:24

Yes, all the time, all the time.

Aya Aboshady 20:28

Okay and what happened to Iman? Iman is your last child, right? She's the youngest one. She's young?

Yousreya Azzam 20:36

Yes, she's, Iman, poor. Mohamed hurt her

Aya Aboshady 20:47

hurt her in general, or was he like hitting her and beating her?

Yousreya Azzam 20:55

Hitting, beating, say bad things....Bad, bad, Mohamed was bad.

Aya Aboshady 21:06

Okay, how long did she stay married to him?

Yousreya Azzam 21:09

She stayed married for him for eight, eight years.

Aya Aboshady 21:17

So Iman's marriage ended in eight years. What about Omayma? When did Omayma's marriage ended?

Yousreya Azzam 21:25

Omayma stay 11 years, 11 years. And Amira 10 years.

Aya Aboshady 21:37

Okay, when did Amira get married? How old was she?

Yousreya Azzam 21:43

Amira was 23, Omayma was 20. And you know, you want Iman, too? Iman was 22.

Aya Aboshady 22:00

Okay, are you sad for your children because, like, your son is struggling in his life and he's not happy. And your daughters are all divorced and from what you're saying, they did not have a happy marriage. Are you sad for them?

Yousreya Azzam 22:17

Yes, I'm sad. But I'm sad, I'm more sad because they say that I'm the reason for their divorce.

Aya Aboshady 22:37

Okay, so your daughters are saying that you're the reason. Like, they're blaming you. They're blaming you for their divorces, right?

Yousreya Azzam 22:47

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 22:48

Why are they blaming you?

Yousreya Azzam 22:54

Omayma say that I should say no to Ahmed when he came to marry her.

Aya Aboshady 23:11

That's Omayma. She always said that to you, right?

Yousreya Azzam 23:16

Yes, but she loves him, when he came. She was happy to have him.

Aya Aboshady 23:28

So it was her choice, you mean? Like she chose him, you did not force him on her, right?

Yousreya Azzam 23:33

No, no, no, no.

Aya Aboshady 23:37

Okay, and what about Amira? Why is she blaming you?

Yousreya Azzam 23:44

Amira, because she say I was not help, help, helping her in her life.

Aya Aboshady 24:00

Is that true? Did you not help her?

Yousreya Azzam 24:04

No, you ask anyone. I helped her all the time, all the time.

Aya Aboshady 24:14

Okay, so what about Iman? Iman is blaming you too?

Yousreya Azzam 24:21

Yes, she blame me, say I'm the reason for everything wrong in her life.

Aya Aboshady 24:33

Do you believe any of those words?

Yousreya Azzam 24:38

She say I did not make her strong, strong for life. She blame me.

Aya Aboshady 24:54

So they're all blaming you because they think that you did not raise them well enough, or strong enough, or good enough. And you did not take good care of them to face their marriages and to actually make their marriages work, right? Is that what you're saying?

Yousreya Azzam 25:11

No, I take care of them. I, they say I did not make them strong. But I take care of them.

Aya Aboshady 25:26

For how long did you stay married, yourself, to your husband before he died?

Yousreya Azzam 25:37

We stay 30 years.

Aya Aboshady 25:41

How old were you in when he died?

Yousreya Azzam 25:45

30 years. I was 50, 51.

Aya Aboshady 25:56

Okay, so you were 51 years old when he died, right?

Yousreya Azzam 26:01

Yes, he died 65.

Aya Aboshady 26:07

Okay, so he was 15 years older than you, right?

Yousreya Azzam 26:11

Yes, he was.

Aya Aboshady 26:16

Okay, did you love him?

Yousreya Azzam 26:21

He was husband, he was the father of my children.

Aya Aboshady 26:30

Okay, so you didn't love him before, you mean? You did not choose him? For your marriage? You did not choose to marry him?

Yousreya Azzam 26:42

No, my time we do not choose, we marry.

Aya Aboshady 26:50

Okay, so you did not choose your husband. But was he forced on you?

Yousreya Azzam 26:57

No, no, no, no, he was, he was not. No. Forced? I don't understand.

Aya Aboshady 27:08

Okay, so you did not choose him, your parents brought you a husband, right?

Yousreya Azzam 27:14

He came.

Aya Aboshady 27:16

And you said yes or no?

Yousreya Azzam 27:22

I said no.

Aya Aboshady 27:24

At first you said no, right?

Yousreya Azzam 27:26

I didn't want to marry, so...

Aya Aboshady 27:34

You didn't want to get married in general or to him?

Yousreya Azzam 27:41

General.

Aya Aboshady 27:42

Okay, but you still got married him. Did you love him after you guys got married?

Yousreya Azzam 27:49

He was. He was good man.

Aya Aboshady 27:54

Um, what did he work?

