

Umar Farooq
Golden Spoon Restaurant
Scarborough, Ontario

Interviewer: Raehah Butt

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Tasting the Global City: Multicultural Histories of Toronto's Cuisines

Raehah: My name is Raehah Mahtab Butt, today is October 7th 2015 and I am at Golden Spoon. So, pehle apne bare mein tora bot batadiye jiye. //Translation: So first please tell me a little bit about yourself.

Umar: Mein Pakistan se yaha aya ta. Canada mein start ase kiya ta ke – as a dishwasher start kiya ta mene. //Translation: I came here from Pakistan. In Canada I started as a dishwasher.

Umar: To kafi arz se kaam kiya, pir part-time dusri job bi karta raha. Uske baad cooking mein zada dehan ta mera; mein cooking siik giya. //Translation: I worked for a long time and at the same time did another part-time job as well. Then after that I put more attention into cooking; I learned cooking.

Umar: Panch saal tuk mene ik jaga pe kaam kiye, cooking siki pir uske baad mene apna restaurant banaliya. Start kiye ta to aaj Allah ka shukar hai. //Translation: For five years I worked the same job, learned cooking then after opened my own restaurant. I started (my business) so today its (running) thanks to God.

Raehah: Acha, pir pehle Pakistan se shuru kiya ta? //Translation: Ok, then you first started in Pakistan?

Umar: Nahi, Pakistan se-ta tora sa restaurant ke field mein kyu ke mera aboo ka restaurant ta, to wahan pe hum sub milke karte te. //Translation: No, in Pakistan I worked in the restaurant field a little because my father had a restaurant, so over there we all did it together.

Umar: Yahan pe aa ke bi yehi dayaan ta ke future mein restaurant ka hi karne. //Translation: Even when I came here, I thought that in the future I should open a restaurant.

Raehah: Acha.//Translation: Ok.

Umar: To starting mein, aatai sate restaurant mein gai te.//Translation: So in the beginning when I came I went to (work at) a restaurant.

Raehah: Pakistan mein kon sa restaurant ta aap ka? //Translation: What restaurant did you have in Pakistan?

Umar: Pakistan mein-famous nahi he. Chota sa city hamara Jhelum; wahan pe ta.//Translation: It's not famous in Pakistan. In our small city if Jhelum; it was there.

Raehah: Acha. Pir apka naam bi bata sak te ho ji? //Translation: Ok. Then can you tell me your name please?

Umar: Umar Farooq.

Raehah: Umar Farooq? Acha ji. Pir is-ye, apka restaurant kase aap ne shuru kiya ithar ake? Kabse? //Translation: Ok. Then how did you start your restaurant when you came here? Since when?

Umar: Ye mene 2013 mein start kya ta, November mein. To starting mein kafi struggling ti, abi Allah ka shukar hai settle down hora. //Translation: I started this in 2012, in November. In the beginning we were struggling, now thanks to God it's settling down.

Raehah: Acha, pir pehle se konse chezein change hoye hein? //Translation: Ok, then from before what things have changes?

Umar: Totally different kiye. Nai management ke saat totally different design kiye, or isko ik mahina pura renovate kiye. Band karke isko rent diye kyu kein mene apna style se shuru karna ta. //Translation: Its totally different form before. With the new management it's a totally different design, and it was renovated for a whole month. I closed it and gave rent because I wanted to start it with my style.

Raehah: Golden Spoon kyu naam raka huwa he? //Translation: Why did you name it Golden Spoon?

Umar: Kyu ke mene 5 saal Silver Spoon pe kaam kiye. Me as a dishwasher Silver Spoon pe start kiya ta. To meri unke saat Milton location pe deal chalri ti. Me wo buy karna laga ta. To beech mein kuch masla howa to nahi ho saka. Pir mene boss ki kushi se , mene bolle me apna banana chaata hu to un se ijaazat lehke – naam nahi unko bataya ta. Naam ka surprise diya ta.

//Translation: Because for 5 years I worked at Silver Spoon. I started as a dishwasher. I had a deal with them for their Milton location. I was going to buy it. In the middle of it something happened so I couldn't do it. Then for my boss' happiness, by his permission I opened my own. I didn't tell them the name (of the restaurant). The name was a surprise.

Raehah: Pir apka koi plan he ik dusra Golden Spoon banane ka, ja..?//Translation: Then do you plan on opening another Golden Spoon?

Umar: Future mein Insallah he, likan abi pehle isko settle down karne.//Translation: In Gods will, in the future, but right now I have to settle down this place.

Raehah: Aap ke restaurant mein bestseller konsi dish he?//Translation: What is the best-selling dish in you restaurant?

Umar: Mera pas Chicken Karahi most famous jari he, Butter Chicken jari he or Achari Chicken jari he. Abi neha start kiye, pehle display mein nahi hota ta order pe banate te. Achari Chicken abi start kiye. Zada chezein larehein. Konse spicy chezein kaane wale hein, wo Chicken Tikka Masala pasand karte hein. Wo zara zaada spicy hota he, breast boneless ka hota he.//Translation: My Chicken Karahi is the most famous (or sells out quickly), Butter Chicken, and Achari Chicken as well. I started it recently, the Achari Chicken, it wasn't in the display you had to order it. We're bringing more things. Those who like spicy food like the Chicken Tikka. Its more spicy, made with boneless breast chicken.

Raehah: Aap ke team me kon kon kaam karte he? Aap ke saat kon hota hein?//Translation: Who works in your team? Who works with you?

Umar: Saab mere worker hein. Mera family ka koi bi nahi he. Saare apni apni jobs me hein. Ye mene ahkele start kiye ta.//Translation: They're all my workers. There's nobody from my family, they all work their own jobs.

Raehah: Kitne log he total mein?//Translation: How many are there in total?

Umar: Mere pas takriban ik shift mein 2 log kitchen me hote hein or 1 front me hote hein.//Translation: I have about 2 people in the kitchen and 1 in the front in one shift.

Raehah: Koi special event ke liye aapke koi special dish lagate ho, jase sirf eid pe milta hein?//Translation: For special events do you make special dishes, like one that is only available at Eid?

Umar: Nahi aisa kuch nahi he, lehken eid pe sometimes aisa hota he, bahar barbeque karte hein. Jase ke choti eid pe kiya ta hum logo ne. To live barbeque kiya ta, wo bara achaa गया. Ye torasa different type ke-//Translation: No nothing like that, but on Eid sometimes what happens is we do a barbeque outside. Like on small Eid (Eid al-Fitr) we had done a live barbeque. That was very good. This is kind of different.

Raehah: Pir ustara ke even kesaat zada customer ate hein?//Translation: So with those type of events have more customers come?

Umar: Ji ji ji, bilkul ate hein. Wo totally customer restaurant ke different hote hein or wo different hote hein.//Translation: Yes yes yes of course it has. Those customers are totally different from the restaurant ones.

Raehah : Iis jaga mein restaurant kyu banaya hein? Koi or be jaga hosakti he.//Translation: What did you make your restaurant here? You could have somewhere else.

Umar: Kyu ke ye jaga , meri kaafi pehle se nazar ti. To use baad mein jab ye restaurant Makkah banra ta pir me uss wakhat bi aya ta unke paas. Mene bola ta ke me aap ke saat partnership karle ta hu, lehken wo uss wakhat mane nahi te. Mene bolata as a worker rakhlo, kaam pe rakhlo.//Translation: Because I was interested in this area from long before. Before when that restaurant Makkah was opening I came then as well, to them. I told them I want to do a partnership with them, but they didn't agree that time. I even said I take me as a worker, I would work for them.

Raehah: So iis jaga ki impression achi ti? //Translation: So you had a good impression of this area?

Umar: Ji ji, isliye feeling hori ti ke ye jaga kuch achi future mein lagri hein. To isliye iss jaga pe humne try ki.//Translation: Yes yes. I had a feeling that this place would be good for the future. That's why we tried in this area.

Raehah: Apne kabi socha he koi food festival pe jane keliye zadaa- jase halaal food festival?//Translation: Did you ever think of going to a food festival-like the halal food festival?

Umar: Bilkul socha he, wahan pe try kare he lekhen har saal kuch na kuch mujhe kitchen mein surprise miljata he. To isliye nahi jane hota lekhen promise ye he apna koshish kare he ka next year jane ka. Or uske baad CNE pe bi haat laga re hein, CNE mein miljaye pir Inshallah wo bi koshish hori he wahan pe siraf barbeque karne ka program he. // Translation: I have definitely thought of it. I tried there but every year something surprises me in the kitchen. So I that's why I couldn't, but I promised I would try for next year. And after that I have thought of CNE, but I would only do the live barbeque there.

Raehah: Tora sa botau, kistara ke kaana banate ho? Is restaurant mein. Konse sunre he hein unko kuch pata nahi he. //Translation: Tell me a little about what type of food you make in this restaurant. The ones who are listening don't know.

Umar: Me yahan pe- meri zada jo famous item he na, wo meri biryani he. Uske rice jo he na bilkul masala mein juicy hote hein , mix hote hein. Agar aap raita ke kina bi kaige to mazaa aiga. Haleem banata hu to bot fast jati he, log mangte he. //Translation: here the most famous item is my biryani. The rice is is juicy from the masala's. if you eat it without raita you will still enjoy it. When I make Haleem it goes out fast, people demand it.

Raehah: So aap bi kanaa banate ho? //Translation: So you make the food as well?

Umar: Saab mehi banata hu. Ye sara menu mene khud design ki he or saabkuch jahan bi para hota he, me banata hu. //Translation: I make everything. I designed this menu all myself, and everything here I make.

Raehah: Suba koi different menu hota hein, shaam se? //Translation: Is there a different menu in the morning than the evening?

Umar: Nahi, menu ik hi hota he. //Translation: No there's only one menu.

Raehah: So sara Indian/Pakistani ka kaana he? //Translation: So it's all Pakistani/Indian food?

Umar: Ji, us hi style. Mere pas barbeque mein zadaa items hein, snacks mein zadaa hein. Jase ki mere paas chicken ke, beef ke samose he, chicken, beef, veggie patties he, ase chezein zada he. Fish fried he meri, everyday ik different special he monday to sunday. Everyday ik special milega, usko regular price se bot kuum hotihe. Or ushi din wo cheez bot fast jati he. //Translation: Yes, I have more barbeque items and snacks. Like chicken and beef samosas, chicken, beef and veggie patties, stuff like that. I have fried fish too, everyday there's a different special Monday to Sunday. The everyday specials are cheaper than their regular prices.

Raehah: Koi competition he, apko lagta he is jaga mein?//Translation: Do you think you have any competition in this area?

Umar: Competition har banda apna apna naseeb karta he, meri nazar me to nahi he.

//Translation: Every person sees competition differently; I think there isn't any here.

Raehah: Aap ko lagta he Silver Spoon ke log idr aige? //Translation: Do you think people from Silver Spoon would come here?

Umar: Ye mera bilkul aim nahi ta, ke wo customer aige. Meri ye aim ta ka mujhe achi jaga miljahiye. Me pehle mississauga mein duntara ha hu. Nahi mili mujhe jaga, to ye achi lagi meri gar ke paas ti. Pehle hum log yaha Lawrence & Orton Park mein rehte te. Jahan apni community hoti he apna food wahan pe sai rehte. //Translation: This definitely wasn't my aim; I just wanted a nice place. I was thinking of going to Mississauga first, but didn't get it there and this is close by my place. Our food does well where our community is.

Raehah: Apne kabi sochahe, maybe koi or tara ki dishes bana na, jase pizza ja burgers?//Translation: Did you ever think about doing other kinds of dishes like pizza or burgers?

Umar: Nahi, wo nahi socha. Ye socha kabi kabi noodles or fried rice banate he. To wo chaltahe bus.//Translation: No, I didn't. I thought of doing fried rice and noodles, just those sell well.

Raehah: Kistara ke log apke restaurant mein ate hein, zada taar?// Translation: mostly what kind of people come to your restaurant?

Umar: Mix ate hein, apni community bi, ya indian bi, bangalore-bengali bi he, sub hame support kare hein. Zada 50-60% jo he na hamare customer jase kehlo indian he. India ke side se hein. Pir hame pakistani logo ki caterings ati he, muslim ki mere paas zada catering he.

//Translation: There's a mix, our community (Pakistani) and Indian, Bangali, Bangalore,

everyone supports us. Mostly 50-60% of our customers I guess you can say are Indian. I mostly get catering from Pakistanis and Muslims.

Raehah: So zada taar konsi event ki catering? jase shaadian? // Translation: So what events do you mostly cater for? Weddings?

Umar: Eid pe, shaadi o pe hoti he. Nugget masjid mein mene kaafi shaadi o ki he. Banquet halls pe ki hein. shaadio pe zada ate hein log. // Translation: On Eid, weddings. I catered a lot of weddings in Nugget mosque; in banquet halls, more people for weddings.

Raehah: Catering business ki saabse best dish konsi he? // Translation: Whats your best dish in your catering business?

Umar: Mere paas Chicken Karahi famous jati he. Log mangte hein, chicken karahi chana masala ke saat or saat me chicken ya veal biryani chalti hein. // Translation: my Chicken Karahi is the dish that goes fast. People ask for it, Chicken Karahi with Chana Masala along with chicken or veal biryani.

Raehah: Apne kabi socha he, downtown ik kolna? // Translate: Did you ever think of opening one in downtown?

Umar: Ji bilkul, kyu ke white people bi kate hein. hamara kaana kate hein. bari kush hoke kaate hein. // Translate: Yes, more white people are eating our food happily.

Umar: Pakistan se yahanpe aya ta pir ik week ke baad mujhe silver spoon pe as a dishwasher job milge ti. // Translation: One week after I came from Pakistan I got a job at Silver spoon as a dishwasher.

Raehah: Canada mein aye te bot jaldi job milge ti? // Translation: You found a job really fast when you came to Canada?

Umar: 2008, ik week ke baad milge ti. Pir ik saal ke baad wo job chori bi ti, part-time ki ti, weekend pe karata ta or weekdays mein me landscaping ka kaam karta ta, logo ke gaar ke grass kaatta ta. 7 din kaam karta ta me, to aise apne aap ko banaya hein. Suba wahan pe kaam karta ta, shaam ko me silver spoon pe dishwashing karta ta. //Translation: 2008, after one week I got it. Then after one year I stopped that job and did it part-time. I did it on weekends and on weekdays I worked as a landscaper, I cut people's grass. I worked 7 days, and made myself. I worked there in the mornings and did dishwashing at Silver Spoon in the evening.

Raehah: Kisi ne aap ko help kiya he?//Translation: Did anyone hep you?

Umar: Ji mera bahi mera partner hein. Hum log bahi hein partner hein. Wo ate nahi he yahan pe, take care sara me hi karta hu.//Translation: Yes my brother is my partner. We're brothers and partners. He doesn't come here, I take care of everything.

End of transcript.