

Aisha Fall



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SPEAKERS

Moureen Kaki, Aisha Fall



Moureen Kaki 00:03

Okay, so my name is Maureen Kaki, and I'm here with Aisha Fall. I'm coming to this meeting from Boca Raton, Florida. It is October 10 at almost noon Eastern time. 11:58, to be exact. Aisha, would you mind introducing yourself and telling us where you're calling in from please?



Aisha Fall 00:29

Yeah, sure. I'm Aisha Fall, and I'm calling in from Chicago, Illinois.



Moureen Kaki 00:36

Awesome. Thank you so much for that, and thank you so much for being on with me today. So as you know, we're doing this for the Muslim Voices archive for the Institute for Diversity and Civic Life. And I want to just ask you, Aisha, if you could start by describing maybe the earliest childhood memory that you can remember?



Aisha Fall 00:59

Sure. So my earliest childhood memory. That's a good question. I feel like when I'm asked a question like that, it's like a whirlwind. It's like a video reel of memories that starts to play in my mind. But if I had to pick one, I would say my earliest - [pauses].



Moureen Kaki 01:38

It doesn't have to be your earliest either. It can be the one that sticks out to you most. Anything that you remember.

A Aisha Fall 01:49

I guess it would probably be - I can't think of anything that is super vivid.

M Moureen Kaki 02:11

How about you mentioned a little whirlwind of memories earlier. Even if it's a tiny one, can you pull on there that might have stuck out in some way?

A Aisha Fall 02:28

I would probably say I have bits and pieces of - I'm trying to think of my earliest memories of when I went to France when I was six with my dad. And there's this one memory specifically where we went to my - I think it was like a family friend. But she had this huge spread in front of us, and she had these silk napkins that she put on my neck to catch the food. And there was an assortment of cheeses and fruits and everything. And I remember thinking like, "Wow, this is awesome." And so yeah, that's my earliest memory. One thing about me is I have the worst memory.

M Moureen Kaki 03:15

That's totally relatable, honestly. My mom asked me the same question the other day, and it struck me. But you said you were how old in that memory that with the silk?

A Aisha Fall 03:26

I was probably six.

M Moureen Kaki 03:28

Six, okay. And where was that at?

A Aisha Fall 03:31

In France.

M Moureen Kaki 03:33

In France, okay. And would you mind describing what took you guys to France? Was it a family vacation?

—

A

Aisha Fall 03:41

So Senegal, which is where I'm from, was colonized by the French. So a lot of my family members when they want to immigrate somewhere, they usually go to France just because they know the language, their schooling transfers and everything, so it's just more of a smooth transition. So we had gone to Senegal, and then we went to France before we came back to Texas, and my dad's brothers lived there, and one of his sisters, so that's why we were there.

M

Moureen Kaki 04:14

Nice. Did y'all go often?

A

Aisha Fall 04:18

Not really. So I went when I was six, and then I didn't go again to France until I was twenty. And same with Senegal, I didn't go back to Senegal until I was thirteen, and then back again until this past year.

M

Moureen Kaki 04:38

And so the first time you went to Senegal was when you were thirteen?

A

Aisha Fall 04:42

When I was six.

M

Moureen Kaki 04:43

When you were six, okay, so Senegal and France six and then thirteen again, and then in Senegal again when you were twenty. Wow, that's cool. Are there any experiences that you would mind sharing from your first time in Senegal if you can remember?

A

Aisha Fall 04:59

Honestly, I can't remember anything vivid from that time, but there are a lot of pictures that we have. And so my dad was super into photography, so we have albums and albums of so many things. And so there's a bunch of pictures of me visiting family members, sitting with my grandma who I'm named after. And just at the beach and various other things that we did while we were there.

M

Moureen Kaki 05:31

That's cool. Does your name mean anything in your - what's the primary language spoken in Senegal?

A

Aisha Fall 05:42

So the language spoken in Senegal is called Wolof. It doesn't mean anything in particular, but the way - a tradition that Senegalese people have is that they named their children after someone. So if you ask any Senegalese person, nine times out of ten, they're named after someone from their parents' life. So I'm named after my paternal grandma.

