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| **R** | You’re not recording directly on Zoom? |
| **I** | No so we’re recording on a GDPR… it’s just… yes. [both laugh] |
|  | I can’t even talk about it anymore but no… so it’s on a sound recorder and then there are ways in which we have to process that so no… but it’s all good, it’s all good. Okay, so the first question is can you tell me about the last wedding ceremony you conducted in England and Wales, specifically focusing on the type of ceremony and location. I assume the last one will be during Covid, if possible can you talk about a pre-Covid ceremony. |
| **R** | Okay, *bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*, a pre-Covid was a long time ago. I would have to… |
| **I** | Oh okay then, then lets stick to Covid and I’ll ask you what the difference was.  |
| **R** | Let me see, I’ve got all the Nikah Certificates on my drive here. If I can figure out where it was I’ll be able to understand which one it was… where’s it gone, Nikah Services…. Nikah Certificates, Nikah Certificate Records, let’s have a look now. …Was it this one, that was in June, that was a… yes I’ve got it.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Yes, go on then. So the question was… what was the question again, remind me sorry? |
| **I** | So if you could just tell us about the last ceremony that you conducted, focusing on the type of ceremony and the location? |
| **R** | So the type of ceremony is always the same, it’s a Nikah Ceremony, so that’s the only sort of religious ceremonies I will conduct. The ceremony on this instance which is probably a rare instance was actually in our building at the [organisation], I would say out of all the Nikahs I have done, probably about less than 10% fall within the centre here, the vast majority of them are either at a venue or at a home. So the Nikah took place here, the ceremony was for a Pakistani family from the Pathan background, so Pathan background are quite conservative from the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, which is very conservative. Our scenario is always that we encourage both male and female, the groom and the bride to be present in the Nikah and we always encourage the family members from both sides including the females to take part in the ceremony because it’s an auspicious occasion, it’s a happy occasion. However because they were from a conservative Pathan background, no females came and it was just the males from both families that attended.The way I got around that was… I’m quite stubborn… was I set up a stream for the family because I knew the girl who was getting married and the gentleman getting married was my close friend, I felt it was excluding her, so I put up two cameras and I streamed it across via a YouTube link for them, however there were no females in the building at that time, it was just males… there was about 40 males that came to the Nikah Ceremony from both sides of the male and female part of the family and that was the probably only Nikah since doing Nikah since 2005 that I actually did it Urdu, again because they … it flustered me because I totally do not know the course of words or… I had to actually practise it… sit down once and practise the script to go through.The ceremony generally is… I try to keep it the same which would be I will ask the… I normally will have a table; I would forward face with the congregation or the guests behind. I will ask the bride and groom to both sit on each end of the table if they’re present… in this instance he wasn’t so I asked him to sit in front of me. I asked the father in law and the father to come on one side, obviously the mothers weren’t there otherwise I would get the mothers to sit by their side as well and then I got the elders from the family to sit by the side, and then it was the remaining of the friends and family that were behind them.I will normally always commence the gathering with a short lecture reminder in regards to the meaning of Nikah… purpose of Nikah and the virtues of Nikah, the prophets Nikah, the sermon and what it means and the significance of the message behind the sermon. I would then normally ridicule the groom at least and crack some jokes, and try to loosen him up a bit and try to get them to smile. I almost find our Nikah… if you look at our website, we’ve sort of put it on there as well, we try to make the Nikah a rememberable service rather than a funeral service. I tend to find Nikah services really boring and horrible so you know we will encourage… if they do it in our building we will put some flowers up, we will decorate, we will perfume, we will, you know, make sure the temperature’s perfect inside and we’ll try to make it really special for the couple and likewise with our certificate, we’ve put a lot of effort behind it, it’s not just like in… some Mosque’s have a receipt book… have you seen it, it’s so embarrassing when you go there and they go can they rip it out and they give you one, so we’ve made an effort to making it presentable you know, professional and that’s how it goes. So normally I would speak for about 20-25 minutes. I will then out of respect speak to both of the parents, mothers and fathers of both sides, do give me permission to do your son’s and daughter’s Nikah, it’s not Islamically required but out of respect… they will say yes, then I’ll go to the bride and groom and say ‘do you give me consent to conduct your Nikah’s?’ it’s, normally, yes and then I’ll do the Arabic Khutbah.My style is slightly different, very different in the way I do the Nikah. I do it in English and traditionally I think the Islamic way of doing it has always been “do you accept her to be your wife?” “Yes I do accept her”. They don’t ask the