

TRANSCRIPT: KIQ ep 3

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[Intro music]

Rob: Hello and welcome to episode three of Keeping it Queer. I am Rob, your NUS LGBTQ+ officer, and I use they pronouns.

Sara: And I'm Sara, your NUS NEC second-place. [Laughs] My head always gets kind of mixed up when I'm trying to say that. So many words. And my pronouns are she/her.

Rob: For episode three, we are going to be chatting about the queer Muslim experience. Sara, do you want to introduce our guest and why we're choosing to talk about this?

Sara: Yeah, awesome. So we're recording in October, but this episode is for Islamophobia Awareness Month, which is November every year. And that's why we want to talk about this topic today. And our guest is Iqra Choudhry from Brown Girls Do It.

[00:01:03]

Iqra: Hey friends.

Rob: We're dancing-

Sara: Finger guns.

Rob: [Laughs] Yeah.

Iqra: I feel so welcomed.

Sara: I feel like you're a mini-celebrity. I don't know if people will listen to this and go 'who the fuck?' But I'm like-

[Laughter]

Iqra: Excuse me, 'whom the heck'

Sara: Whom the heck. Right, of course.

Iqra: Whom the hecketh.

Sara: But I'm always like, 'Iqra's such a celebrity and I'm in the presence of a celebrity'.

Rob: Bless. [Laughs] Iqra, do you want to talk about what you do and a bit about yourself?

Iqra: Yeah. So I am a current student at the University of Manchester. I'm in the third year of my Ph.D., which is a fact that freaks me out. But I'm also one of the two co-hosts of the podcast Brown Girls Do It. Which is Manchester-based. And we talk to women and non-binary people of colour about their experiences and the amazing things that they're doing. So we've been doing that for over a year now, which is crazy. We've taken a little hiatus but we'll be releasing episodes again soon.

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Sara: Yeah, those sound like really amazing people on your podcast as well.

Iqra: Sara's one of them.

[Laughter]

Rob: Real subtle there Sara.

Sara: I did not mean it like that. I meant like, quite famous people, like Mona Eltahawy. Which is just amazing, that you've managed to get really cool, quite prominent people on that podcast.

Iqra: Yeah, I think the really amazing thing about it has just been, the approach that we take is: you don't ask, you don't get. So we just cheekily tweet @ people and say 'please, please be on our podcast.' And sometimes it works, which is cool.

Sara: Awesome.

Rob: Awesome. So I guess to get in to the topic itself, I would just kind of like ask you to chat a little bit about, what is it like to be a queer Muslim? If that's okay.

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Iqra: It's interesting because I've been thinking a lot about that question recently, and I think the one thing that I think it's really important to say from the start is that, although Sarah... sorry, Sara and I-

Sara: Wow, rude.

[Laughter]

Iqra: I know, I know. I'm so sorry.

Rob: Cancelled!

Iqra: I know, that's it. Although Sara and I are both queer and Muslim, we have very differing experiences just between the two of us. And also, we don't really speak for the whole queer Muslim community. And we can't, because we're not on one... like, no two experiences are the same. But yeah, having said that, I had a strange experience, because I kind of realised that I was queer when I was about 14. I went to an all-girls school, so I started to realise the feelings that people described having for Jacob or Edward, for example-

[Laughter]

- when it came to the Twilight books. I was just like, 'I don't see that, but Kristen Stewart is pretty'. So-

Sara: Team Bella.

[00:03:55]

Iqra: Team Bella, I know, right? But yeah, I realised quite early on that I wasn't like all of the girls around me, who were boy crazy. And I really, really struggled with that, because I grew up in quite a conservative, strict household, and I didn't really have much access to the

internet or to any sort of queer resources. And all I knew was that, like, being gay was bad. And that you couldn't be gay and Muslim, or I didn't think you could. And then as I got older, I realised that I was also attracted to people of other genders. And so I was just like 'what does this mean?' I just got my head around the idea of being Muslim and lesbian, and then the idea of being Muslim and bisexual, which is the label that I've chosen, was very very new to me. And I think it's been a constant learning process. So I came out as bisexual at the age of 17. And then I had some time where I was, like, trying to figure out whether or not that could live alongside my Muslim identity.

