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| **I** | So, the first question I have is can you tell me a little bit about the last wedding ceremony that you conducted in England and Wales, specifically focussing on the type of ceremony and the location? |
| **R** | The last wedding I conducted was still Zoom.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Okay? |
| **I** | Uh huh. |
| **R** | The bride was in Australia. The groom was here in [city] and some members of the family were in Africa, the Emirates, so… [laughs] It was a Zoom wedding. |
| **I** | Uh huh. Wow! Okay. And so, what did the ceremony then look like? Because they weren’t in the same place. |
| **R** | They weren’t in the same place but from an Islamic point of view, there’s a *fatwah* that meeting in Zoom is like an actual meeting. It is a come-together of people with more-or-less real time. Okay? The amount of time it takes for the voice to travel, or the sound, is such that the people are still there and can correct any mistakes or anything like that. Anyway, the bride was there. Okay? And she, of course, gave her consent. This is something that I always insist upon. I will not marry a couple if the woman is under duress or not agreeable.  |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. So… |
| **R** | And therefore, I think the bride to be present, if at all possible. If she’s not going to be present, then I insist on speaking to her at least before the marriage is conducted. So, if you would like me to talk about the Zoom wedding, I will. If you’d like to talk about a wedding that I’ve actually conducted with the presence of both parties, then I will. Whichever you like. |
| **I** | Okay. Let’s talk about the latter. So, the `normal’ wedding that you would perform. |
| **R** | The normal? |
| **I**  | Yes. Please. |
| **R** | Even though the Zoom wedding is a normal wedding as well? [laughs] |
| **I** | Well, okay. I will rephrase that. [laughs] The wedding where the bride and the groom are present. Which is more usual, let’s say that. [laughs] |
| **R** | [laughs] Okay, the normal wedding or the actual wedding, I get a lot of problematic requests for weddings. What I mean by problematic request is generally, most likely the bride is here but her *wali* or her guardians are not here. Okay, she’s studying, she’s working here, she’s not with her family. Or her guardians are disagreeing to the wedding and don’t want her to get married. So, I get a lot of that. Okay. But the last actual wedding where they were present was a straightforward one. And it was for a convert, or a revert, okay? And I believe a sister who has been married before. And she has received a civil divorce only. She got married with an Islamic wedding plus she did a civil divorce… I’m sorry, a civil marriage. They did in the UK. And then she got divorced by her husband with a civil divorce through the courts. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | And one of the problems that they thought was that this divorce is not valid Islamically. Okay? I told them that it is. There are no complications because this civil divorce was initiated by the husband. |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. Okay. |
| **R** | Okay? It’s the husband who went to the lawyers and he said to them, “I want to divorce my wife.” And he signed the application and he sent it to her. She agreed to the divorce, and the divorce went through, and she started her waiting period, and during the waiting period, her husband did not take her back, or did not get in touch, or did not contact her. So, her divorce was valid and therefore she was divorced. Okay. This was the first problem that was put out of the way. And because she’s divorced, she does not need the permission of her guardian. Okay. But her parents were happy for the marriage to go ahead anyway so, again there was no problem there.And usually, I start the ceremony by giving a talk, a small reminder focussing on the seriousness of marriage and the importance of marriage. And I also stress, especially to sisters, the importance of having a civil marriage at the same time, or as soon as possible. Because one way of protecting, especially women’s rights, is when you have a registered civil marriage in this country, that tends to protect your rights. Otherwise, the husband just may… just, you know, go away and… or do anything and I think this is one of the problems of the Islamic marriage in this country is that there is no central body that registers the marriage and can be referred to. Okay, so that’s missing.If you go to any Muslim country, the Islamic marriages over there are controlled. Not anyone can conduct a marriage and it’s registered as is the civil authority here in this country, registered their marriage. In Muslim countries, Islamic marriages are also registered and what we call *al-maqdum* or the one who conducts the marriage is given the authority to conduct marriage. And he registers it in a proper form issued by the government.Anyway, so I stress the importance of having the marriage, the civil marriage, done as well. And… |
