



## *Dishing Democracy*

### ISSUES TO CONSIDER

*What subjects are too dangerous to talk about? Why?*

*Can cultural diffusion have a direct impact on societies today through satellite television? How?*

- *Kalam Nawaem* balances personal and political topics for discussion. In your opinion, does a show like this better address personal concerns (regarding women's sexuality) or political ones (such as the relationship between Islam and perceptions about terrorism)? Do you believe the show balances these well? Does it succeed better in one area than another?
- What are some of the taboo subjects tackled on *Kala Nawaem*? What are some of the taboo subjects in America today? Are the issues discussed on *Kala Nawaem* easily discussed in America? Explain.
- Many Middle Eastern countries are culturally traditional if not conservative. The television show you've seen is popular because of its opinionated and vocal women hosts. How is this received by the conservative nations where the show is seen? Can the hosts change perceptions of women in society?
- Did *Dishing Democracy* change your ideas about Arab women? How? Is it important that *Kala Nawaem* is centered on four very different women? Why?
- In the United States the explosion of cable television and radio talk programs actually coincided with an increase in political partisanship and rancor, as these programs exploited controversial issues to achieve ratings. Could this happen with Arabic satellite programs and what might be the possible effects?
- What is the role of television as a political force? If television is the medium where people are informed about the world, and their own personal lives, what has its role become as a force for social and political change?
- Rania Barghout, a host of *Kala Nawaem* says in "Dishing Democracy" that "you cannot stop change." But shouldn't she be more specific? Haven't one-party states in North Korea, Burma, China and in parts of the Arab world been very effective at stopping political change for much of the past century?

- What is democracy? What rights come with the concept of democracy? What rights are you willing to give up for stability in your society? What rights are you unwilling to give up? Why?
- Have you ever been influenced by a television program? Explain.

### **Activities**

#### **Research and report on one of the following questions:**

- What role does the government have in the media in America?
- When does the right to freedom of speech challenge the right of the government to control information?
- Al Jazeera English has had a difficult if not impossible time finding a place in Americas cable channels — why?