

Transcript of Interview with Dr. Azizah Y. al-Hibri

Introduction

Elkoustaf: My name is Hisham Elkoustaf and I am a third year student at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Today is Saturday, March 21st, 2002. It is 12:20pm in the afternoon and I will be interviewing Dr. Azizah Y. al-Hibri.

The interview commences on the next page.

Elkoustaf: where were you born and when?

al-Hibri: I was born in 1943 in Beirut, Lebanon.

Elkoustaf: where were your parents born?

al-Hibri: my father was born in Beirut as well, and my mother was born in Damascus, Syria.

Elkoustaf: what did your parents do for a living?

al-Hibri: my mother was a good house wife, and mother, and caretaker, and my father was a business man and still is.

Elkoustaf: what kind of business is he involved in?

al-Hibri: trade mostly and manufacture.

Elkoustaf: do you have any siblings?

al-Hibri: yes I do.

Elkoustaf: how many?

al-Hibri: I have three brothers and a sister.

Elkoustaf: and what do they do?

al-Hibri: My brother Ibrahim is an international business person; my brother Jamal is a chemical engineer; my brother Tayeb is a professor of history; and my sister Huda is a doctor.

Elkoustaf: if you could just quickly tell us what your childhood was like in terms of your relationship with your siblings, did you guys get along very well?

al-Hibri: there are quite a number of years between me and my siblings so my childhood was mostly being alone reading a lot of books and magazines. In fact I taught myself how to read, I don't know how I did it but I was so bored...I taught myself how to read and then when I did have siblings it was a lot of fun we would spend a lot of time together and we would make a point of eating together, chatting...I think of those days in a very warm way.

Elkoustaf: this is in Beirut, Lebanon?

al-Hibri: in Beirut, Lebanon.

Elkoustaf: and did you attend high school also in Beirut?

al-Hibri: yes I did.

Elkoustaf: and what type of student were you in high school?

al-Hibri: I was an honors student I could say. I went to the American school for girls.

Elkoustaf: and what were your favorite subjects or extra curricular activities that you engaged in?

al-Hibri: I liked mostly Literature. Arabic literature and English Literature. And when I say English, it was English, not American.

Elkoustaf: and did you have, at that age, any particular authors that influenced you?

al-Hibri: Khalil Jebran.

Elkoustaf: and were there any high school teachers also that stick out in your mind as having a positive influence on you?

al-Hibri: yes...in a very humanitarian way, I remember Ms. Craig. I can't remember what she taught us...she taught us some mainstream courses, regular courses, but what I remember about her was that she was a very kind person. And very attentive and cared about her students.

Elkoustaf: I am going to continue my questions now and focus a bit more on your college years at the American University in Beirut ("AUB"). why did you decide to stay in Beirut, Lebanon, as opposed to attending college in the United States?

al-Hibri: that was not an option at the time. And I was fortunate that I went to a university. I had to convince my father, not my family, but just my father, that I wanted to go to a university and my brother backed me up, and so I went.

Elkoustaf: and what would have been the option, the other option, had you not gone to college?

al-Hibri: well my father's argument was that I was really excellent in Arabic Literature, I was already published, and we had at home one of the best Arabic libraries in the country, so he couldn't see what I would gain from going to a university.

- Elkoustaf: and while at AUB, what was your undergraduate major?
- al-Hibri: it was actually Physic...yes because I argued to my father that we didn't have a physics lab at home (laughter), so he sent me to college.
- Elkoustaf: so was that a tough transition having all the years previously focused on literature and now all of a sudden focusing on physics?
- al-Hibri: no. For some reason I just loved it. It was different, I loved physics, I discovered chemistry, math did not sit very well with me, but I liked the sciences.
- Elkoustaf: in terms of extra curricular activities, were you involved? for instance with student government?
- al-Hibri: quite a bit...quite a bit.
- Elkoustaf: and what did you do most?
- al-Hibri: I did a lot of things. I remember one program which was very successful and quite large which was a welcoming program for junior year abroad students—Americans coming to spend a year in Beirut and we wanted them to have a very comfortable and welcoming few days in the beginning and that went extremely well.
- Elkoustaf: and in terms of any political activity at all?
- al-Hibri: yes I, well not political, but I was a member of the debating society. I can't remember what positions I held in it, but I remember at one point Malcolm X and Malcolm Boyd, I don't know if people remember Malcolm Boyd, both passed through Beirut and they were both invited to campus to speak by the debating society.
- Elkoustaf: and how was your experience in being in the same environment with such a great leader such as Malcolm X back then?
- al-Hibri: I did not know about Malcolm X until he arrived on campus. We had wonderful chats together, I did not have to deal with the stereotype image of him in the American press, I just didn't know it. I found him to be a very kind and sensitive person.
- Elkoustaf: and having attended graduate school in the United States afterwards, did you perceive any major differences between an education say at AUB and it's counterpart in here the United States?

- al-Hibri: yes. At AUB I found that the teachers knew their students, almost on a personal level, not quite, but nobody was really anonymous. But in the US, I think partly because I was an immigrant and partly because of the nature of the campus, I felt a lot more anonymous and basically, not uncared for, but somewhat marginalized to some extent.
- Elkoustaf: I guess this is a good time to make the transition from your studies in Beirut to the United States. You attended graduate school before law school at the University of Pennsylvania. When did you first become interested in graduate studies?
- al-Hibri: when I was at the American University, in my last year, I had moved from physics to math and then from math to logic, which was the closest thing to math but I could still count my credits and I ended up in Philosophy where they taught logic and that was the other campus, Arts and Sciences. And at that time I applied for graduate school in Beirut and I was rejected because while I was an honor student in high school, I did not do very well in undergrad because of all the activities, so I decided that if I am going to have a graduates education anywhere, it has to be outside.
- Elkoustaf: and you eventually chose to attend the University of Pennsylvania where you obtained a Ph D in Philosophy?
- al-Hibri: yes.
- Elkoustaf: what lead you to choose Penn as opposed to any other institutions in the US?
- al-Hibri: you know at that time I believe it was some professors, I didn't come directly to Penn, but some of my professors in the US mentioned Penn as a good option and I had looked at the program and I thought that it would fit me much better than other programs in the US.
- Elkoustaf: and if you could recall you experience at Penn, was there any negative treatment that you faced because of your gender or ethnic or religious background?
- al-Hibri: I think of the days doing philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania in a very positive light. It was very difficult when I first arrived, I arrived right at the time when the Munich events had taken place, you know there was that massacre and shooting, and it was a very tough time for all of us. But the department did not identify politically or ethnically it seemed to me. We were just a family depending on our thought, and there were different schools of thought in the department and I found a comfortable group and had a great time.

Elkoustaf: and you speak of Penn promoting this notion of family. I was just wondering about the diversity of this family and whether there were other female Ph D students as well?

al-Hibri: yes. And even the faculty in philosophy was quite diverse, not only in terms of gender but also ethnicity

Elkoustaf: During your course of graduate studies did you teach any courses as a teaching assistant?

al-Hibri: yes I did.

Elkoustaf: what was that experience like?

al-Hibri: actually I was a...I think I was given a research assistantship and I did not teach because in the first years, that is wrong...I'm sorry let me back up a little bit...I'm having difficulty remembering because it's been such a long time. No I don't believe I taught but I did have research assistantships all the way through.

Elkoustaf: and what was that experience like, from being a student to making the transition to teaching?

al-Hibri: it was wonderful. Being...you see, once I became a graduate student, I enjoyed higher education a lot more than I did in undergraduate. In undergraduate, I felt I had no control over my life or what I was being fed and that I could not really interact with it very positively. In graduate work I felt I was given space to think to grow and to take control over my own intellectual life and so I had a great time.

Elkoustaf: I will now just go ahead and quickly shift to your teaching experience after obtaining your Ph D. After completion of your Ph D, you became an assistant professor at Texas A&M?

al-Hibri: yes.

Elkoustaf: why did you choose to go to Texas?

al-Hibri: well you know these days it was very hard to get a job in philosophy, in fact when you apply to get a Ph D in philosophy you get a slip with the acceptance telling you we warn you there are no jobs out there. And I was very fortunate that when I applied I did get an offer and I got it from Texas A&M and it's a great university.

Elkoustaf: could you just tell us briefly what courses you taught?

al-Hibri: Yes. I was hired to teach a variety of courses. Ethics, logic, and a new course that I designed with another person who co-taught it with me and that's technology and human affairs. We ended up actually writing a book for the course, which got published and met with some success. Later in my stay at Texas A&M I was also asked to teach feminism, and I did teach those courses.

Elkoustaf: and among these various, incredibly interesting courses, which one would you say was your favorite?

al-Hibri: Logic (laughter). Isn't that boring? I love logic and in a way I regret not teaching it anymore.

Elkoustaf: and during that time at Texas A&M, did you visit anywhere else?

al-Hibri : yes I visited at Washington University at St. Louis for a year, I had a great time and I probably would have thought about even staying there, there was some discussion of that, had I not applied before I went to Washington University to law school. And I had gotten in the meantime acceptance and I got a deferral for a year while I was at Washington.

Elkoustaf: and how would you characterize your teaching style?

al-Hibri: I think my teaching style might be changing just a little bit as I grow up and get older. But it has never been authoritarian or hierarchical, at least not in any way that I am aware of. But I do like order and discipline and I like to connect with my students, so I like to get a lot of question and answer type of free flow discussion and interaction. I also see my students sometimes outside class, for example in the feminist class I took them on a trip to a museum showing feminist exhibits, so you know we did a lot of things.

Elkoustaf: I hope this question isn't too redundant, but what is your favorite aspect of being a professor?

al-Hibri: the fact that I have (pause)...you could say this is not true but academicians who go into teaching do not see themselves as employees, they are free thinkers and in that sense they have no boss and they do what they think is important and is right and it's that complete attachment to freedom that allows me to produce and if I ever lose that liberty, I don't think I can come up with any useful ideas.

Elkoustaf: again this is a perfect time to move on to the next section of questioning. having enjoyed your teaching experience so much, and enjoying interacting with students, learning from them and teaching them, you actually decided to once again to leave academia and go back to law

school. When did you first become interested or seriously considered attending law school?

al-Hibri: when I was starting to write more and more on feminist issues such as women's rights, and specifically Muslim women's rights, it came to me that if I am really interested in change it's not really going to happen through philosophy writing, although philosophy is very important, and I do need to be clear in my mind about which way to think and which way to go, but that the tool for change would be law and law and philosophy were very consistent with each other.

Elkoustaf: again just out of curiosity, which law schools did you consider?

al-Hibri: I wanted to go back to Penn. My experience the first time around was so positive, I knew the area, I knew the place, so why not I thought.

Elkoustaf: and just in terms of the student body and diversity at the law school, post graduate school, how would you describe it?

al-Hibri: the school...the student body was diverse. I felt the school felt short on issues of diversity and fairness in that regard. I have to mention to you that one reason I found Penn very interesting as a law school was because I could keep my connections with the philosophy department where I still had friends. And I had by then established the first feminist journal in the country together with the society of women in philosophy and I had negotiated with the philosophy department and the women's studies at Penn a deal whereby I could have offices, and assistants, and so on, to continue the journal even though I was doing my first year in law school.

Elkoustaf: speaking of your first year of law school, how did you find it? was it the traditional difficult year everyone goes through?

al-Hibri: yes it was partly difficult because although I decided to go into law, I really did not prepare myself to figure out what law is. I had lawyers in my family back home but law in the US is different and I was not prepared for the American experience, in terms of the material, the mode of thinking, how does the law work. But the most difficult aspect of going back to law school I found out, is after being an accomplished professor to be a student and then since I was a logician I was subconsciously or unconsciously critiquing every single argument a professor made and finding problems with it. That became very frustrating.

Elkoustaf: frustrating because you did not think the professors gave you a proper response or were overly antagonistic?

al-Hibri: no I tried not to critique the professors too much. There is nothing worse than a smart-alik sitting in your class (laughter). But it sometimes made me feel less confident when I heard arguments that were not so well presented...less confident about the abilities of my professors.

Elkoustaf: speaking of professors, does anyone in particular at Penn law stick out in your mind as having been the most influential?

al-Hibri: Yes. Professor Reitz was very good. He taught me contracts. But at the same time, and although people were afraid of him that he's tough, I thought he was a very kind man in class and outside of class, he really cared about his students. And I kept a relationship with him till this day. The other person who also affected me a great deal was professor Summers. And again I love labor law, not only contract law, and we had a great time in class because our thought was very similar in many issues and in a way maybe I should have also considered being a labor law person.

Elkoustaf: now you mentioned you were able to start the first ever feminist journal, not only at Penn but also in the entire country, what other activities were you involved in during you law school career?

al-Hibri: I used to be...well the first year was all taken by the journal and even the second, part of the second year, but at that time also I was then selected as the editor in chief of the journal of... which keeps changing its name, I think at that time it was business...I don't know (laughter)...something about securities markets and business law...capitol markets and business law. And it was a band new journal...well somewhat unestablished compared to the other journals and I made a point of trying to get money for that. I got...I think about...a donation of like...I don't know...a large amount of money from Davis Polk when I was a summer associate, just for the journal so that we can furnish it properly, and so on, and at that time we had dean Mundheim, I tried to negotiate with him a better headquarter for the journal. Unfortunately, the decision process took forever and I left, with the money still sitting not having done anything with it, but on the way back when I visited Penn I found out that the journal was doing very well these days...has good quarters (laughter).

Elkoustaf: you mentioned Davis Polk being one of your summer employers, can you just briefly tell us what you did your other two summers?

al-Hibri: the first summer, I split it, when I was a 1L between a magistrate and judge Pollak. I was interviewing the magistrate and somehow I ended up interviewing also judge Pollak and they both liked me so they decided to split me for the summer. And of course the 3rd year I studied for the bar

and then went to Harvard to do one semester at the divinity school and then I went to Sullivan and Cromwell.

Elkoustaf: I guess again this is a perfect transition period. As you mentioned, immediately after law school you went to the Harvard Divinity School's Center for the Study of World Religions. Can you just tell us what sparked your interest in religious studies?

al-Hibri: well you remember as I mentioned earlier I was already working on Muslim women's rights. When I went to law school I felt that all the thinking processes I was engaged in as a professor had been somehow taken away from me, put on hold until I got my law degree. So I wanted to reactivate that flame and I went to the Divinity School for World Religions where my responsibility was actually to just write on the issues that I love so much. So it was a wonderful experience and I did lecture there as well.

Elkoustaf: and how long were you there?

al-Hibri: one semester. I could have stayed for a year but I thought that would delay me too much in terms of my class at Sullivan and Cromwell.

Elkoustaf: ok, so subsequent to that you joined the law firm Sullivan and Cromwell as a corporate associate, could you just briefly tell us what was your first year like at Sullivan and Cromwell?

al-Hibri: First thing. When I entered there were a lot of books that we were asked to read in preparation. You know you don't get...at least when I went there and I understood that the was the experience of others, they don't take you that same day and tell you go do this or that, they prepare you...and part of the preparation is reading a lot of works so that you get to know the culture of the firm to some extent and then will be orientation programs and seminars. So we did this for a couple of weeks and then I started getting the tasks, and I really enjoyed very much the tasks that had to do with securities laws. I love doing securities practice. When we started doing things like acquisitions and so on I was not as interested but I did not know that at the time and I did not know why, but we were working so hard. It was at the height of the activity just before the adjustment of eighty seven when we were working sometimes I remember going two three nights without sleep or shower and I thought that was getting to be too much and I decided to look for something less demanding and I was told that at Debevoise you can have more normal hours and so I went there but it turned out that you still had to work long hours (laughter)

Elkoustaf: speaking of Debevoise, you were there for five years after Sullivan and Cromwell so it must have been something else aside from just less hours.

Do you think that the firm culture at Debevoise was more conducive to your other interests as opposed to Sullivan?

al-Hibri: no frankly in retrospect I think the culture at Sullivan and Cromwell, especially in the area of securities was a lot more suitable for me than I had realized at the time and in retrospect I think I should not have left Sullivan and Cromwell so quickly but have stayed for a while. I stayed at Debevoise because it became clear to me after a while that you know I just shifted firms but really there wasn't much shift in the kinds of things I was looking for and that what I really need to do is become a professor, and being a professor was really what I was looking for and so instead of hopping law firms again, I sat there until I felt that it was time.

Elkoustaf: and if you could just briefly tell us about your experiences as a woman in private practice?

al-Hibri: there were problems...I will not specify which firms. But there were problems at times getting clients to accept women on the teams that represented them. And the partners were in a quandary as what to do when your client tells you I want an aggressive team so don't put women on it. I'm sure they've resolved it since then pretty wisely. There were also some partners in some of these places who also participated in a more stereotypical view of women so that some women felt they were not getting as choice projects as the men, but remember these were the early days and I am sure much of this has been worked out since.

Elkoustaf: in 1992 as you mentioned, you decided that, I guess, you missed the world of academia and you missed being a professor. Was it difficult leaving private practice?

al-Hibri: not at all. In fact the transition was very good. What happened was...as I was sitting in my Debevoise office pondering how to make the shift to academia, because once...you know, once you are in practice, it's not that easy to shift to academia. And I didn't want to go back as a philosophy professor. I got a call from Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law, who asked me to write if I could, an article about Islamic law. And I said sure. I thought that would be a good transition and I in fact very seriously researched that article and very hard, it took me many months, and finally submitted it, they accepted it, it got published, and I used that as my stepping stone.

Elkoustaf: so what attracted you most then to the University of Richmond Law School?

al-Hibri: well you know...you know the market (laughter) when you go out and start interviewing at various universities for a job. What happened was

Richmond gave a reception the night before the interview, and we were invited to that reception. I went and it was in a suite, there was an entry room and then the suite and in the entry room were two professors, one on the left of the door, one on the right, arguing about a very important case in Virginia, and ...VMI actually, and they were on each side, they were on opposing sides, and had actually written briefs and submitted briefs on opposing sides of the case and I got so involved in the case and in their arguments and the three of us and another group were talking that the time of the reception ended and I did not even enter into the other room. And the next day I was eating in the cafeteria and I see one of them, the professors, and he calls me by my name and he says why don't you join us, by my first name, so I got very impressed that they were very personal as opposed to a Wall street which was very cold and distant (laughter), so when they made me the offer on their campus on the spot, I accepted it on the spot.

- Elkoustaf: now in terms of again making a transition from...I guess a professor of philosophy to a professor of law, did you have to adapt any changes into your teaching style when you teach law as opposed to philosophy?
- al-Hibri: teaching law is quite different from teaching philosophy...Plato died thousands of years ago and he hasn't changed his views since (laughter). But when you teach law, it is a lot more dynamic field, everyday something could happen, everyday...even the perspective could go different on you. So you have to keep thinking about the latest changes and predicting the future changes so that you keep your students ready not only for today but for ten years after their graduation. I believe in a combination of lecturing and asking questions, asking my students to reflect. As I tell them in class, that what I try to do is help them...I teach corporate law, and I say I want to help you develop...you know in your guts, a sense of what a corporate reaction would be, so that even if you are asked a question you don't know, you'll know how to answer.
- Elkoustaf: aside from corporate law, you've also taught the following course: Islamic jurisprudence, sec reg, advanced corporations and corporate finance. Which would you say is your favorite to teach and why?
- al-Hibri: securities (laughter). I don't know why I like securities. I like logic and you know in each field they are very structured...maybe it is the structure I like... maybe it's the ethics. I wrote about that and I said what I like about securities is that it requires you to be a very ethical lawyer to practice in that field with success and I like the combination of ethics and law.
- Elkoustaf: one of my friends once told me that, he is also a professor, he said the best things about being a professor is that not only do you teach students but

you learn from them as well. So if you were to say...what are some of the things that you learned from your students both at the graduate level as a professor of philosophy and also as a law professor?

al-Hibri: hum...what a profound question. It isn't like one idea I would like to share with you but I've learned patience, a great deal of patience, that sometimes getting to the truth requires a lot of patience at time.

Elkoustaf: when you teach Islamic jurisprudence, I guess when you run the gamut of the course that you teach, it's the only one that seems out of place. I was just wondering what has been the reaction from your students to that course?

al-Hibri: well I taught it originally because we were looking for diversity of courses in the curriculum and then I stopped teaching it. And then this semester my school just put it on the calendar, I mean on the agenda, and then they told me they did, so I said ok, I'll teach it.

Elkoustaf: you were on leave of absence I believe 2000-2001, and then on sabbatical leave in Spring of 2000. Could you briefly just tell us what you did when you were away from Richmond?

al-Hibri: yes. When I went on sabbatical I was a scholar at the library of Congress, resident scholar in the legal division, where I was starting to research my book on the Muslim marriage contract in American courts. While there, it occurred to me to apply for some grants and I did, and I received a grant from the National Humanities Center as a fellow...I'm trying to remember the title of the fellowship...it's a Dupont fellowship, and at the same time I also received a Fulbright. So I negotiated with the Fulbrighters if they would let me have it as three months instead of a full year. They accepted and so after I finished my year in North Carolina with the National Humanities Center, I took the summer as a Fulbrighter in Qatar.

Elkoustaf: I just sort of want to bring the interview to a close to give you a break and also to sort of focus on your activities outside of the academic realm and I guess before I do that, I just want to mention a couple of things that you've been part of. For instance, you are on the Board of Directors of the Inter-faith Alliance Foundation from 1998 to the present; you were co-director of the United States and American Assembly entitled "Religion and Public Life"; you are also on the advisory board of the Public Religion Project at the University of Chicago and the American Muslim Council; you are on the advisory board of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, and another activity which I find incredibly interesting is that you were the founder, director, and vice president of International Relations at, I believe, Karamah?

al-Hibri: yes. At the moment I am actually the president and executive director of Karamah, Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights. Yes, I think a few years ago, it became clear that while Muslim women's issues are of importance to a lot of people in the world, the Muslim woman's voice was not itself being heard. So I found it necessary, along with other sisters, to form Karamah to bond with Muslim women in other places and also to voice some of their concern.

Elkoustaf: now again aside from Karamah...could you just briefly tell us what the word Karamah means for the non-Arabic speaking people?

al-Hibri: Karamah...actually we picked the word because there is a verse in the Quran which mentions Karamah, in one of its forms "wa laqad karamna bani Adam" and that verse means that "God has given dignity to the children of Adam" i.e. to all human beings, not just people with one religion or the other, and Karamah means dignity, that's why we chose that word.

Elkoustaf: now in your capacity both as a law professor and...I don't know if I am fairly characterizing you as a social activist...you have spoken in many institutions and many countries including: Qatar, Pakistan, Kuwait, Yemen, Holland, you've also spoken in Capitol Hill, US House of Representatives. What has been the reaction from this audience who is not the typical law student but rather the lay person, or a representative, or a government representative?

al-Hibri: depending on the audience, I've had a couple of reactions. When I talk overseas, if I am coming via the State Department such that...you know like for example the...what used to be the USIA and is now the Program for Public Education, Public Diplomacy...when I go with these programs, initially the audience might think that I am pursuing an American agenda and they look at me with some...you know suspicion of what I am trying to do. But then invariably I have established trust with my audience and the discussions were very successful. On the other hand when I am speaking in the United States about Islam, the audience tends to think that I, some of them, that I am tailoring my statements about Islam to sort of whitewash the situation and make them think positively about it, not realizing that this is the same lecture I give to Muslims. So it takes me a while also to try and let them know that this lecture is not about getting them to approve or disapprove, it's just telling them, you know, what Islam is.

Elkoustaf: you mentioned that from your students you've learned the value of patience. I guess in your interaction with non-students when you visit various countries, what has been the lesson that you've drawn from these people?

al-Hibri: patience again and don't rush to judgment. Patience is a very good quality if you want to succeed in public diplomacy, in teaching, in a variety of other things.

Elkoustaf: I think it was in 1997 that you visited Indonesia, if I am not mistaken. In one of your introductory remarks to an audience in Indonesia, you've stated the following, and please be patient as I quote your words. You said, "...our campaign for women's rights therefore, should not be understood as yet another attempt to snatch a piece of the pie in a power hungry society, not at all...it is in fact an attempt to pull all of our *ummah* [read community] from its civilizational decline and reintroduce it to our heritage of fundamental Quranic, democratic principles." This was in 1997, today it is five years later. In terms of looking at the Islamic *ummah* and giving it a general summary or analysis, do you think we are closer to this goal?

al-Hibri: no...no. But the goal is still a good one. It's just that not much has happened. The Muslim world has been sort of static on the outside. But I think a lot has happened on the inside in terms of the consciousness of individuals in Muslim countries. I am starting to feel that there is a critical mass being approached. It might not happen really quickly but it is on the way.

Elkoustaf: I guess I'll end the interview with two very quick questions. What advice can you give to us in inspiring graduating law students who have a profound and dedicated interest to uplifting those who are less fortunate than we are?

al-Hibri: well I'm glad you specified which law students because my advice would have been not just think of yourself, but think of others. But since you've mentioned that, I would say when you think of others, please think long term. Don't look for quick fixes and don't look at short term problems...have a longer horizon. You are young, you have several decades of service in front of you, you could do a lot if you think about the problems in the long term and have strategic and have strategic visions and solutions

Elkoustaf: the best way to describe you from my personal perspective is that you wear many hats, you have many titles, and you have world-renowned status among scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, scholars on Islamic women's rights. I just want to ask... **(Dr. al Hibri's cough symptoms necessitated a break in the interview)**

Dr. al-Hibri, to end this interview, I just want to say that as I mentioned earlier, for many of us you are a great role model, world-renowned, I

guess I hate to us the world specialist, but specialist in Islamic jurisprudence and women's rights. Of all your accomplishments, do you feel that there is still something that you need to do or accomplish?

al-Hibri: yes (laughter)...funny you should ask. Yes, I see myself towards the end of my life getting into the area of Sufism or mysticism and that's the one thing I hope I have time to do.

Elkoustaf: I just want to say on behalf of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, the Oral Legal History Project, myself, and my classmates, I want to thank you so much for your time and it was a wonderful time speaking with you.

al-Hibri: Thank you so much.