M

Moureen Kaki 05:42

That's really beautiful. Okay, and so when you were growing up in Texas, how was that with the traveling back and forth to different places? Did the travel between France, Senegal, and Texas - were there differences and memories that you experienced there? Did your trips grow up affect you growing up in Texas in any way?

A

Aisha Fall 06:46

I feel like because my trips were so sporadic, I guess, they were each at different stages of life. So I was a little child the first time I went, I was a preteen the next time I went, and then I was an adult this last time. And so my memories of the travel are very different. Because obviously, the first two times I had to be accompanied and stuff. Although I will say when we went when I was thirteen, it was just my siblings and I, and then my cousin who's a bit older than us, and her kids, and so we went with them. And then this next time, we went with my mom, but it's different, 'cause there's more - It's a long journey. So there's different restrictions that come up within the years between traveling. They don't do direct flights from New York to Senegal anymore. So the travel journey was stretched even longer than it needed to be.

M

Moureen Kaki 07:53

Can you elaborate on what it was like, if you remember, to experience some of those various restrictions, besides a longer trip?

A

Aisha Fall 08:02

I feel like it wasn't anything that was too intense. I feel like COVID was probably the most annoying part of it this past trip, just because you have to have a COVID test, a PCR test. And then because we can't go directly into Senegal, we have to fly into Europe first. And so the restrictions there are even more strict than they are in Senegal. So it's just making sure you got the timing right with when you get your test, and there's entrance forms that you have to fill out in order to enter certain countries. So we went in through Belgium, and they have this form, a contact tracing form, that everyone has to fill out. And it's just a lot of things that they make you do in order to just get to your final destination.



M

Moureen Kaki 08:55

I see, I see. Gotcha. So we talked a little bit about the traveling back and forth through different times of your life. But would you mind talking a little bit more about your life in Texas? Maybe not earliest memory, but just general childhood memories that you can think of there from anytime?

A

Aisha Fall 09:19

Yeah, so growing up in Texas, I had a pretty basic life. I grew up in one of the north side suburbs, the Westover Hills area. I started off going to Islamic school until second grade, and then second grade was my first time in public school. And I came in the middle of the school year, so I remember walking in, and I was introduced to my teacher and to my classmates and just being so scared, because I was so used to knowing everyone because Islamic school was so small. And I remember walking into the lunchroom for the first time, and we had to take our lunch at the private school that I was at. And so we got our trays with lunch, and I remember you had to pick up milk, one of those carton milks. And I was like, "Oh my god, milk at lunchtime? What is this?" And so I picked a strawberry milk. And if there's something about me, if I get something and I like it, I will always get it. So I got the strawberry milk, and I was like, "Mm, this is good." And literally until I graduated high school, I always grabbed the strawberry milk in the cafeteria.

A

Aisha Fall 10:35

So yeah, those are my earliest memories in Texas. But for the most part, it was a really nice childhood. Playing in the neighborhood, playing games with the neighborhood kids, tag. From third through seventh grade, I lived across the street from another Muslim family, actually, so it was really nice. They were from Pakistan, so we would trade dishes whenever our moms would cook. And we were always over at their house, and vice versa, so it was really nice.

M

Moureen Kaki 11:14

That sounds really nice, and that's funny about the strawberry milk. Did you ever try any other flavors, or was it literally you just got strawberry milk, and the others weren't even worth trying?

A

Aisha Fall 11:23

So I think there were times - so strawberry milk was that one that after Michelle Obama was like, "No sweetened things," I guess there's too much sugar in it. So they started having it less. So I was like, "Oh yeah, let me try the other milks." I'm not a huge fan of chocolate milk, so I got it, and it was two percent or one percent chocolate milk, and it just was a horrible experience. And same with the regular milk. There were a few couple stints with birthday cake flavored milk, which I'm sure was so bad for us, but it was tasty. And then I graduated to the slushie machine.