girl generally in our sort of traditions do we? The girl normally is just sat on the side. And then I’ll ask the girl the same question, and then I ask them to repeat after me, this is where they sort of go red as tomatoes and wet themselves and I say repeat after me and I’ll say, Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim and then they’ll say Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim, and then I’ll say repeat after me “I [name] have accepted [name], daughter of [name] to be my Islamically wedded wife.” I’ll make them say that and then I’ll say to the girl as well repeat after me and then I’ll make them say the same sort of script and then after that I will congratulate them and before they start the then signatories of the Nikah certificates I will do a Dua. My Dua is always in English, it’s normally totally focused on marriage and wedding and blessings around the marriage and the wedding and then after that before they start hugging and meeting all the photographers if there are any and say here take your photos of the Nikah signing and then after that they can start meeting and doing what they do.  |
| **I** | Oh it’s lovely… so it’s very different to your average Nikah Ceremony then. |
| **R** | Yes it is, it is. I have two conditions, one is on this occasion when I allow the girl not to be present it was because I knew the family very, very personally for the past 20 years… so I wasn’t in doubt that the girl… I wasn’t familiar. I know they’re a very conservative Nikah hijabed family but I knew them personally for a very, very long time but generally if somebody walks through the door who I do not know, then there is no chance that the Nikah would be conducted without the woman present or without the bride present. If I do not know the family, they have to come in for a prior meeting with one of the Imams as well. |
| **I** | Actually that takes us on to question two, so if I can just ask it and then you can continue. So is it usual to meet or otherwise communicate with the couple before the wedding ceremony? |
| **R** | For ourselves absolutely because generally they tend to not know the faintest of what a Nikah Ceremony is or the legalities or the thick of the Nikah Ceremonies, they don’t know it which is a problem for us. So if we don’t have that meeting they just cause us a headache in our administration and organising. So they won’t know what Mahr is… the bridal gift, what amount it should be. They won’t know what immediate and a deferred Mahr amount is. They won’t know what wali is, a father, or they won’t know what a liaison is if they’re not present. They won’t know what amount of mahr to give. On one occasion we had a man that said £10.00 and I sort of nearly threw him out the building and said “I don’t think so…” so those conversations generally have to be had, and then the conversation in and around the set up on the day because the vast majority of them… this amazes me is that the vast majority of Nikahs I do are not actually for conservative families… they’re for the least conservative families that you’re doing a Nikah, but when it comes to the Nikah they shove the girl in a cupboard in the back of the hall… I don’t know what happens, so I say, “you know, she’s going to come out all… you know glamourous with her suit on for the whole world to see her but for the Nikah we have to shove her in a cupboard?” You know, what on earth is that? And some of them will still refuse and say, “no it’s our tradition,” I’ll go, “Well, put her on the stage with me, let her take part in her Nikah, let her say the words, let her see her Nikah, let her listen to the speech…” but sometimes strange cultures preceed that. So those conversations have to be had. Alhamdulillah, the vast majority of them will come around and allow both parties to come on and I’ll have to explain to them. I then start becoming the wedding manager to explain how the setting will be and move this here and move that there, and your lighting’s bad and the camera man won’t be able to see from here, and sort of get that set up for them and have that conversation. But more importantly, the vast majority of Nikahs we actually end up doing are acquaintances or far acquaintances or… you know the Muslim community is very small, so you always tend to find or know someone when you get there anyway. But if it’s a couple that we do not know whatsoever, or we’re not acquainted with, then we’ll definitely ask for a face to face meeting. In particular if, when they complete their Nikah application form… service application form, which it comes in before the Nikah’s conducted… I’m very rigorous on the way we have a vetting system on there to see if there’s anything dodgy going on. If there’s any indications of any dodgy business in the Nikah; it’s not legit, there’s some room for… maybe there’s not consents from parents, maybe the girl is too young, then we will say you’ll have to come in for a meeting in those instances.  |
| **I** | Okay, so moving on slightly then to think about the legalities so… are the ceremonies you conduct part of a process towards a legally binding marriage? So what I mean by that is do you view the Nikah as a step in a process which will at some point include or involve a legally binding ceremony? |
