

## **Spinning Lifestyles – Shadula and Havavor**

***Can you just tell me what your names are?***

Shadula [lady] and Havavor [man]

***Can you tell me where you're both from?***

Shadula

Yes, I was born in this country but my parents came from Bangladesh.

***Do you know when they came to this country?***

In 1959.

***Did they come together?***

Yes, with the family.

***Whereabouts in Bangladesh did they come from?***

Sylhet.

***Have you been back there?***

Yes, when I was little, in 1965/66 stayed for a couple of years, came back in 1967 and haven't been back since.

***Is it very different in Sylhet?***

Yes.

***How different is it?***

Lots, of rivers, canals, a big mosque, Sadla Mosque who founded Sylhet.

***Have you got a lot of family in Sylhet?***

Not immediate family. Relatives.

***So what did your Dad do when he came over?***

He worked in a food packing factory.

***Did he work there long?***

Not for long.

***What did he do after that?***

We owned a restaurant in Mile End.

***What was it called?***

Blue Heaven Restaurant.

***When did that open?***

In 1967.

***So it must have been one of the first Bangladeshi restaurants?***

Not the first but one of the early ones.

***Did he have the restaurant for long?***

No, not for long. It closed in 1975.

***Did you work in the restaurant?***

No, I was too young, but I used to watch my mother prepare food.

***What did he do after the restaurant?***

He sort of retired. My Mum retired.

***Where do they live?***

In Mile End.

***Have you got brothers and sisters?***

I had two brothers but one brother died in February this year, he was 53.  
He lived in East Ham with his wife and 2 sons and a daughter.

***What was it like growing up in Mile End?***

Quite pleasant. The crime rate wasn't as high as it is now.

***Have you seen a lot of changes in the Bengali community?***

Yes.

***Can you tell me a little about it?***

Well, you get youth going to crime now and gangs in Stepney.

***What was it like when you were little?***

Quite pleasant.

***Were there things to do?***

Yes, there was Mile End baths, go swimming with the school. I used to go to Stepney Green School.

***Did you enjoy it there? Were there Bangladeshi boys and girls there?***

Not many?

***Your parents came over early, didn't they?***

Yes, they went to Manchester first, in Middleton.

***What made them move to London?***

Not sure. London was the capital so it was better to work there. My Mum worked in the cotton mills.

***Did she tell you anything about the cotton mills?***

Yes.

***Did she work there long?***

No.

***Did it close down?***

No. She just decided to move.

***So you haven't been back to Sylhet for a long time have you?***

No. 1965 I was there.

***I reckon it's changed a lot since then?***

Yes. The money my Mother earned in the cotton Mills, she had a house built in Tilda's Hill near the College of Bangladesh in Sylhet but unfortunately my father he sold it because his name was on the deed, so we haven't got it any more. She was upset about that.

***What does your brother do?***

He works in a nightclub and manages the staff and arranges cabs to take staff home.

***Do you think things have change a lot for Bangladeshi young people these days?***

Yes.

***In what way?***

They have more prospects and training and have colleges they can go to. There's more recognition of ethnic minority groups. Not like when I was young.

***Do you think the younger generation have become more Westernised and less involved in their culture?***

Yes.

In what way?

***They listen to rap music, go into crime and drugs and all sorts of nasty things.***

talks to man

***Havavor, you haven't said much. Do you live around here?***

I live in Commercial Road.

***How old are you?***

Since I was born.

22

***What school did you go to?***

?

***And when did your parents come over from Bangladesh?***

1972.

***Did your Mum come with your Dad?***

Yes

***And when were you born?***

1983.

***What did your Dad do when he came over?***

Worked in factories.

***In the East End?***

Yes

***Do you know what he did in the factory?***

Everything.

***Did your Mum work?***

Yes. At home.

***What did she do at home?***

Sewing.

***Do you remember that?***

No. I did after my Dad died. My Mum did some work and my sister helped. She did night work.

***Have you got brothers and sisters?***

Four sisters and one brother.

***Are they all married?***

Yes.

***Were they arranged marriages?***

Yes.

***Did you see a lot of them?***

I see two of my sisters nearly every week, but two of them are busy. One of them lives in Brighton.

***Have you ever been to Bangladesh?***

Yes, three times.

***When was the last time?***

That was when I was 15.

***And how old are you now?***

22.

***Not that long ago. How different is Bangladesh to here?***

There is quite a lot of difference. There are a lot of poor people. Last time I went I didn't stay in the city, I stayed in the village.

***What's your village called?***

Lasfara. Lasfara. It means Five Steps.

***You don't know why it's called Five Steps?***

No.

***How long were you there for?***

I stayed for 5 months.

***That's a long time. So what did you do while you were there?***

Went out. Didn't do much actually. Mostly stayed in. There was no TV, so I had to hire a TV (laughs).

***So it was very different?***

When I went the second time, it was much better because I was younger. My cousins and I used to do things, played football. Study and working.

***What was the village like?***

It's a nice place. ?

***Did your family have a farm? Did you help?***

I didn't help. We sacrificed a cow, two of them. I watched that. That's to give it to the poor.

***So there are a lot of poor people? That's really good. Do you have a lot of family there?***

Yes.

***The times in going back to Sylhet, or your village, have things changed a lot?***

Yes, things have changed. People are building houses with bricks. Going to Universities to learn how to make clay bricks.

***Do you think that's because so many Bangladeshi people have come over here or to different countries are sending money home. Did your Mum and Dad send money home?***

Yes. My Mum did send money to my grandmother, my Uncle. Now my uncle, my mother's younger brother is here, and he's working. They are building houses now with an upper floor.

***Is that a sign of wealth?***

These houses have gates and are safer.

***Do you feel the young people here now have changed over the past few years?***

Yes, they are more Westernised.

***Have they forgotten their culture?***

I think they have.

***It must be so different over here to being in Bangladesh?***

Yes, it is.

***I mean like your cousin's upbringing and yours? Were there a lot of differences?***

Yes. In this country you go to school and don't have to pay any money. There when you go to Secondary school you have to start paying. They have to stop then, can't go to College, because they can't afford it.

***Are there a lot of jobs there?***

Not like this country. You have to be ? mostly people are in shops. My cousins used to ride a rickshaw bike and go round selling things. ?

***Do you remember your Dad when he worked in the factories?***

No. I was too young then.

***Did your Mum find it better when she came over here?***

?

***Well thank you that was very interesting. Are there any funny stories you can tell when you went to Bangladesh?***

Shadula

My Dad was driving the car down this road and a rickshaw started to race him. (laughs) he had a passenger in the back and as he went the weight knocked the rickshaw over and he couldn't get out.

***I know. When I was in India it was quite frightening to watch the driving on the roads.***

Havava

Did you get mosquito bites?

***Oh I did, I didn't get bitten that badly because I had some very, very strong repellent, but I smelt so bad, it was disgusting. Did you?***

Yes. The first time I did, but the second time was not bad. They did bite me.

Shadula

I was bitten by ants, red ants.

***Do you think there's a lot of changes between the different generations, like your parents when they came over here and yourselves and friends?***

Havava

Yes much different. You have to work much harder in this country.

***Did your Mum find it difficult to get food here when she first came here?***

Shadula

No, there was an Asian shop. I was born in Settle St and there were shops near there.

***So it wasn't so bad then? They came in 119?***

1959 to Manchester and I was born in 1961.

***How long were they in Manchester?***

I'm not sure, about a couple of years.