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And then the older I've gotten, the more other queer Muslim people I've found, and the more I've found this wonderful group of people, the more I've realised that not only do people like me exist, but we're just as valid as people who are heterosexual and Muslim. So that's been my journey.

Sara: Yeah. I would say a lot of very similar things, like my journey was very similar. Like, in the sense that I was pretty young when I realised that I wasn't straight. And around the age of 13, 14, as well. And so I guess the thing that I would talk about is kind of how that made me feel about my faith. Just because, like, the journey is quite similar. But yeah, it felt to me like you just couldn't be queer and Muslim. And thinking back on it, it's really hard kind of trying to place where that idea even came from.

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Iqra: Because no-one says it explicitly when you're young.

Sara: Yeah. I was thinking about this the other day. I don't remember, but I was thinking, like, I guess it's just your socialised in a certain way. And even though no-one says 'you can't be queer and Muslim', it's just like it doesn't seem to add up in terms of everything that you're socialised to learn. Which is really strange. So I kind of fell out of touch with Islam and... because I felt like it was in opposition to my queer identity, or at least the Islam that I knew or understood, or had been taught. So I kind of identified as an atheist for a period. Like, a very long period of probably about seven or eight years.

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And when I came to Manchester and, like, came out I guess... although I use that very loosely, because coming out is such a weird concept to me. I met Muslims for the first time who had different ideas of what Islam was, and what it could be, and what it meant to be a Muslim. And then further down the line, I met other queer Muslims as well. Well, I say 'other'. At the time, I didn't identify as a Muslim. But I guess meeting people like that, both queer and heterosexual, but people who were Muslims who were being like 'Islam is not this one thing', really really changed my perspective. And I didn't just have like a, wake up and I'm Muslim again. Because everything adds up now, because I've completely rejigged in my head.

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But it definitely was a process of... I started to realise that, partly because of a lot of the thing that I'd been through in my life, and the fact that I survived it, I kind of started to feel like I did believe in something. That that label of 'atheist' wasn't right, or correct anymore.

Rob: Something that you both just touched on which I think is really cool is, you basically alluded to this transformative power of finding a Muslim community, or at least resources in

which you felt safe and you felt connected to. And so I was interested to hear how you found those spaces. Like, was it on the internet? Was it community spaces? I have a feeling it might be on the internet.

[Laughter]

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Iqra: So I have a really really clear memory of being 14, and going to the school library.

Sara: Were you going to say 'going to the internet'? [Laughs]4

Iqra: Going to the internet! No, because I found a little computer in the corner, because I didn't want anyone to see what I was searching, and I typed in the words 'Muslim' and 'lesbian'.

Sara: OMG.

Iqra: And then the word 'allowed', question mark.

[Laughter]

Sara: Oh, I'm sorry I'm laughing, because that's heart-breaking.

Iqra: [Laughing] Yeah, it is a little bit.

Sara: I'm going to change my Twitter name to 'Muslim lesbian allowed?', question mark'.

Iqra: No, exclamation point. So yeah, one of the first things that actually came up, which in retrospect I'm really really glad about, because I feel like it's probably one of the first resources that comes up when other people type in other similar things...

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It was the Imaan LGBT website. And so Imaan is a charity that's been going since the '90s, which seeks to sort of support Muslim people as they come out and help their families to understand that being queer isn't a sin, or wrong, or unnatural. And I was a mixture of glad that I'd found it, and that I could start understanding that I wasn't some crazy kind of anomaly and some mistake that God had made or something. But also there were sort of like FAQs about how to come out to family, and what to expect. And at that point I definitely wasn't ready for any of those conversations. So I remember quickly shutting down the browser and being, like, 'well that's that.'

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But I think when it comes to meeting other people who are queer and Muslim, and also other people who are queer and POC, there is something so wonderful about walking in a room and knowing that there are certain parts of your identity that you don't have to defend anymore. And like, I always describe it as coming home. And I think the older I've gotten, the more queer Muslim friends I have, and the more just being around them feels like being part of an extended family. But that's been my experience, and I know that it's not the experience of every single person. But I think it's sort of meeting people in person and having those conversations in person, has been so much more liberating, than finding internet resources. Although they were important when I was younger.

