

It's Ramadan, Brother!

English Transcript



It's Ramadan, Brother! (2018) was produced for Guestbook Project's documentary video initiative by students from The American University in Cairo (Cairo, Egypt) with guidance from Professor Marina Marren:

Participants

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Please note: the participants in the video are left unnamed and identified by their their religion and occupation. As such, they are identified within this document as Interviewer, Muslim Student, Christian Student, and Muslim Shop Clerk.

Christian Student: [on the phone] Hey Michael, how are you? How is everything? Yeah, I am coming now. I'll just buy some cigarettes and come straight away.

Shop Clerk: Hi

Christian Student: Hi. Can you please give me cigarettes?

Shop Clerk: Yellow Merit?

Christian Student: Yes, Yellow Merit. How much is one cigarette?

Shop Clerk: Five pounds.

[the Christian student leaves the frame as the Muslim Student approaches the shop clerk and they shake hands]

Muslim Student: Hi, how are you? Can I please have a pack of cigarettes?

Shop Clerk: Ramadan Kareem, brother!

Muslim Student: I know, I want a pack of cigarettes!

Shop Clerk: Aren't you fasting? It's Ramadan!

Muslim Student: I am already eating. Give me a pack of Yellow Merit, brother!

Shop Clerk: —It's Ramadan, brother!

Muslim Student: I know, man. I will pay for it! I will pay for it!

Interviewer: As we've seen in this scenario a Christian guy has immediately taken whatever he wanted during Ramadan. Yet it was completely the opposite with the Muslim guy when he tried to approach the shop clerk. He... The guy did not give him whatever he wanted just for the sake of it being Ramadan. Now we are going to interview both of them to see how they thought about this experience.

What was your experience through this?

Muslim Student: Honestly, I felt really awkward, but this happens all the time in the community we're in. I'm not fasting. That people around like the guy who's selling me cigarettes should not be bothering me about it. He should not be annoying me about it. This is just how generalization in our community—this is just what it does.

Interviewer: Hi.

Shop Clerk: —Hi

Interviewer: Can you explain to me why did you do this? What it is based on?

Shop Clerk: As per our traditions in a Muslim country it is Ramadan, the Holy month. We should all be fasting, all the Muslims. So it would be my role seeing a Muslim guy asking me for some food, cigarettes, or something to just give him advice not to do this and to fast.

Interviewer: Based on what did you know that the person is Christian or is Muslim, and how does the treatment differ?

Shop Clerk: Well, with the first guy I heard him on the phone saying he was named... So, it's a Christian name, so I didn't bother to force him to do something because it's not his role. With the second guy, I heard his friend call him Abdelrahman so I knew he was a Muslim.

Christian Student: I just took a normal cigarette from a place and it's Ramadan. It's three in the afternoon and it's all good. So I didn't find any trouble just buying a cigarette. Nobody talked to

me—nobody said anything—so I'm very appreciative of that thought. Even the guy who did not tell me anything—I guess because he knew I was Christian for some reason. I don't know but it was really... it was really good that he did not joke about it or say something about it, didn't comment about it. It was very good, thank you.

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