| **R** | No, so on our Nikah proforma on the website and it really is very clearly stated that the Nikah Ceremony or the Nikah after which takes place is an Islamic marriage ceremony, it isn’t a legally binding… it isn’t a legally binding ceremony under British law, that’s stated on there. We applied for registration of the centre last year and the Home Office is just… they might as well be in Islamabad if you ask me. They’re so dreadful that we’re still here now in November, 12 months later, with no paperwork and continuous headaches from them in just… I don’t know whether it’s Covid or just the inability to be able to deal with an application, I don’t understand what’s going on between them… so, we did actually apply for being registered. Personally for myself, I don’t think it will work much because the vast majority of the Nikahs unfortunately within our communities tend not to want to be in any building, they want it in their own venues. So they want it in the… whether it’s a banqueting hall or some formal place that they’ve hired. We always encourage them to have the Nikah ceremony here in the Masjid… in our prayer hall, in our communal hall. We encourage them to maybe have it after Jum’ah, after an Isha prayer, to make it a bit more auspicious… a Nikah is an Islamic ceremony, it’s a holy and a virtuous gathering but, like I said, the vast majority of the time it’s outside, so I don’t know how that would actually impact those who want to be registered as well. We are still waiting for the paperwork for the past six weeks… six months sorry, and we still don’t have it.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | But they do clearly know that it is not… we make that very clear on all documents and on the website to state that it is not a legally binding marriage and it’s a Nikah… it’s a comp… it’s a Nikah in which you are Islamically wedded. |
| **I** | Okay, so that sort of dealt with question four, which is ‘how do you perceive your role in advising the couple on the legal status?’ But if I can just probe a little bit more with the question before so… in terms of a process I guess what I mean is, while your role is very clear, you just do the Nikah but do you expect that the couples will go on and undertake a legally binding ceremony or is that something that you’re not engaged with at all?  |
| **R** | It’s something we don’t engage with and that’s their personal private decisions that they may want to make. As you know the vast majority of people in this country aren’t married whatsoever, so we don’t tend to… some of them will ask us, that is it necessary for us to have...? I generally say to them, “well I don’t know what purpose you want to have it for… in this country if you have a Nikah Certificate they still do accept you as a married couple under what they want. So if you’re going for Umrah… if you’re going into a foreign country and you have it… if you are applying for benefits or anything else such, they will accept your Nikah Certificate as a proof of marriage. Will they legally require… I don’t know that’s your personal private issues but it depends on why you want it as a couple. Sometimes it works for some, sometimes it doesn’t work for others. But we don’t generally advise on that, we just tell them that this is the legal status. Some people come to us and say you know we want a marriage certificate… we want it legally done and we’ll explain it and well obviously… “what do you want it for?” “Well you know what if I want to go to Dubai, what if I want to go on Umrah, what am I going to do for my benefits, or when you have children and stuff like that?” and then I explain to them, well look, it’s accepted… the marriage certificate is accepted, they do listen to it… beyond that I don’t know but that’s for you to… if you do want to you’re going to have to go and get registered at the registry office. |
| **I** | Okay, so question five… where do your ceremonies generally take place? So the majority of the Nikah that you perform, where would they take place? |
| **R** | Probably I would say always at venues, the vast majority of the time. We have like I say about 10% here in the building and we always encourage for it to be in the building. It makes life easier for us and easier for us to manage. Generally, whenever we get to a venue there’s always a botched job in the way it’s done, the PA system don’t work which means that… so we have an inclusive mindset of the Nikah ceremony should be a chance, because we’re an educational organisation, to educate the community that are there as well. So a half an hour slot is very, very important to get our message across to the wider community on who we are… and try and engage them as well because many of them will never have come across English speaking Imams… many of the guests coming from far and wide may not be in contact with Muslim organisations, so we feel it’s a prime opportunity. So we always encourage to have it at the building, however the vast majority of the times it will be at a venue and a smaller amount of times maybe even at a home.  |
| **I** | Okay, right so then moving onto a different point now… have you seen a change in demand for the Nikah Ceremonies in the past ten years and if so what do you think the reasons are? So… sorry yes?  |
| **R** | Go ahead, sorry… |
| **I** | So has there been an increase in demand? Have more people wanted to do the Nikah rather than going through the civil process? |
| **R** | I think the increase may be on the civil process not on our side. Ours have been steady as normal. Obviously within the Muslim community Nikah is actually their priority and nothing else. The vast majority of them will not even… they consider the civil marriage just you know… we’ll just pop in ourselves and sign off and come out; it’s not the main part of their marriage, they consider that the Nikah is the actual main part of the function… that’s the part where guests will come and the civil part of the marriage is just a tick box that they do.So, on our side it’s been steady as usual, business as usual, people coming in and Nikah as normal however, I do feel that there is probably a bit more of an awareness in the younger generation and particularly the girls’ sides now to have a civil marriage for some form of a legal protection… I do feel that it’s there, it’s a lot more common where you will have… where I’m aware that families will go and have the registry done, couples will have it, not in large numbers but they still will have it.  |