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Sara: Yeah. Kind of like I said, I didn't really fall in to the category of seeing myself as queer and Muslim until maybe, like, four years ago. So I never actively looked for anything online. I did not Google 'Muslim lesbian allowed?' question mark.

Iqra: Question mark.

Sara: But I think, and I didn't go looking for it when I came to uni either, so actually again, I feel like it's one of those things that was just meant to happen. That I ended up meeting people like that totally by chance, without looking for it. Which I know isn't incredibly helpful to people listening to this, but there are spaces that you can look for, and we might talk about that later. But I think that once I did reach that place of being, like, 'cool I'm queer and Muslim', then I was actively looking for it.

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And those spaces are out there, so if you do Google 'Muslim lesbian allowed?' question mark, then there's like, Imaan and Hidayah. I think those are the main two organisations. But yeah.

Rob: Something that I think might be interesting to touch on is your experiences of LGBT spaces, and especially, if you're happy to talk about it, LGBT+ student spaces, if that has been a thing that you have navigated.

[Laughter]

Iqra: So I went to university for my undergraduate degree at Newcastle University, and for the most part my experiences there were really really positive. But! I think sometimes, when we have an idea of what a queer person looks like, and what a young baby queer at university looks like, we have a very sort of cis, white, gay idea of what that person is.

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Sara: And also, like, that usually I think it's assumed that LGBT+ people are, like, atheist.

Iqra: Yes. And so, I remember quite clearly that I was trying to shake off my South Asian flatmate at this point, because I wanted to go sign up to the LGBT Society. But I wasn't ready to like, start screaming about how bisexual I was within my flat, because I didn't know whether or not it was a safe space to do that. So I wanted to sign up to the LGBT Society, and I went up and I put my name down for the email. And like, no-one said anything that made me feel necessarily unwelcome, but I got some funny looks from the then-committee members. And so I just kind of like, didn't bother with LGBT Society in first year.

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Because like, that initial interaction just had such negative connotations. I was like, you know what? Everybody else, all the other names on this email sign-up sheet are very white-sounding. And maybe this just isn't the place for me.' So I didn't bother. It turns out, like, the three people that I became very close with and ended up living with for most of my time at university all came out as we progressed through our time at uni. And so I had my little group of queer friends in my own house, which was lovely. And I felt like I didn't necessarily need to then be part of this society space.

But then in my second year, I was... so something that changed a lot of my outlook on a lot of things was the passing of my father just before I started my second year of university. And all of a sudden, I really wanted to do everything and to make sure that I was being represented in these spaces, whether other people liked it or not. So I kind of stopped giving a shit about what other people thought, and I was just like 'well, we exist and I have every right to be in this space.'

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And so even though I still had my qualms about it, I was like 'I'm going to be involved'. And that involvement really started with Newcastle University's first ever LGBT Awareness Week, where me and one of my best friends Liz, we put together a bisexuality awareness 101. And that really started a lot of conversations, around bisexuality but also around what it meant to be a person of colour and bisexual, and a person of faith and bisexual. And I would try and have conversations with people in person to challenge their ideas of what someone like that was, because I realised very quickly that a lot of the conversations that happen in Facebook groups for LGBT societies get really nasty really quickly.

[00:17:01]

Sara: Yeah.

Iqra: And there were a lot of people whose names I won't mention who really tried to have those conversations and tried to educate people, and were constantly shut down or, you know, accused of being divisive, or accused of being reverse-racist. Or, like, 'oh you know, I think you're just pointing that things that aren't an issue'. And those are the conversations that I saw happening, so I never tried to have the same conversations online. So yeah, I always felt as though, because LGBT societies are places that are primarily very very white, and very dominated by white cis gay men, I never felt 100% welcome or comfortable.

There were people who were white cis gay men who were wonderful friends to me and still are. But on the whole, I think, LGBT societies need to have a look at the way that treat people who aren't white and who aren't atheist. And just try and extend a hand to those people, and be more inclusive.

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And especially for committee members as well, I think moderating online discussion is really really important, and trying to bring it to an in-person conversation whenever possible, is really really important so that people can listen and learn as opposed to just shutting down people of colour and people of faith. How about you, Sara?

Sara: I think that what you've alluded to, which is really important to say, is that Islamophobia is racialised. And in a lot of ways, manifests itself in like, a very visual way, or based on visual indicators. Which is why it's racialised, but is why it's also particularly for, as I'm sure you know, people who wear hijab or, you know, are visibly Muslim in other ways. Like, have beards or dress up in a certain way.

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And people associate, especially the image of hijabis and bearded Asian men, with this conservatism. Which means in their minds 'oh, that person can't be queer, or can't have radical politics'. And stuff like that. Which now, at this point in my life, I think is hilarious.

Because I know so many, like, hijabis who are queer and have great politics. So I think that we really really need to kind of unlearn what we associate with people who are visibly Muslim.

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Iqra: I think, being someone who's been in queer spaces both without the hijab and with the hijab, because I didn't wear it when I was at my undergrad and now I do wear it, I think it's really interesting how differently people treat you when you have a marker of your faith. And I think the one thing that people in the queer community generally really struggle with is this idea that you can be a person of faith and be queer. But strangely enough, I think if you come from a Christian background and you find that your journey leads you to reconciling your faith with your religion, that is an accepted narrative in our community. There are plenty of very welcoming queer-friendly churches, who will fly the pride flag or who will explicitly say they're inclusive. And I had a lot of friends who were queer and Christian, and really really proud of that.

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And that was not just okay, that was celebrated. But weirdly enough, when you come to Islam, people have a real mental block about it. Which is bias, it's Islamophobic, and it's probably an institutional thing. It's something we've all grown up in, especially in a post-9/11 world. We all have very ingrained ideas about what Islam means. Especially if you've not grown up around anyone Muslim. And these are things that people who haven't grown up around Muslims need to unlearn in their own time.

Sara: Yeah. Yeah, I think that's a really important point, and I think that for me that really highlights the idea, like how racialised Islamophobia is, and the particular nature of it. Because when I think about the fact that being a queer Christian is becoming a more accepted concept, it's because people associate Christianity with whiteness. Which of course isn't true, but I don't think they'd extend the same assumptions to, for example, black churches or black communities.

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Because like, I very much know people who are black queer Christians who've had vastly, vastly different experiences of LGBT+ spaces to their white Christian counterparts. And I think that similar things could be said of queer Hindus and queer Sikhs. And yeah, because those are religions that people associate with a certain ethnic group. Therefore there's that mental block there, because Asian and Arabs are assumed to be more conservative. Or backwards, or whatever.

Iqra: Yeah. And I think, when we talk about Islamophobia specifically within the queer community, there is a way that conversation is more often than not shut down.

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So say I'm in a queer space and I want to start talking about Islamophobia and how it is an issue within the queer community. You know, like many other things, like anti-blackness or the way we fetishise people of certain races, or racism. There are so many issues within our own community. And they are more often than not shut down by people who have the most power within that community, more often than not, are cis white gay men who'll say 'well, you're lucky that you don't live in certain Middle Eastern country here, you're lucky that

you're not living in Malaysia, they stone people to death for being gay, you get lashed in public for being gay. But you live here, isn't that great?'

Sara: Oh my God, that narrative irks me so much. Especially because I was born in Saudi Arabia, so I'm very very familiar... well, not very familiar because I didn't grow up there or anything, but I'm quite familiar with how existing as a queer person in Saudi Arabia works.

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And there's always this narrative in the West that's like, 'oh, it's like completely not possible because you'll be stoned to death, blah blah blah'. But like, how often are people actually stoned for homosexuality in Saudi Arabia? Very very infrequently, because like... obviously it's problematic in its own way, but in a huge amount of the Arab world, even though there are laws wherein, I guess being caught being queer could lead to your execution, the reality is so much more complex than that. A lot of the time, it will be accepted but not really spoken about. Accepted until people enter in to heterosexual marriages, a lot of the time. And a lot of the time, executions or public lashings etcetera only actually happen when people use it as a blackmail tool, or something more complicated like that.