M

Moureen Kaki 12:02

Nice. The many flavors of Aisha fall. That's funny. Islamic to public school, the transition, besides the milk, you talked a little bit about the fear of that. Can you delve into more of what that was like? Not necessarily the fear, but the other emotions that you had from that transition? Because it sounds like it was a pretty big jump, because second grade's long, right? So it sounds like a pretty good while in Islamic school to go from there to public school.

A

Aisha Fall 12:39

I think the hardest part was leaving my friends. Because it was so small, it was the same kids from pre-K all the way to second. And so one of my best friends who I stayed best friends with until high school was at that school. So I was just like, "Oh my god, I'm leaving my friends," and just the fear of the unknown, especially at that age when you're walking into this school. My Islamic school was in a house, a converted house. So I'm in an actual school building. There's a lot of fluorescent lighting. There's a lot of White kids, not to sound racist or anything. But there was just a lot of things that I was not used to seeing.

A

Aisha Fall 13:23

But thankfully, there was a girl in my class. I'll never forget her, her name was Raquel. We became instant friends, because she came up to me very quickly and was like, "Hi, I'm Raquel. You can sit with me." And she lived in my neighborhood, so we would walk home from school together. She lived a street over. And we stayed in touch for a while after I left. I was only at that school for one year. But back when we had landlines, she had my home number. So every once in a while, she would call and we would catch up. It was before the days of cell phones. And so it wasn't until we got rid of our landline that we lost touch, because I didn't have a phone at that time, and I think she had just gotten one, but I never got her number or anything.

M

Moureen Kaki 14:27

Could you talk a little bit more about her? What made y'all connect as friends, besides the fact that she was really welcoming on the first day?

A

Aisha Fall 14:38

That was the initial thing, but she's super outgoing. And so she was always like, "Oh, let's go ride our bikes." She had an older sister and a younger brother. She had a lot of siblings, but I remember the older sister and the younger brother the most, because they're the ones that we would walk to school and back home with too. And her younger brother, I think, was around the same age as my younger brother, so they were friends. She was very good at, I guess, keeping friendships, if that makes sense. Keeping in touch and asking about how we're doing and stuff. I remember for my eighth birthday party, I had invited her and my best friend from the Islamic school over to my house just for some cake and just to hang out and stuff. And they hit it off

just as well, and I was like, "Hey guys, talk to me too. Don't just become friends and leave me out," even though they weren't even leaving me out. But when you're eight, and your two friends become friends, and you're like, "Hold on, hold on, what's going on here?"

M

Moureen Kaki 15:50

That's funny. That's awesome. Thank you for sharing that. And you mentioned the Pakistani Muslim family that lived across the street from y'all from third through seventh. Would you say that that having other members of the Muslim community around you and sharing those moments is a value of yours?

A

Aisha Fall 16:12

Yeah, definitely. I look back to that time, and I'm actually really grateful for it. Because in a community, living in America, where it's very secular, and the schooling is very secular, for parents who want to raise their children to be practicing Muslims, having that community is helpful. So for example, they knew this Qur'an teacher that was Pakistani, but he would come to their house and teach them Qur'an. My parents were like, "Hey, can you give him our number? He can just walk across the street and do us next." So for years, my siblings and I would have the Qur'an teacher come over to our house and teach us also. So things like that. And to this day, I see them at the mosque, and I run and hug them. And I worked at a high school for three years, and the younger sister of the girl who I hung out with, she was one of my students. So I was just like, "Oh my god." It was a full circle moment.

M

Moureen Kaki 16:16

That's so cool.

A

Aisha Fall 16:46

Yeah, it was very crazy. Yeah, too many memories. You know when you get kids together, there's a lot of, "You're not my friends anymore," the petty little things. But it was good, it was fun.

M

Moureen Kaki 17:37

That is awesome. And could you talk more about - Islam, seems like, means community to you, and the importance of building that. Would you mind talking a little bit more about what else Islam means for you, I guess beyond community, on a personal, or however you want to talk about it?