| **I** | Okay. So is… |
| **R** | Then I make sure that the conditions are met. And the normal conditions are that the guardian has given his consent. If the consent of the guardian is required, but because this was a divorcee, then the consent wasn’t required. But it was there anyway. That there are present two male adult Muslims, okay? That the woman is agreeable to the marriage. The bride. And that there is a *mahr* agreed upon. Okay.And then I focus on the importance that the Islamic marriage is conducted based on the Qu’ran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. I say to them, “You are going to get married but your frame of reference, okay, is the Qu’ran and the Sunnah of the Prophet. So, you need in your life together to refer everything to the Qu’ran and the Sunnah. The overall authority that governs your coming together is Qu’ran and the Sunnah. It’s not your wives, it’s not what you think is right or wrong. It’s the Qu’ran and the…” I make this very, very clear. |
| **I** | Okay. So… |
| **R** | Okay, but there’s a lot of people when they get married, they’re not aware of the seriousness and what governs their overall coming together. I also make sure, of course, that the bride is over 18 and the groom is over 18. You’d be surprised. And what else?And then, you know, I tell them about how marriage in Islam is based on an offer of marriage and acceptance. As simple as that. Everything else, like repeating the offer three times and the acceptance three times, that’s all culture. There’s a lot of culture involved, okay? But from an Islamic point of view, it’s an offer and then acceptance. And then, you know, I make either the guardian of the bride, or the bride herself put an offer to the groom, okay? Of marriage. Okay? That this marriage is based on the Qu’ran and the Sunnah and the dowry agreed between us. I don’t mention the dowry in front of… because there might be other people around. Make me reluctant to mention, unless they say to me, “Please mention the dowry, how much it is.” But otherwise, it’s just agreed between us. That’s all I say. |
| **I** | Okay, so sorry, I’m going to try and steer you towards the details that I need with regards to that process. So, thank you for all of that detail. That’s brilliant. I wondered… my next question is… so, you’ve mentioned a lot of things are checks that you will put into place at the beginning, so is it usual for you to meet or otherwise communicate with the couple before the wedding ceremony? |
| **R** | Yes. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | I like, especially if there are problems, okay? If I feel that it’s not as straightforward and… because sometimes couples tend to shop around, you know what I mean? |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. |
| **R** | Okay. They tend to go to their local Imam. The local Imam says, “No, I’m not going to conduct this marriage.” So, they’re shopping around, and they might hear that, you know, the place where I… the [organisation], in the city centre, you know, they’re not Pakistanis or they’re not Bengalis or whatever. And they will come to me. I like to check because I’ve had a few cases where I refused to conduct the marriage. And I refused because they lied. |
| **I** | Right. What sort of things would they be? |
| **R** | If they talked to me and told me the truth, yeah, I would’ve found a solution for them. Okay. But sometimes the solution takes time because what happens, my dear sister, is that sometimes I get two people who are actually living together and they’re living in *haram*, of course. And they want to make the relationship *halal*. So, we have an obligation to facilitate the halal. But sometimes the father may be reluctant, so we invoke either the opinion of the great scholar, Abu Hanifa, where his requirement is that the two are compatible and therefore, if the two are compatible, then the agreement of the guardian is not required. Or we look at the guardian himself and conclude that he is not fit to be a guardian. I had a case where the sister was 39 years old, okay. She’s not been married and still her father doesn’t want to marry her off. I don’t know when she’s going to get married. She’s 39. She has found this guy who’s willing to marry her. She doesn’t have many years to be able to give him children… you know, give herself children indeed. So, obviously this guardian is not fit to be a guardian. It’s very plain to see. In a Muslim country, of course, this will be through a judge. Okay.So, yes, I tend to meet them beforehand. I would request that they provide some photo proof of their identity. Usually their passports, but I would accept a licence as well. I will tell them what is required and what is expected of them. When I first started taking the role of the Imam in the mosque, people came to me with their problems. Especially after I address certain social issues in my *khutbah* which I tend to do, okay. I find that many Imams do not address social issues, problems in marriage, bringing up children, facing the reality of the society which we live in and this made people come to me after *jumu'ah* and seek my advice on these issues. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | So, I said to myself, if I’m going to be involved in counselling, I went and got a counselling qualification. |
| **I** | Oh, okay. |
| **R** | Even though my background is, I’ve got a master’s degree in mechanical engineering. Okay. So, I became a counsellor. And I have specialised in what I call Muslim Marriage Consultation.So, I’ve been dealing with a lot of marriage problems within our society. |
| **I** | Right, okay. |
| **R** | And I’ve developed a system where I can give consultation to people who want to get married. |
| **I** | Okay. Okay.  |
| **R** | So that they can overcome future problems, how to communicate together… |
| **I** | Sure. |
| **R** | How to… |
| **I** | Can I… |
| **R** | You know, they’ve met. Yeah. |
| **I** | Can I ask you a question with regards to… so, you mentioned the legal side of it, so you know, ideally there should be legal recognition. So, when you conduct the ceremonies, do you see that as a process? So, if they’ve just come to you for the Nikah, do you see that as a step in a process when they will then go and get a legally binding marriage? So, the civil… |
| **R** | When they…? Sorry? |
| **I** | Where they will then, at some point, have the civil ceremony. So, like at a register office? |
| **R** | Okay. I don’t really like to say this but if two young people come to me and I see that they’ve got a problem and that they’re corner Imam, if you like, wouldn’t marry them because the family is disagreeable… the family of the bride is disagreeable, even though I had cases where the groom’s family are disagreeable, but that doesn’t really count. And their Imams are refusing to marry them from a cultural point of view. I don’t want to topple the apple cart. I don’t want to rock the apple cart. And they’d rather say, “No, sorry, go and find someone else.” In that case, my advice will be to them, “If you want me to conduct your marriage, then go and get married… get your civil marriage done and then when it’s done, you can invite me to join you at that marriage.” |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Okay? Or come to me with the certificate that you got married and we will do the Islamic marriage. Let me also tell you something that might help in your research.Let’s say that there is a couple who want to get married. Okay? And that they go to conduct the civil marriage. And they invite me. Okay. And I say to them, “Make sure that the guardian is there.” Okay? That the guardian is there. “And he is agreeable. And there is a *mahr*. And name two witnesses. Okay and take them all to the place you’re conducting your civil marriage.” Okay. And when the civil marriage is done, I can give them a certificate that this marriage was conducted according to the requirements of Sharia. |
| **I** | Right. |
| **R** | And there is no need for them to conduct another Islamic marriage. |
| **I** | Right, okay. |
| **R** | Why? Because in Islam, marriage is a civil contract. It’s not a religious contract, it’s a civil contract. |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. Okay. So then… |
| **R** | So… |
| **I** | How do you see your role then in advising the couple of the legal status of their marriage? So, if they just did the Nikah. They didn’t do the civil registration. Would you advise them and say, “This isn’t legally binding, you should do X, Y and Z.”? Or not really? |
| **R** | Some couples are not looking for a legally recognised marriage. Okay. They’re not looking for a legally recognised marriage. They’re looking for an Islamically recognised marriage by Allah. Okay. As far as the government is concerned, they are partners living together. Adults who are consenting to each other, which is also recognised. Yeah? If two people decide to live together, a man and a woman, okay, they are not going to do the civil marriage. They’re not going to do the Islamic marriage. They’re not going to do any marriage.And the law says, “No, you can’t live together. You have to come and get married.” I wish! I wish! I would endorse it and vote for it, one hundred per cent. But that’s not the case in this country, is it?So, really from a legal point of view, an Islamic marriage, from the legal point of view of this country, it is as though it didn’t exist. And these two people who are living together are just living together as boyfriend and girlfriend or couples or whatever you’d like to call it. Okay.So, there shouldn’t be a problem there. Okay. However, if it’s more organised, more conducted properly, children are involved. In the future, children may not… because the Islamic marriage sometimes is not done properly. Sometimes there are no proper archives, there’s no certificate. Nothing like that. Then there’s nothing to prove the mother and the father have actually been married. And there’s no legal document issued by the government that says that they were married and that might cause some problems with children who may grow up, you know, and start to say, “Hang on, my parents weren’t married.” From an Islamic point of view, of course, that’s going to be a problem. That’s the only problem I can see but otherwise, the Islamic marriage is simply… and another thing about the Islamic marriage that’s important. The requirement is, as I told you, agreement of the guardian, two witnesses, the *mahr*, consent of the bride. Okay? So, anyone can conduct this marriage. You don’t need the Imam. You don’t need anybody. |
| **I** | So, in terms of where they take place. Generally, when you conduct Nikah, where do they tend to take place? |
| **R** | The cheapest… because we do charge for our services… the cheapest will be to conduct the marriage at the mosque, at the centre, which will, you know… that’s straightforward. You have a few people coming together. We conduct the marriage and then they can go to the restaurant or to the wedding hall or whatever and have their party if they like.But I have conducted marriage in homes, hotels, in banqueting halls, in restaurants. Wherever they want. So, if the wedding is something that is endorsed and conducted by the family, for example, the father might approach me because he knows me and says, “Oh, [name], can you please come and conduct the marriage of my daughter. We’re having the party in this banqueting hall.” Okay. Plus a few words and, you know, and make *du’a* and that sort of thing. So, it’s a package. Okay.  |
| **I** | So, where…? |
| **R** | And then I would go to the banqueting hall and conduct the nikah Yes. |
| **I** | Okay, so out of all of those places you mentioned, are the majority in the mosque? Or the majority in like banqueting halls? |
| **R** | No, no. The majority are in the mosque. |
| **I** | In the mosque. Okay. That’s fine. |
| **R** | Yes. |
| **I** | So, have you seen a change in the way people are marrying? So, in the last ten years, if you think about the way they’re marrying. For example, what the ceremony looks like. Where it takes place, et cetera. Have you seen a change? Are there more people wanting just the Nikah? |
| **R** | Of course, of course. Many years ago, like 30 years ago, okay, the marriages were quite simple. The party and the *walima* takes places in the mosque. Nowadays, they like to spend more money, much more money, so they’re doing it in banqueting halls, you know, and restaurants, posh restaurants. That sort of thing.But in the past, it was a simple affair. You get the local cook cooking very hot rice in the kitchen of the mosque, okay? And the people come and sit on the ground, in the main, okay? Some mosques, they may have tables and things like that, and the marriage is conducted simply, you know, with a simple affair. And that’s all. But now, no, they want the full thing, okay. The hall… |
| **I** | So, thinking about your role then, why do you think it’s important for you to be able to conduct the Nikah ceremonies? |
| **R** | Why me? |
| **I** | Not, not… sorry, let me rephrase that. So, in England, obviously there are Muslim communities, you’re an Imam. Why do you think it’s important to be able to conduct ceremonies that are Nikah ceremonies of marriage? |
| **R** | Why… the importance of the Nikah ceremony? |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. |
| **R** | I’m sorry, I woke up today with problems in my ears, so I’m not hearing very well. |
| **I** | No, it’s fine. Sorry, I will… yeah, do let me know if you can’t hear. |
| **R** | Yes. I should have put in my hearing aid, but I didn’t. Anyway. Yes. Are you asking why me? |
| **I** | No. I’m asking why the Nikah? |
| **R** | Why Nikah? Why the Islamic Nikah? |
| **I** | Yes. Why is that important? |
| **R** | From two perspectives. The first is culture, okay. And the second is an Islamic viewpoint, okay. The civil marriage, okay, the way it’s conducted, they don’t feel that it is based on the Qu’ran and the Sunnah. Okay. There’s something missing. There’s no blessing, okay. There’s no *barakah*. We have to do it Islamically, okay. And this is not our way. You know, we need to do it the way we’ve been doing it. The way our parents have been doing it there. We ask the Imam to conduct the marriage and there’s a blessing and there’s *du’a*. There’s, you know… So, I think these are the reasons.They’re cultural and religious, okay, which are missing in the civil marriage. |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. Okay. That’s great. Thank you. |
| **R** | The best way forward, in my opinion, how to put the two together is either to do like some mosques do, okay, where the Imam of that mosque is approved by the council to conduct civil marriage. So, the Imam, in the same setting, in the same ceremony, okay, insures and conducts the marriage according to the civil requirement and it is registered as a civil marriage. Legally recognised by the government. At the same time, it’s an Islamic ceremony that fulfils the requirement of the society and the families, okay. This is one way of doing it, okay?But this means that certain mosques will have a monopoly. And, as you know, some are Gujaratis, some are Wahhabis, some are Bengalis, some are Pakistanis, Turks, Arabs, so that wouldn’t go well within the community. Unless, you know, all mosques, or the majority of mosques are given that right. |
| **I** | Okay.  |
| **R** | This is one way. Another way is for the law to accommodate. When the civil marriage is conducted, the law to accommodate the presence of the Imam to do the Islamic marriage at the same time as the civil marriage. |
| **I** | Okay. So, just on that point, are you registered as an authorised person to perform…? |
| **R** | No. |
| **I** | You’re not, okay. Would you consider doing that? Would you consider becoming authorised? Or is there a reason why you wouldn’t? |
| **R** | I don’t mind becoming authorised. I just never… I might stay three or four months without conducting a marriage, okay. So, it’s not something that I thought was pressing or that I needed to do it. But because of word of mouth and because of things, you know, people are coming to me more and more, if you know what I mean.But I haven’t done it. But I’m willing. There is no problem with that. |
| **I** | Okay. So, that actually takes us nicely onto talking about the Law reform proposals. So, one of the things that has been proposed is that religious groups can nominate an officiant. So, the term used would be `officiant’. So, somebody who can conduct the ceremony. So, their main role will be to ensure that both parties are exchanging consent and that there are witnesses and that the document that comes from the register office, the marriage schedule, that that is signed. And they could lead the ceremony. They wouldn’t have to so another Imam could come in to do it if they wanted to. But their role would then be to oversee, for example, the Nikah. And then ensure that the schedule is signed, there are witnesses and then that just goes back to the register office and that’s it. You have a legal marriage. |
| **R** | Yes. |
| **I** | And the type of ceremony could be different. So, the type of ceremony could be the Nikah. It could be, you know, any other form of ceremony. And the evidence just comes from signing what they call the wedding schedule. Do you think that would make it easier for the Nikah to be legally binding? |
| **R** | It will make the… yeah, I don’t object to that system. |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. Okay. |
| **R** | But I also see that it does not meet all the needs of the community.  |
| **I** | Okay, please tell me more about what needs it won’t meet. |
| **R** | The first thing, from my understanding, I might be wrong, is that to have a civil marriage takes time.  |
| **I** | Mmm hmm. Yes. |
| **R** | Okay. You need to file for a marriage and that needs to be hung on certain notice boards for if there are any objections from anyone. |
| **I** | Yes. So, that would still be in place. Yeah, so that would be… |
| **R** | Sorry? |
| **I** | The notice… so, it’s called the notice period. So, that would still be… you would still need to give notice to the register office. |
| **R** | Yes, yes. That takes time. |
| **I** | Yep. |
| **R** | And sometimes, you find people who are there and who want to get married and want to leave the country. |
| **I** | Right. |
| **R** | Okay? You have people who may face problems if they’re going to, you know, I don’t know about the law but does the law recognise someone who’s an asylum seeker? Okay, who wants to get married. And no, you cannot… you have to… I’m sorry, you know… that requirement is not there. So, the conditions for a legal marriage, a civil marriage, are sometimes difficult to approve or to have. You [inaudible 0:36:39], okay. The other problem, which is also an important problem, is what I told you about people who are either living together, already living together as man and wife, okay. Or who are considering living together as man and wife. And they want to have the *halal* umbrella on them. That’s what they want. They’re not willing to go through the procedure of a legal marriage and what have you, okay? That’s the one.Number two. The problem is polygamy.  |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Someone who wants to marry a second wife. Will the law allow him to marry a second wife? |
| **I** | Okay, so just to clarify, the officiant system, it’s still voluntary. So, it’s not that every Imam who does Nikah **has** to become an officiant. So, it’s still voluntary.  |
| **R** | Yes. |
| **I** | So, as you mentioned earlier in the interview, you see no reason why you wouldn’t engage in becoming an authorised person. So, the officiant would be the alternative, sort of, structure. But it wouldn’t negate things like polygamy or other ways in which you can marry and not be legally recognised. |
| **R** | In that case, you know, I will endorse it one hundred per cent, okay. I think it’s a good alternative provided it’s not the first step in many future procedures that will make it more difficult for what I spoke about. |
| **I** | So, what sort of… what things would you be worried about? |
| **R**  | The law works. Let’s bring them to the council, okay? To the Islamic… to the marriage register and make them conduct their Islamic marriage here through the… and then, you know, it’s voluntary. Okay. But in five years’ time, ten years’ time, well you know, now they’re doing it… let’s say that this is the only way that they can do it. Okay. This is a worry, okay, that I may have. |
| **I** | So, you’re worried about encroachments, okay. |
| **R** | Why is that not beneficial? Because then Islamic marriage will go underground. And that will be worse for especially women. Okay? Islamic marriage will go underground. You will not have a body that will issue a certificate, an Islamic certificate of marriage, okay? Couples will go to anyone they like, and they will ask them to conduct the marriage. They will fulfil their requirements. The guardian agrees. Two witnesses. The agreement of the bride. The *mahr*. The marriage is verbal. It’s not registered, okay. And it goes, okay. *Hamdulilah*, they will feel that their married. From the legal point of view, they’re consenting adults living together. But it goes underground, okay? And if it goes underground, then it will be such that it is more convenient. I don’t know how much it costs to have civil marriage. |
| **I** | Ah. |
| **R** | So, you have… do you know how much? |
| **I** | I don’t know. [laughs] I would have to look it up. |
| **R** | Okay. |
| **I** | But I think it varies depending on when. |
| **R** | And where and how and what do you want. Do you want everything included or just the basics? I understand that but, at the end of the day, even the system today in the Imams and mosques, the money sometimes is… sometimes you find, for example, a student cannot afford to pay two, three hundred pounds. Okay. So, there is this underground thing that’s conducted by a friend or something like that. It’s going to cost nothing. Okay. So, why should I get married through the system that’s going to cost me five, six hundred pounds? |
| **I** | Sure. |
| **R** | Okay? |
| **I** | Okay. So… |
| **R** | So, there is a danger of that. And that’s why I’m reluctant for it to be strictly controlled. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | But if the Imams are allowed to continue as is, but there is an opening up of the law to accommodate the Imams and the way we do… with a variety of schools of thought that exist amongst us, unfortunately. Okay. The different ways that it’s been done from a cultural point of view. And then there will be no need for the Islamic marriage to go underground. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Okay? |
| **I** | Okay, thank you. So, with these proposals, how do you think… so, you’ve actually already covered this to a degree, but is there anything else you want to add about how these new proposals will impact on the process of getting married in Muslim communities? |
| **R** | Sorry, sorry. Can you repeat that? |
| **I** | Sure. How would the proposals impact on the process of getting married within Muslim communities? So, you mentioned the time… |
| **R** | I think the proposals need to be preceded by an awareness campaign. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | Okay? Focussing on what are the benefits. “I am the father of a bride-to-be. Why is it important that I have her marriage registered in the civil registry?” I am, as a person who has been living in this country, someone who’s educated, I see the importance of such a thing. And I always encourage those who come to me to register their marriage.But the majority of the community, they don’t see the reason for it except an extra cost. Okay. And the marriage conducted in the mosque is sufficient and enough. “Why do I need to register the marriage?” Okay.So, there should be a campaign of the importance of this. So, it’s not just about a regulating and controlling the procedure. It’s about actually providing benefit to the community. “What do I get for it?” Okay.If there is an awareness campaign and there are many people in our community, many families, who will insist on the civil marriage. Okay. For those, if we can combine the civil and the Islamic marriage into one, that’s a benefit. Okay. If you know what I mean? |
| **I** | Yep.  |
| **R** | That’s a welcome thing rather than something to be shunned or… But the whole system needs to be re-looked at because the waiting period, frankly, is too much. |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | You know, sometimes people need to get married in a week. |
| **I** | Right. |
| **R** | Not in three months. |
| **I** | Sure. It’s 28 days. But okay. Okay, so my final question really is, is there anything else you’d like to say about the proposals? Or anything else about the marriage process? |
| **R** | