**Silk Road: Exploring Faith: Faith as a Way of Life**

**Video transcription**

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**Video running time: 2 minutes 45 seconds**

Meet Mariam. She attends the Abu Bakr Mosque in Middlesbrough. Mariam works for the Islamic Diversity Centre, a Newcastle-based charity that promotes Islamic awareness through education, engagement and empowerment.

**Why is your faith important to you?**

My faith means to me being a whole system, a whole way of life. For me Islam is not just something that I practice at home or in the Mosque. For me, Islam is a way for me to understand how I believe God wants me to live my life, outside, inside at home, at work, socialising with people. For me it’s a whole framework or a system of being. And that’s actually the word that Allah or God uses in the Qur’an, which is *dīn,* and *dīn* loosely translates from Arabic to English as being a system or a way. So, for me Islam is not just a religion about ritualism and putting your head down on the ground 5 times a day, it’s about how best can I please my Creator in my day to day life.

**What is the most important part of the Mosque for you?**

For me, having a dedicated prayer hall in the Mosque just for women is really important, away from the main prayer hall. Very simply because I grew up in Sunderland and as girls we weren’t really encouraged to go to the Mosque, very simply because there wasn’t a place just for women. And so as I got older and I went to University and there was a prayer space just for women, as well as the men, it meant that when I was at University I had a really comfortable place to practise my faith and that was where I came into my identity as a Muslim woman.

Now that I am seeing that the Mosques are, renovating themselves in Newcastle and in Middlesbrough it’s really vital for me as a Muslim woman to see that actually there is going to be space for just us as sisters to relax, have our conversation, have our own space in that Mosque.

**Is there a part of the Qur’an that is particularly important to you?**

For me, one of the most fundamental, or most important aspects of Islam is a saying of the Prophet Mohammed, which is known as a Hadith and He said that I have not been sent to Mankind except to perfect good manners. This personally resonates with me a lot because when you study the life of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon Him, which is what I’ve been trying to do as well, you look at the way He behaved and interacted, His manners, His demeanour, was with people, Muslims and non-Muslims. And when you learn more about Him, it makes you fall in love with His character and personality even more. And so for me, making sure I have the best characteristics, best manners, best behaviour I can with people, it means that I am actually trying my best to represent my faith as best as possible. Because the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon Him, told us that we should be the best ambassadors for the religion that we can be as possible.

**Thank you to Mariam Khan and the Abu Bakr Mosque community for their help in making this video.**