Yousreya Azzam 27:58

He work in news, journal.

Aya Aboshady 28:07

Okay, so he was a journalist.

Yousreya Azzam 28:09

Yes, he was.

Aya Aboshady 28:11

Did he spend most of his time outside the house or inside the house?

Yousreya Azzam 28:16

No, he was busy working, working, outside.

Aya Aboshady 28:25

Did you have a job?

Yousreya Azzam 28:28

No, I take care of the house, I take care of children, all the time. Take them school, study, making food, cleaning.

Aya Aboshady 28:45

Did you go to university?

Yousreya Azzam 28:49

No, no university.

Aya Aboshady 28:53

Okay, so you went to school and then you got married. You didn't go to university. You went like, from your parents house after school, to your husband's house and you had children, right?

Yousreya Azzam 29:04

Yes, yes.

Aya Aboshady 29:07

Okay, what school did you go to?

Yousreya Azzam 29:12

French school Saint Joseph.

Aya Aboshady 29:17

Where that one was? Where was that school?

Yousreya Azzam 29:22

Alexandria.

Aya Aboshady 29:24

Okay, so you were born in Alexandria? Not in Cairo, right?

Yousreya Azzam 29:28

Yes, I was born in Alexandria. I stay in Alexandria until I marry your grandfather.

Aya Aboshady 29:42

What year were you born?

Yousreya Azzam 29:47

I was born in 1945.

Aya Aboshady 29:54

Okay, so you think you married at an early age, right? You married young?

Yousreya Azzam 30:02

Yes..

Aya Aboshady 30:04

Do you think your children are married at a young age?

Yousreya Azzam 30:08

Yes, young. Omayma 20, young. Yes, they were young, but I didn't tell them to marry. They loved Ahmed, Ayman, Mohamed. And they want to marry, so they were young.

Aya Aboshady 30:41

Okay, so they were young but they made their choices. When we talk about your case, you didn't make your own choice and you still did not get a divorce. So is that your justification to why your children shouldn't blame you?

Yousreya Azzam 30:55

Yes, I married young and I did not choose and I stayed 30 years with my husband.

Aya Aboshady 31:11

Talk to me a bit about your life before you got married at 19, and before you had children. How was it back home in Alexandria? Talk to me about your mom, your brothers and sisters and all.

Yousreya Azzam 31:27

I have two sisters and one brother. My brother Yousry. My two sisters, Mimi and Temtem. My mother...She, I I..

Aya Aboshady 31:56

Your mother's still alive?

Yousreya Azzam 31:59

Yes, she's, she is alive.

Aya Aboshady 32:03

She's living with you or where is she living?

Yousreya Azzam 32:07

I live in Cairo, she lives in Alexandria with my sister there.

Aya Aboshady 32:16

Are you all your sisters and brothers alive?

Yousreya Azzam 32:23

No, not all. I, my sister, she died.

Aya Aboshady 32:29

Which sister?

Yousreya Azzam 32:30

Mimi. I'm the old one.

Aya Aboshady 32:35

So You're the eldest child?

Yousreya Azzam 32:40

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 32:41

And then your brother Yousry, then your sister Temtem and your other sister Mimi. The one who recently died, right?

Yousreya Azzam 32:50

Yes, she's young. She's younger.

Aya Aboshady 32:55

She's the youngest, okay. So what's the name of your mother?

Yousreya Azzam 33:00

Her name is Samira.

Aya Aboshady 33:02

Okay, and she lives in Alexandria now. Are you close to her? Were you ever close to each other?

Yousreya Azzam 33:10

No, no she wasn't close with me. No.

Aya Aboshady 33:18

Okay, so you always had fights at home or is it that you were just not close?

Yousreya Azzam 33:25

No. No fights. Just, she wasn't close to me. Not me. I was close to Abla Rashida.

Aya Aboshady 33:43

Who is Abla Rashida?

Yousreya Azzam 33:46

She's the sister of my father.

Aya Aboshady 33:51

Okay, so she's your aunt.

Yousreya Azzam 33:54

She is my aunt.

Aya Aboshady 33:57

Okay, and you were close, you treated her as your mother and she treated you as her daughter.

Yousreya Azzam 34:03

She is, she was. She was my friend. She was my...she was close. She was like my mother.

Aya Aboshady 34:14

Okay, why weren't you close to your mother?

Yousreya Azzam 34:19

Oh, I don't know. Maybe because we were too many.

Aya Aboshady 34:31

So you were four children in the house, right?

Yousreya Azzam 34:35

Yes, I I was old. So maybe because I was old, she take care of young.

Aya Aboshady 34:47

Okay, so were you close to your father?

Yousreya Azzam 34:51

Yes, yes, close to my father. To my father and Abla Rashida.