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So the reality of living in, I suppose like, a Muslim country, with such laws, is actually so much more complex. And can we realistically say that it's worse than it is for queer Muslim asylum seekers trying to come to this country? And being thrown in to detention centres and being separated from their families?

Iqra: Yeah. It's one of those things where, people only care about queer Muslim people in other countries elsewhere when it comes to shutting down conversations about Islamophobia here. If you want to have a whole conversation about how we can support our brothers and sisters and non-binary siblings elsewhere, then let's absolutely do that. But that is a whole different conversation from talking about Islamophobia within our own community here in the UK. And I know that it's a difficult conversation, I know that bearing up to the fact that you have been, like, that you've grown up in a culture that is inherently Islamophobic and has in recent years definitely become more overtly Islamophobic as well, is difficult.

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And it is difficult, especially when you're already marginalised in one way. And I think a lot of queer people get quite defensive when you accuse them of being Islamophobic. Whether they intend to or not. Or being racist, whether they intend to or not. Because they have this idea of 'well, I'm oppressed and I understand what it's like to be oppressed, so therefore I can't possibly be oppressing anybody else because that would make me a bad person, even though I understand what it's like to be treated badly.'

Sara: Yeah, it's like an amplified version of white fragility.

Iqra: It really is. And I think it shuts down so many other conversations, productive conversations, that we could be having about Islamophobia in our community. And this is one of the reasons why I think a lot of queer Muslims and a lot of people of colour who have faith tend to stay away from a lot of, like, more mainstream queer spaces.

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Like, you know, if you're queer and Muslim, chances are you might or might not drink. You might have a more complicated relationship with alcohol and the partying culture of LGBT spaces at large. And so, you know, a lot of the spaces where young people usually find themselves when they come out as queer as inaccessible or not as comfortable a space. And I think that's also something that we need to talk about just generally when it comes to the queer community. Is like, you know, it's proven that we rely on alcohol and abuse substances more than straight people, or cis people. And yet, all our culture still revolves... well, a huge majority of our culture still revolves around that. But I think sometimes being like 'hey, I don't drink', because personally I don't, and it's one of the reasons why I much prefer dry events.

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Having that conversation, it just comes back to 'oh, but is that because of your religion? Like, you know, but going out and getting pissed in the Village is like, part and parcel of being queer. So sorry.'

Rob: Yeah, and I think as well, societies need to remember that it isn't just, like, the Muslim members who are going to benefit from dry events. Obviously, you shouldn't be like 'oh, it's only a small amount of people who would benefit from it', but like, it's not healthy to have your main event every single week be a bar crawl or hanging out in the pub. That's not good.

Sara: Yeah.

Iqra: Don't get me wrong, at undergrad I fucking loved... sorry, can I swear on this podcast?

Rob: Yeah.

Sara: Yeah, yeah.

[Laughter]

Iqra: I loved going to Powerhouse on a Monday night, right. Like, light-up rainbow dancefloor, 90p drinks, it was great. Even though I didn't drink, I still went out you, you know.

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And I was still part of that culture, and I had a lot of fun. But it was the Sunday afternoon meetups in the coffee/bar space in the SU where I actually had conversations with other queer people, and made friends, and like reached out to other... like when I was in my second year and there were lots of new little baby queers, I could chat to them about what life in Newcastle is like, and finding this awesome community. And also, that's where I really solidified two of the best queer friendships I had outside of my house. Because those were friendships, I had with two people who lived at home during their university years, so they didn't really go out because it was a faff to get back home and they didn't want to... they weren't really going-out people anyway. And I think if we hadn't have had those sober socials, I may have met them but I don't think we'd have become the really close friends that we are now.

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Sara: Yeah. I think like, you're absolutely right to be like, it doesn't just benefit Muslim queer people. I think that those dry spaces are super essential to making genuine connections with other queer people and building our communities, and building collective care, and yeah, I

think you'll definitely notice as well that LGBT+ societies or spaces that are more political and active and healthy will revolve around dry activities. And ones that are run by, like, [Laughs] white liberals who just want to get pissed, are the ones that are like [Silly voice] 'oh, we're apolitical, we're not going to say anything about Nazis because we just want to have a good time'. I don't think that's a coincidence.

[00:31:01]

Iqra: Absolutely. And I think there was a really shift to... when our Welfare and Equality Officer, who was this great guy called Luke Allison, started his tenure at Newcastle. I think it was when I was in my final year at uni. And things really changed because Luke had always been an advocate of better mental health for students, specifically LGBT students. And a lot of that was putting money and support behind various sober initiatives. To this day, one of my best memories of an LGBT Society social was going to a screening of the movie Pride. And like, just collectively all sobbing together in the cinema.

Sara: Yeah, I feel like we've all been to a Pride screening.

Iqra: And that sense of community was just so beautiful, and I think that was one of the few times that I really really felt that. And again, when me and my friend Liz that bisexuality 101 awareness talk, there were so many straight people in the audience, which was great.

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But also a lot of people who didn't really know much about bisexuality or about biphobia within the community. And I remember, we were talking about our own experiences and things that people had said to us, you know, out and about in Newcastle and elsewhere. And there was a lot of people coming up to us afterwards going 'I didn't know that this was an issue'. And you know, if everything that we did just revolved around going out or pre-drinks, we never would have had those conversations. And I think, they were so important for people like me feeling included, but also important for people who have nothing in common with me in terms of like, race or faith. Like, the only things we had in common is our queerness. To take that away in to the world, and know that those differences exist and you can be cognisant of them and find ways to be more inclusive and welcoming, is such an important lesson. And where better to learn that than at university? We have that space and the time to do that.

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Rob: I guess one of the main issues that you both touched on there really eloquently was kind of the need for dry spaces, not just for Muslim queers but for the society as a whole. And I guess that's a really simple takeaway for societies and, like, people who are running LGBT+ spaces in general, is the importance of making sure they're dry, or at least some events are dry. Do you think there's anything else that our community leaders can be doing to support our Muslim siblings?

Iqra: Yes. So the one thing that I really liked during LGBT Awareness Week the second or third time that we did it was that we had, like, an LGBT and faith panel, and there were people of various different faiths. And it was a very open, lovely conversation about what means and what our experiences have been. And I think, you know, dry events are great and they are so much easier to put together, and less stress on the night than a bar crawl, because we've all...

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I used to be social secretary for a university society, and as the only sober person it was my job to put all these very very drunk freshers in taxis home.

Rob: Oh no.

Iqra: When they'd finally had enough.

Sara: Sounds like an absolutely nightmare.

Iqra: So I know more than anybody that having something dry is so much easier to organise and execute than something that involves a bar crawl or any kind of day drinking. So there is that, and I do think that's so important to remind people. But yeah, having panels and discussions. You have access to free space. Usually when you reach out to someone and say 'hey, would you like to come to a university space and talk about your experiences, or talk about what you do as an activist, or as a writer, or whatever?' More often than not, people will say 'yes'. And that's such a privilege, it's one thing I'm really realising now that I'm not really that involved with society stuff.

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Is that when you have the weight of a society behind you, you can really approach people that you wouldn't approach as easily if you were an individual, about having those conversations and bringing them in. And I think that's a really important thing to remember, is if you want to talk to a queer Muslim person, just reach out to them and be like 'hey, our society would love to chat to you, we'd love to talk about X, Y and Z'. And I think there's also something to be said for bringing someone in from the outside to run a workshop or to have a discussion, or to be on a panel, that will take the burden away from the people who are in the society to educate everybody else as well.

Apart from that, going back to what we were saying earlier, I think it is important to keep in mind the challenges that queer Muslim people face elsewhere.

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And so, when it comes to LGBT societies, and this is going back to what you said earlier Sara about being political. You know, support queer Muslim asylum seekers, you know. Like, have some events that focus on activism and change that is being made in various Muslim majority countries, and the ways in which we can support our Muslim siblings across the world who are also queer.