| **I** | Okay, so question seven… why do you think it’s important for you to be able to conduct this ceremony, so the Nikah? |
| **R** | Because in our faith tradition you can’t be with a wife or a husband without the marriage… without the marriage ceremony. So it’s part and parcel of the essentials of life, a car, a house, food, a job and marriage is something which is essential and will always be required.  |
| **I** | Okay, so the next question is has there been any change in your own role since you began conducting these ceremonies, for example has there been any change in the form of the ceremony that you conduct? |
| **R** | Yes, absolutely 2005 I was a young man, newly graduated, had no experience, nervous and just did them probably in the traditional way of seeing other people doing it and other Imams doing it and then, as I’ve delved deeper into the community… I am a secondary school teacher as well… there’s an accolade of other things that I do which means that you tend to get a better feel of life and then you just keep on adjusting and keep on adjusting and keep on adjusting to get it to somewhere where you feel comfortable. So definitely it has changed from a very traditional type of Nikah service that you will have traditionally still done in many places… it’s just come in, the father, the males from families will be there and it’s just… have you accepted? Yes I’ve accepted and that’s it… done. To where we are now where it’s a full time process for us, like I said it’s not just the opportunity for the husband and wife, it is an opportunity for that family and the wider community that are coming through our doors to sort of see what Islam is, to show them a beautiful Islam… like you mentioned about behaviour on campus and Muslims of… the newer generations, younger generations that we have at the moment, they have such a distorted image of Islam which will eventually put them off… we work with a lot of universities… and we Imam share with universities in particular now to make sure that there’s a message going out to them and they can have the contact with them for the same reasoning is that there’s a beautiful image of what the actual Nikah is, it’s always been beautiful, Islamicly it’s always been beautiful where you know there was duff there was singing, there was celebration, there was families… The Prophet’s *(salallahu alaihi wasalam)* Nikah to Khadijah (*radia’Allahutala’an*) was actually conducted by Waraqah Ibn Naufal a Christian Scholar, if you just think of that for a moment and how it was… how pretty and beautiful it was, how simple it was. So we want to bring that back into the equation of the conversations of the Nikah, so for us it’s a very thought out process… for us with the husband and the wife it’s a very… we want you at the stage where we want to actually put a condition down where they actually have to come in and go through some basic thick of marriage. So to understand just some basic rules of marriage and basic character of marriage, your husband’s and wife’s character during marriage and changes that happen, we will try and implement that eventually where it might be just even online session of an hour with the Imam where they can have that sort of course for understanding what marriage is and then take it from there. So ours are personalised, we hope that whatever service we deliver at the [organisation] in particular the Nikah will mean that the husband and wife have our numbers and they have those numbers for life and it tend does to happen is that you will then get the phone calls coming back, you know this happened, it’s a headache for us because you don’t intend to become a marriage counsellor which I’m totally not qualified for but it does mean that these people now actually have some form of... in particular for the women some form of empowerment that they can actually access an Imam or a learned person at the centre and get the correct advice that they need.  |
| **I** | Okay, excellent, right thank you. So you don’t conduct legally binding ceremonies, so that question isn’t relevant. So a question ten is… if you don’t conduct the legally binding ceremonies, are there any particular reasons why? So you’ve already mentioned that you are in the process of becoming a registered building for marriage, is there any… so I guess that answers the question insofar as you do plan to… why do you think that’s important?  |
| **R** | We want to be able to make sure we can facilitate our community, obviously adding another layer to someone’s marriage makes life difficult and the understanding we have at the organisation is always to try and make life easier for the congregations that we have, so if it’s something they do want we have it facilitated within the building, within the Nikah service that we do, it makes life easier for them, less hassle for them, more convenient for them and that’s something in our faith tradition that we have is to facilitate that which makes life easier for the community and as simple as possible and again as an organisation, we feel that serving our community is imperative, it’s our duty to serve the community and to help them in whatever shape and form we can, so that’s why we’re doing it. However, I do feel like I said is at the moment the vast majority of the Nikahs are conducted in venues… external venues which would make the registration part of it being a bit useless because the building is registered rather than the Imam or the organisation.  |
| **I** | Okay, right so… I’m so sorry the emails are back up. Okay, I’m just going to make a note of that. So, that’s great… I was hoping that we can now move to discussing the Law Commission’s proposed reforms for weddings… so in summary the document that I sent to you which…  |
| **R** | I did have a look at the PDF.  |
| **I** | Okay fine, that’s great. So just in summary, what it’s giving is it’s changing the processes. So as far as giving notice and registration is concerned and this is for the legally recognised aspect of it… each of the couple would give notice of their intention to marry to the registration services. The initial notice could be given online so that’s not the case at the moment… by post or in person. There would be a 28 day waiting period before they would be issued with the document authorising the marriage to go ahead. If they had not given notice in person, there would need to be an in person interview during the 28 days, okay… so at the time of giving notice the couple would inform the registration service who would be officiating their wedding and the document authorising the marriage which is called a Schedule would name that person and then the couple would take that document to their wedding, they would sign it… the Officiant will sign it and then there’d be two witnesses, so it ends up being a paper exercise.Another change is in the Officiant, so religious groups would be able to nominate Officiants to officiate at weddings. The group making the nomination could be either an overarching organisation or a local one but the minimum number of members would have to be 20. The names of all nominated Officiants would be on a publicly accessible list held by the general register office. So the main duties of the Officiant would be to ensure that both parties freely exchange consent to the marriage in the presence of two witnesses and that the schedule is signed. The Officiant could also lead the ceremony however this is not a requirement of the role and it would be possible for a different person to take responsibility for leading the ceremony… and just in terms of the criminal dimension to it, it would be an offence to pretend to be an Officiant and deliberately or recklessly mislead a couple about the effect of the ceremony. So a real change and in your role as somebody who performs Nikah, you could potentially be an Officiant. When it comes to the ceremony, there would be no legal restrictions on the types of places in which marriages could be legally celebrated, so it would be for the officiant to decide whether the location proposed by the couple was safe and dignified and the religious groups could set their own requirements as to where they want marriages to be held… and then finally there would be no required prescribed words etc…. so a real overhaul in terms of the weddings process.So the first question I have is, would the proposed reforms make it easier for the types of ceremonies you perform to be legally binding? |
| **R** | Yes, absolutely it would. Generally for what I’ve just said previously is even if… we’re almost in the process for that being registered as a legal place but it still means that 90% of our marriages if we were to conduct them would not be able to be registered because of the fact it’s the building that’s licenced rather than the Officiants you call them… what do you call the person?  |
| **I** | Officiant. |
| **R** | The Officiant… so that will make life a lot more easier, that would mean that couples… we could do it in their homes, we could do it in the building where they wanted us to do it and I think that would then make sure that from… I think it would mean the uptake of the registration… the legal registration of marriage or the civil marriage the uptake would be a lot more.  |
| **I** | Okay… |
| **R** | Because it can get done in one go. The vast majority of the reason people don’t do it is, why bother, can’t be bothered now, who’s going to go through all that paperwork, go there, get it done and have it all done, it’s a headache. Whereas if you can get it done in one go, you know it makes life a lot more easier and by default what we would encourage… we do encourage and what we do try and encourage is once we are registered places, to use that as leverage to get them to do it in the building as well.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | It’s just things that we want you to… look if you had it in the building we’ll get you registered by default and the same costs we’ll get you registered, as a carrot to say come and do it in the building… to get them that sense of security and safety as well. It’s not presuming that a lot of women are manipulated but there are some women that we feel that are safer in a civil marriage… is it called a civil marriage, that part of the marriage being part of the Nikah would be safer for them as well.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | But it definitely will, the wording’s been a right headache, it’s just a right joke, it’s so archaic, it’s just… honestly it’s like we’re in 2020 and we’re still having these silly conversations about what words we’re going to use… I think it’s ridiculous. We’ve had so many to and fros with the Home Office or with the registry here about the wording, going back and forth and again the building being registered, it’s just silly what does the building have to do with it, the person should be registered to do the marriage not the four walls, what relevance do the four walls have? |
| **I** | It’s historic but… that’s fine… Okay, so the next question is would any of the proposals give rise to problems for the types of ceremonies you conduct? |
| **R** | Having a look at the document, the only part… where’s it gone… let me have a look at it, it was at the bottom part wasn’t it… the only part was there was something about non-religious ceremonies… there was something about humanists, where was that section? Which part was that? |
| **I** | So the types of ceremonies… |
| **R** | Yes couples do not include elements in a civil building that reflect religious beliefs, what does this mean? |
| **I** | Where are we? |
| **R** | When ceremonies, the chapter… the little section called ceremonies, second box… couples cannot include elements in a civil wedding that reflect religious beliefs. |
| **I** | So at the moment the current law if you have a civil ceremony, so in a register office or you have a registrar coming to perform the wedding, that ceremony cannot at the moment include any religious words. |
| **R** | Yes.  |
| **I** | So at the moment, it’s excluded whereas… |
| **R** | It’s very secular, then, isn’t it? It’s just… |
| **I** | Yes. |
| **R** | Yes. |
| **I** | Because there is the second way in which you can marry is obviously a Church of England… so a church wedding.  |
| **R** | Yes.  |
| **I** | So the proposal here is that obviously that changes so long as it’s still identified as a civil ceremony, couples will be able to have religious songs, readings, hymns etc, so it is taking away that restriction.  |
| **R** | Yes, that actually doesn’t impact us, that was the part I wanted a bit of clarification on, so that’s if actually somebody in a civil cer… they’re secular but they want to spice it up with a bit of religion, they can, that’s absolutely fine for them and I was like we can do it anyway because we will be a religious organisation licenced to do marriage, so it doesn’t impact us. So I don’t really see any problems with this whatsoever .  |
| **I** | Okay, so how do you think the proposals might impact on the process of getting married within Muslim communities? |
| **R** | As long as the organisation delivering it has a clear framework in place, I think the Muslim community would be fine with it. The steps have to be very, very clear so they’re not familiar with it full stop, the tradition is now is I pick up the phone two days before and say “Imam can you come and do a Nikah”… so obviously that culture will have to change because if it’s a 28 day or a one month or whatever procedure it is, that will have to change and it’s just about making sure that the congregations are aware of that. We have actually a similar policy here is that if the documentation is not received or the documentation we required is not received one week before the Nikah then the Nikah will not be conducted and that’s made very, very clear in initial conversations is that this documentation has a deadline to get it in, if it’s not in, I will not confirm the Imam and we will say that until documentation has not been come in… we don’t… we haven’t checked it through, you do not have a confirmed time slot and an Imam in place. So for us I don’t think it will be problematic. Faith organisations, Muslim and non-Muslim that are sloppy unfortunately a lot of ours are will struggle because they just can’t organise themselves. However, organisations, Mashallah, as they they are now, the percentage is increasing of Mosques that actually can deliver those things properly, as long as they’ve got the admin in place they will be able to, I think, stick to it as well. There just needs to be an awareness created in particular if the law is changed, there will probably be a campaign anyway telling people that the law has changed and policies will change in Mosques and I think people will be aware of the fact that you’ve got a 28 day window or whatever it is to get things done properly. So I don’t think it will cause too many problems as long as people are educated and there is an awareness of how the procedure works and I think a lot of them would actually even if they made the mistake they would say we will defer the Nikah until the date we can get it done properly or with the civil. As soon as the tradition begins or the fashion starts isn’t it… as long as it is a fashion then everyone will start demanding it “oh, they got the civil one done as well in that Mosque, then they get it done together”… I think our community is a very copycat community so they will just start with moving in that direction as well.  |
| **I** | Okay… Okay so is there anything else that you would like to add your thoughts on the proposals? |
| **R** | It’s taken a very long time to get where we are, to modernise them. Like I said in the way we do things, we have already sort of modernised everything here and the system that we have in place is a very archaic in not being flexible, in not… we come from a religion that has a compassion tradition in making sure that we facilitate it for them. I think… I forgot the… let me just quickly tell you which sums it up… where’s it gone? I was doing… the web designer was asking me for the Nikah part and this is what I did:“Here to make your special day special, that’s what it’s about, it’s about”… that’s in one sentence what does [organisation]… it’s here to make your special day special, so we want to be able to facilitate it as they want and how they want, it’s their memorable day. From our faith tradition, we’ll go backwards to make sure it is done in a way that’s rememberable and spiritual for them. However, our law doesn’t allow to make it their special day. |
| **I** | Okay, thank you… so just to conclude is there anything else you would like to say about the marriage process? |
| **R** | No, I think I’ve probably covered a lot anyway within what I’ve said. I talk too much anyhow.  |
| **I** | That’s wonderful, thank you. So I’m going to stop recording.  |
| **0:30:51** |  |