Aya Aboshady 35:00

Okay, so why did you get married, if you said earlier that it was not your choice? You said no at first, and then you loved him after marriage. Marriage wasn't your choice; then why did you get married if you didn't want to?

Yousreya Azzam 35:17

I wanted to go out of the house, I wanted to have my house, my life, to go away.

Aya Aboshady 35:36

That's because the house was crowded? It had many people?

Yousreya Azzam 35:41

Yes and my mother, she was not my...she was not my friend, my close. So I wanted to have a life.

Aya Aboshady 36:00

Okay, so did you feel that you had that life after you got married?

Yousreya Azzam 36:07

Yes, I had my children. I have my, my husband, it was good.

Aya Aboshady 36:19

How was life with your husband? Like apart from the children; how was it after getting married to him and since you were the one who didn't have a job and he was the one who's working all the time, like you said, how was it?

Yousreya Azzam 36:35

It was good. He, sometimes, he came home angry, he was drinking. He was angry because of drinking.

Aya Aboshady 37:04

So you're saying that he came home like, most nights, drunk because he was an alcoholic?

Yousreya Azzam 37:14

No, no, no, no, no, no, not alcoholic. Alcoholic, he drinks a lot, you mean?

Aya Aboshady 37:21

Yes.

Yousreya Azzam 37:23

Ok, no, no, no, not all the time but he was a good man. He was, only drinking he is angry. But he was a good man.

Aya Aboshady 37:36

But you took care of the children alone after his death or most of the time you were taking care of them?

Yousreya Azzam 37:46

I was taking care of them when he was working but my children, they loved their father because he was a good man. And I take care of them, I was in the house all the time.

Aya Aboshady 38:08

So you're in the house all the time and you took care of them but still, they grew up - because I know you say a lot - they loved him more than they love you. Why do you think that happens? Why do you think they - even after he died -, why do you think they may love him more than they love you? Even though you were the one who was always there?

Yousreya Azzam 38:30

Maybe because I, I was, sometimes, I say "No", I say no to everything. You know, like "Mama, I want to go see my friends," I say no. Maybe their father was always kind with them. Only when drinking angry.

Aya Aboshady 39:10

So he was good, unless he was drinking, you mean?

Yousreya Azzam 39:14

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 39:17

So you were tough with them because you wanted to raise them in a certain way. You mean, like, maybe they love you less because you are always saying no and you were tough on them. Why were you tough?

Yousreya Azzam 39:30

I was scared that they are girls. They can do, they can, they can see bad people, bad people if they go out.

Aya Aboshady 39:58

Which schools did they go to?

Yousreya Azzam 40:02

Just like me, Omayma, Iman, they went to Ecole Catholique, French schools, only girls. Amira and Mohamed, they go to, they went to normal schools, English not French.

Aya Aboshady 40:40

Okay so when I talked to Omayma and Iman, they mostly say that the reason they grew up making bad choices and choosing the wrong people and choosing, making wrong decisions in their lives in general, it was because they grew up in a closed community. Because they went to the Catholic schools you just mentioned, because they were only raised with girls and did not mingle with guys.

Do you agree with that? Do you think that you did something wrong when you made them go to a very closed off community with only girls surrounding them and they even like, spoke a different language. How do you feel about that?

Yousreya Azzam 41:19

No no, good schools, French schools, good schools. Catholic, they are good to girls. They take care of girls and they raise girls good way and I do not know why do they say so, I don't.

Aya Aboshady 41:50

You don't agree with what they're saying, right?

Yousreya Azzam 41:54

No.

Aya Aboshady 41:56

Okay, so how is your relationship with your only sister and brother right now?

Yousreya Azzam 42:07

We, we do not talk too much. We are, we are always like this, it is not new. They have a life, I have a life with my, my children. We do not talk.

Aya Aboshady 42:41

So your relationship with your brother and sister is not good right now. How about your relationship with your mother?

Yousreya Azzam 42:50

I call her, I call her to say are you good? She say are you good? And we talk, not all the time.

Aya Aboshay 43:11

Do you blame her for anything that happened to you? Even though you're saying that my grandfather, you're saying that Ahmed Maher is a good man, and was a good man even though he had drinking problems and even though you raised the children on your own most of the time, even before he died. But the overall of the turnout of your life, do you blame your mother because of anything?

Yousreya Azzam 43:37

I think she didn't, didn't take care of me. I don't, I don't. Yes, I blame her.

Aya Aboshady 43:53

So you blame her because she didn't take care of you as well as she should have, right?

Yousreya Azzam 43:58

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 44:00

Do you think there was another reason other than the fact that you guys were four children? And you were a lot to to handle?

Yousreya Azzam 44:10

I don't know, I don't think, I don't think I don't think of this, anymore. I don't think, I stopped. I stopped thinking of that.

Aya Aboshady 44:23

Do you think the idea of having more than one or two children maybe affect the way you raise all of them?