Sara: And don't do it in like, a stupid white saviour way.

Iqra: Yeah. Like, just uplift the voices of the people who are already doing the work, or listen to people who know about it than you do. And yeah, I think the takeaway with conversations like this is, there's someone who knows it better than you do, and taking the time to listen is transformative and it's the best thing that you can do to make people feel more included and welcome and supported.

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Sara: Yeah, I would totally echo everything that you said Iqra. And I think I would just add that it's definitely been an emerging theme over the past two episodes, where we've talked

about being QTIPOC and being disabled and queer, of like, just listening to people. It's just, it's been a theme.

[Laughter]

Rob: Full stop.

Sara: So I should really hope that if you've been with us since the first episode, these themes are emerging and you're seeing a pattern.

Rob: For sure. I've noticed that I say 'for sure' a lot. Like, when I was reading the transcript through, I was like 'oh my God, that is what I say at the end of everything in it'.

Sara: I say that a lot of as well. I don't think I've done it on the podcast a lot, but in life, I'm always like 'yeah, for sure, for sure'.

Rob: It's so annoying. Every time I say it now, I'm like...

[Funny chatter]

[Laughter]

[00:38:01]

Rob: Fantastic. I feel like we've touched on most of the things we wanted to talk about. Is there anything that you want to further explore, either of you? Or shall we wrap it up?

Sara: I would want to briefly say, I don't think we need to explore it because otherwise we'll have a really, really, really long episode. But I do think it's important to say, and Iqra did allude to it earlier, just that even though that's the title of the episode, 'The Queer Muslim Experience' TM, it's not a thing. For me personally, I am a cis South Asian and Arab woman... it's confusing. Even 'woman' is confusing sometimes, but still. So I can't speak to the experiences of, like, trans Muslims. And people have different relationships with Islam as well. I think that me and a lot of my queer Muslim friends, we don't have exactly the same relationship with our religion. And that's totally fine as well.

[00:39:08]

And like, Muslims, there are billions of us. We're like, the biggest religion in the world, so if you can kind of conceive of that then think of the incredible diversity of queer Muslims there is out there. We're just two.

Iqra: Yeah.

Sara: We're just two of those.

Iqra: Yeah, and we can't possibly articulate even a fraction of what those experiences are like in one tiny little episode. And neither should we try.

Rob: Because it would be a long episode.

[Laughter]

Sara: Yeah, yeah.

[Outro music fades in]

Iqra: Oh yeah, I forgot, I need to like-

Rob: Plug yourself.

Iqra: Plug myself. So Brown Girls Do It can be found on any and all social media, except LinkedIn, because who does that? So we're @browngirlsdoit on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

[00:40:03]

Our email, if ever want to be on the podcast or give us some polite engaged feedback, that's browngirlsdoit@gmail.com and we're also open to having new women and non-binary people of colour on to talk about their work and their experiences. So if you're one of those people, please do get in touch, because we'd love to have some amazing conversations with you.

Rob: Awesome! So I guess we will be back with you in approximately one month's time for a special live episode.

Sara: What?!

Rob: We talked about this!

Sara: [Laughing] We didn't talk about it...

Rob: We did talk about it!

Sara: Okay, maybe we did.

[Laughter]

Sara: Anyway, okay, this is me... no, that was done on purpose. I'm pretending to be the shocked audience right now. Rob, what is your announcement?

Rob: That's it. That was all I wanted to drop, was that the next episode is going to be a special live recording. And people can keep an eye on our Twitter and stuff for more information on that. But yeah, I just wanted to be mysterious and made you more mysterious by being like 'I forgot about this'. [Laughs]

[00:41:09]

Sara: Totally intentional.

Rob: I'm 100% sure we had this conversation but it was more than a few days ago, so it's okay.

Iqra: Well I'm very excited about it.

Sara: Yeah, I know-

Rob: I'm glad you are as well Sara. But yeah, thank you so much for listening. This has been Keeping it Queer.

[00:41:28] End of Podcast.