A

Aisha Fall 17:57

Yeah, so for me Islam is the way of life. So I do my best to - in all the decisions I make, in all

the things that I do - keep my Islam in the background, and it influence all the decisions I make, and how I carry myself, and how I want to treat others. And so it's a huge aspect of my life. Yes, the community portion of it is very important, but just the way in which I want to live my life is driven by the kind of Islam that I want to see in the world.

M Moureen Kaki 18:47
And would you mind sharing what that vision is?

A Aisha Fall 18:52
Yeah. I mean, I don't know if the listeners are going to be familiar with Islam or not, but the Prophet, peace be upon him, is our greatest example. And so for me, just taking aspects of his life, and there's a very in depth history on his life. And the Qur'an also speaks to a lot of the prophets and their lives, and there's a lot of lessons that can be taken from them. And the Prophet, peace be upon him, is our greatest example, and we should try to lead our lives to be like him. And so for me, that looks like loving unconditionally. So it doesn't have to be that I benefit from a relationship, but that I can give to someone even if they can't give anything to me. And things like that. Just to be the kind of person whose character, when they think about me, they can think about my character, and have positive feelings, and then translate that back to Islam and maybe inspire someone to do good in this world. It's a really big - I'm by no means anywhere near someone who can do that, but I want to be.

M Moureen Kaki 20:25
Thank you so much for sharing that. For what it's worth, I think very fondly of your character. Can you hear me? Hello?

A Aisha Fall 20:36
Okay, yeah, I cut out for a second, but I just caught what you said there.

M Moureen Kaki 20:41
Okay. Okay, awesome. Yeah, I will say to the record that when I think of your character, I think of it very fondly and with a lot of admiration and respect. Would you so would you mind - I think there's a bit of a lag.

A Aisha Fall 21:09
Yeah, it's glitching a little bit.

M Moureen Kaki 21:13

Yeah, maybe we'll give it just a second. I can hear you okay. It doesn't sound too delayed.

A

Aisha Fall 21:24

Okay, I can hear you as well.

M

Moureen Kaki 21:26

Okay, awesome. Would you mind sharing - you mentioned how you're striving towards that ideal, but you feel like there's some things that are not perfect, right? But would you mind, like sharing some of the struggles that you've encountered? Whatever you're comfortable with whatever that comes to mind.

A

Aisha Fall 21:51

Struggles in the sense of practicing my Islam or was there anything specific?

M

Moureen Kaki 22:01

That's what I was gearing towards, just following up on what you had finished on. But if you think of other things related, please feel free to share anything that comes to mind.

A

Aisha Fall 22:10

Yeah, I mean, I am human, through and through, so I'm not perfect. I feel like there are definitely times where I can lose my patience, or the want to be petty is very strong. Someone does something, and you're just like, "Oh, I do not want to be a good person. I want to hit them back with what they're hitting me with." So yeah, sometimes I succumb to that, I will be honest. Especially when it comes to siblings. Oh my gosh, my siblings, they know exactly what buttons to press to just rage mode on. Yeah, I feel like generally speaking, that is probably - my humaneness does take over at most times, honestly.

M

Moureen Kaki 23:07

To be fair, I don't think anyone can blame me for that, really. But that's funny. And yes, you're right about siblings. You're absolutely right about that. I feel the same way about mine. Family is something that you described, you mentioned in passing quite a bit. Could you talk a little bit more about your siblings and what your relationship with your family is like, and what they mean to you?

A

Aisha Fall 23:31

Yeah, so I'm the oldest sibling. I have a younger brother and a younger sister. We're each three years apart from each other. So he's was twenty-three, and my sister's twenty. So I feel like growing up, each of us had our own playmate. I would play with my brother, my brother would play with my sister. And we were those siblings, I'm pretty sure - no I know I'm sure [inaudible] because we were [inaudible] at each other for fun, and wrestling in the living room, and just doing what siblings do best, and driving each other crazy. But I feel like in our years, now that all of us are more grown, we're able to just have more chill moments. All of us have a crazy sweet tooth. We get it from our dad. And so we'll be like, "Let's go get Crumbl." Even though there are a lot of Crumbl Cookie haters out there. But that's what we like to do. Just try the different flavors each week. And my brother was at UTSA when I was at UTSA, so just running into him on campus and just teasing him when I was with my friends. And we have a very - the banter between my siblings and I is always at one hundred. So yeah, it's fun.

M

Moureen Kaki 25:06

Sounds like it's fun. Sounds like y'all keep it going pretty well, too. You mentioned UTSA. Would you mind talking a little bit about education, what that was like? Just broadly, what did you major in, the basics, and how you liked it.

A

Aisha Fall 25:24

Yeah. So I got my bachelor's in public health from UTSA. I was actually the first in my family to get a four year degree, so that was pretty interesting. I like to say that I'm a social - I thrive in social settings, so college was the most fun for me, because that's the epitome of there's 1000 things happening at the same time, so I could definitely have been seen speed walking around campus, going from one thing to the next. There was some semesters where I quite literally did not have a second to breathe, because I would just overextend myself, for better or for worse. So yeah, it was a really nice experience. And just education as a whole is something that I value, because I know the importance of it, and my parents instilled that in my siblings and I. And just continuing our educational aspirations, it doesn't just stop with school. With everything. Be lifelong learners, and things like that.

M

Moureen Kaki 26:38

That's awesome. What was one of your favorite memories ever at UTSA.

A

Aisha Fall 26:46

Oh, that's so hard. I would say my time with the Muslim Students' Association [MSA] was definitely probably one of my highlights just because I met so many of my lifelong friends in the organization. And if I had to pinpoint one thing, it probably be Showdown or something, which is when all the MSAs across Texas get together, and we compete in sports and arts and poetry and all that. So it was a really good time to bond with our UTSA MSA, but also get to meet a lot of Muslims across Texas. And to this day, I still talk to so many of the people that I met from Showdown who don't even live in San Antonio. So yeah, I would say that that is something that I really cherish, and a very fond memory of college for me.

M

Moureen Kaki 27:46

That's really beautiful. And what was - Sorry, I lost my train of thought.

A

Aisha Fall 27:58

It's okay.

M

Moureen Kaki 28:00

Can you talk about how, if it did, did going to UTSA, attending it, shape things that happened in your life after it all, or the things you did at UTSA?

A

Aisha Fall 28:16

Yeah, I would definitely say that. So if I could take you back a little bit, when I was a senior in high school, if you asked me what college I was going to, I'm a very indecisive person by nature. Literally everything in my life is like, "Oh, I don't know. Could be this or this." So when it came to college, I had a really hard time deciding where I wanted to go, because initially, I wanted to go out of state really badly. And my parents were like, "Yeah, apply." So I applied to a bunch of out of state schools, and I applied to a few in state schools. And then I applied to UTSA just to appease my parents, like, "Yeah, I applied to one San Antonio school." And so thank god I was able to get into all the schools I applied to. So when it came down to deciding, I was like, "Oh yeah, what about St. Louis University?" My parents were like, "St. Louis? What's in St. Louis? Why do you want to leave Texas? Stay in Texas." And I was like, "But you let me apply out of state." And they were like, "No, stay in Texas."

A

Aisha Fall 29:12

So my in state options were Baylor, Texas Tech, UTSA, U of H, and UTD. And I was like, "Yeah, I'm not going to any of these schools. Why did I even apply to these Texas schools? I do not want to go to any of them." So it was the week of decision day, you had to make a decision on where you wanted to go. I, at the last minute, was like, "Okay, fine. I'll just go to UTSA." I was super spoiled high school student, very disgruntled about it. Like, "My parents ruined everything for me. I wanted to go out of state." But honestly, it was probably the best decision that I could have made for myself, because I look back at my time at UTSA, and so many things happened, and my life was so enriched because of it. Not just the education, but I feel like the community aspect. I'm born and raised in San Antonio, but I feel like as far as being in touch with the Muslim community, my dad really liked going to the mosque from the east side, and that's where we would go to Jummah with him. And so there's not a lot of people from the north side community who go to those mosques, because it's predominantly Black people, it's just not the demographic of a lot of Muslims that frequent the bigger mosques.

A Aisha Fall 30:40

And so I didn't really know a lot of - I wasn't really into the quote-unquote "Muslim community," because we just were not in the mainstream, going to the bigger mosques, and things like that. And so I feel like because I went to UTSA - and it's right across the street from Muslim Children Education [and Civic] Center. I always mess up the acronym, but MCECC mosque. And so because that was right across the street, I was always there. And so because I was always there, I was able to go to the events that they always had. And that later translated to me being part of the Youth Committee, and then translated to just having a very robust experience being a part of not only the masjid leadership and programming, but just being a part of the greater community there. Getting to experience that was awesome, and I don't think that would have happened, had I not been to UTSA.

M Moureen Kaki 31:52

Wow, wow, that's really awesome. Thanks for sharing. I mean, there was a lot in that, but I appreciate you sharing.

A Aisha Fall 31:59

Yeah, I gave you the long-winded answer.

M Moureen Kaki 32:01

No, it was great. Don't apologize, please, it was great. It was really great. I actually have multiple questions that I want to ask, I'm just thinking of where to start. You mentioned that you really wanted to go out of state. Could you describe more about what your motivation for that was, why that was your primary thing? Because it sounds like you're so close knit to your family, so if you could elaborate more, that'd be great.

A Aisha Fall 32:28

Have you ever heard of the Myers-Briggs Personality Test?

M Moureen Kaki 32:35

Yeah, definitely.

A Aisha Fall 32:38

So I would say that mine is very accurate, and it says a lot of things about seeking adventure and wanting to experience new things. And so that's a really big motivation as to why I wanted to leave. Not necessarily that I wanted to leave San Antonio, but more so that I wanted to experience something new. And I always pictured that college lifestyle was of being surrounded by a bunch of students, because I'm in a college town, and getting that experience, where I

knew that if I stayed at UTSA, then I would live at home, and I might not get that same quote-unquote, "college experience." Whatever that means. I don't even know if I knew, if I had any expectations of what that was. I was just like, "Oh yeah, I need a college experience," not knowing exactly what it [inaudible].

M

Moureen Kaki 33:50

That's funny. Okay, that definitely makes sense, of course. Thank you for that. So, I think the acronym earlier, Muslim Children's Education and Civic Center. I think that's the right acronym, the full correct acronym.

A

Aisha Fall 34:10

That's the right acronym. Yeah, you got it [laughs].

M

Moureen Kaki 34:16

You talked about how you were there often. Could you talk more about MCECC and just your general role there and how it was for you to grow there? Did you enjoy it? Yeah, just whatever comes to mind.

A

Aisha Fall 34:31

Yeah, so I feel like MCECC is one of those mosques that like really emphasizes youth programming and youth involvement. And Shaykh Omar, who was one of the religious directors at the mosque for several years, one of his main things was getting youth programming off the ground and the masjid being a place where - because I feel like a lot of people, you go to mosque, and it's just men there. And maybe sometimes there's women, but mosques should be a hub for families and definitely a place where children should be, because it's a great environment for young people growing up to be in. And I feel like for me, a really big contributor to the kind of person that I am today - not environment is the best. There can be situations where it can be toxic or whatever. But I feel like MCECC for me was not like that. It's was also you make it. So I feel like things for college students, there was a lot of opportunities for us to learn about our religion.

A

Aisha Fall 36:04

And just being someone who always came to those things, people from the youth committee saw that I was active. So they reached out and were like, "Hey, we have an opening. Would you like to join?" And I didn't even know what a youth committee was. I was like, "What is it? What do you guys do?" And they're like, "Oh, we program, and we make the events for the college, and the young professionals, and the little kids." And I was like, "Okay," They were like, "Okay, here's an interview time. You're going to interview with Shaykh Omar." And I was like, "Oh my

god. I've never done anything like this." I was super nervous. But alhamdulillah, thank God it turned out to be - being a part of these communities is probably the most rewarding thing I've done in my life ever so far. So yeah, it was awesome.

M

Moureen Kaki 36:58

That's really beautiful. What was your favorite aspect about it?

A

Aisha Fall 37:07

Shaykh Omar is one of those people, he's super down to earth. And he was like, "I don't want you guys to just be programming for the mosque, but I want you guys to get enriched too yourself." So we had a book club within the committee. So we would read various books on various topics. So the first book that we were reading when I first joined was The Life of the Prophet, peace be upon him. I forget who wrote it, but it was a biography written - I have to look it up. But it's a really good, well-written biography. Things like that, where we would read and then discuss with each other, and we had Shaykh Omar there, so we could ask questions. And it was just such a really great experience, and something that I feel like not a lot of people get the chance to have.

M

Moureen Kaki 38:08

Yeah, that's awesome. That's really awesome. Thank you for that. One of my last question for our interview, unless there's anything else you want to expand on, is if you could talk about any mentors or people who really just influenced the way that you live your life that you look up to.

A

Aisha Fall 38:33

Mentors. So I feel like there wasn't necessarily one person who took me under their wing were like, "These are the things you need to do to live a successful life." But there have definitely been people in my life that I look up to, and the way that they conduct themselves or the advice that they give or share, that I'm like, "Yeah, I want to make sure I remember it and apply it in my life." A mentor specifically, I would definitely [inaudible] one of them. He was [inaudible] someone that I looked up to.

M

Moureen Kaki 39:18

Who? I'm sorry, you cut out.

A

Aisha Fall 39:20

- for four years. Oh, Shaykh Omar. He wasn't necessarily a mentor, per se, where it was like he took me under his wing and was like, "This is what you need to do." But he was a really great role model and a leader to look up to. And I feel like being able to work with him along

with other the team members were something that was very enjoyable. As well as, honestly, I look up to, in a very light way, from a distance, I'm like, "Yeah, I want to lead like them, and I want to take the example that they shown and be like them," is honestly your brother Ahmad. I was on the committee with him for four years, and his leadership style was very - when I was the chair, I would try to channel my inner Ahmad. Like, "How can I be a leader like him?" Because he was just such a great role model for people.

M Moureen Kaki 40:28

Aw, I'm gonna tell him you said that. It's gonna make him so happy.

A Aisha Fall 40:36

No, don't tell him I said that. I'm embarrassed.

M Moureen Kaki 40:37

Okay, I won't tell him then, I'll just like look at him and smile like a big dork and he won't know what I'm smiling about.

A Aisha Fall 40:44

Exactly, yes.

M Moureen Kaki 40:47

That's funny. That's really sweet. Thanks for sharing that. That's awesome. Aisha, that's pretty much all I've got for you today. I just want to ask if there's anything, given the topics that we've discussed, that you feel like you want to share, that you wish I would have asked about and I didn't, anything at all that you want to bring up. Or it doesn't have to be, I just want to give you the last shot to give any kind of final word here.

A Aisha Fall 41:15

Yeah. Yeah, I guess I would say that the Muslim experience in America is very unique. If you find 1000 people, you will find 1000 stories, 1000 very different stories, about people's upbringings, and their experiences with their religion, and their community. But I will say that every story and experience is very valid, and there can be a lot learned from each one. And so I feel like an initiative like this is very important, and it's very special, because people who might not have experience or maybe you just want to listen to other Muslims who might not be in their area, or get to learn a little bit about what life is like in other places, this is a really great initiative and a really important thing that you're doing. So yeah, thanks for reaching out, and I really appreciated talking to you.

M Moureen Kaki 42:23

Oh no, thank you. Thank you so much for taking the time to share your experiences and your story. I know it can be a vulnerable thing to do. And to your point, I mean, it's beautiful that there's this collection happening, and you're such an inspiring and wonderful person, that there's no reason anybody shouldn't want to hear more from you. So I appreciate your time, and your sharing here today. It's been really wonderful to listen to you and listen to your story. So thank you so much. I'm gonna go ahead -

A Aisha Fall 42:25

Thank you.

M Moureen Kaki 42:38

- and stop the recording here. Boom.