Yousreya Azzam 44:34

I don't understand.

Aya Aboshady 44:36

Like, if you didn't have four children. If you didn't have Mohamed, Iman, Amira and Omayma. If you only had two of them, do you think it would have been easier and do you think their lives could have been happier or better because they were, like, not that big number?

Yousreya Azzam 44:57

Maybe, but I do not think so. Because I know my friend, I have, I know, I know, woman, my, she, she's, she's in the apartment in the same. She has, she has just one daughter, she is divorced. I don't think so.

Aya Aboshady 45:28

So you don't think that someone should put the blame on another; let alone it's his parents or not. Like, you don't think that the blame should be put on anyone, it's only by choices, right?

Yousreya Azzam 45:44

Yes, and I'm sad, when I say...when they say; my daughters when they say that I'm....I'm very sad for that.

Aya Aboshady 46:02

But you don't believe that you are the reason at all right?

Yousreya Azzam 46:06

I do not know. I don't know.

Aya Aboshady 46:10

But during Omayma's marriage, I know you tried to help her a lot. Like during the marriage, you tried more than once to make her understand that her husband is a cheater and that she should leave him. You did try to do that, right?

Yousreya Azzam 46:27

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 46:28

Okay, so she knows. Like, you tried to help her and she still blames you. Why? Why do you think that?

Yousreya Azzam 46:37

Because she say, I, I, I, I should, I should, I should say no when I, when he came to marry her. Not wait until she's marrying him.

Aya Aboshady 47:00

Did you have any friends back then when you were married with children? Did you have any friends?

Yousreya Azzam 47:04

Because I was, I was old. I was her mother. So she say I, I was old. I, I should, I should understand. I should understand that he is not good man.

Aya Aboshady 47:20

Okay. So back then when you had, when you first like had your children and when you first got married, did you have any friends to talk to? Did you have anyone surrounding you?

Yousreya Azzam 47:32

No, I have this woman who lives next to me.

Aya Aboshady 47:45

She's your neighbor, right?

Yousreya Azzam 47:46

She is my neighbor. That is it.

Aya Aboshady 47:52

But you didn't have anyone else, ever since school, right?

Yousreya Azzam 48:57

No, because I live in Cairo, not Alexandria.

Aya Aboshady 48:05

Because you moved from Alexandria to Cairo, you mean?

Yousreya Azzam 48:08

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 48:10

Okay, so is there anything you blame yourself for? Whether it happened to you, or it happened to your children? do you blame yourself for anything?

Yousreya Azzam 48:29

I, maybe. Maybe I blame myself. Maybe I'm, I should, I should say no to Ahmed, to Ayman, to Mohamed. I do not know. Maybe, maybe they are right, but I'm sad that they think that I'm...I love my children, I love my daughters. I, I want them happy and marrying was, I see them happy but after...They, they, they were not happy.

Aya Aboshady 49:40

When they were younger, do you think they were happier? When, before marrying and before all of that, do you think all of them were happy children?

Yousreya Azzam 49:52

Yes, they were. Maybe Iman not very happy.

Aya Aboshady 49:59

Why wasn't she happy?

Yousreya Azzam 50:07

Maybe because she was young, so young. She's so young. Then Omayma and Amira; she, she wasn't she wasn't friend. She wasn't close to her sisters.

Aya Aboshady 50:34

She wasn't close because she was the youngest, right?

Yousreya Azzam 50:36

Yes.

Aya Aboshady 50:37

How is their relationship right now? All four of them, how is the relationship between each and every one of them?

Yousreya Azzam 50:46

They're good. Just every, you know, brothers and sisters. Sometimes, they have problems, sometimes. But they are good. Not very close, but they are good.

Aya Aboshady 51:11

Okay, now I want you to say...Like we're nearing the end of this, and thank you for taking the effort. I know you're tired, but we're nearing the end of this and I need you to say a couple of words to your son and two daughters. Like What do you want them to know? Like, how you feel...Like what do you want to say to them right now?

Yousreya Azzam 51:38

I want, I want to say to Mohamed, I, I love you. I, I want to try to take care of, I know you love your children, I know you love your wife. But you should, you should try, you should try to have good job to take care of your Family. I want him to be happy, he is not happy. And I want him to be happy. He's a good man.

Aya Aboshay 52:37

And that's to Mohamed, your son, the second child you have. And he's the one who's still married. What about the three daughters?

Yousreya Azzam 52:50

Three daughters, I love you. I love you, Omayma, Amira, Iman. I'm sorry if I, I did something to make you not happy. I want you to be happy. I try, try with your father and after your father died, I tried to make you happy. But you, you, you had, you had bad men. But now I want you to be happy with your children. You have children and you take care of your children. You are good mothers to your children and I want you to be happy and I love you.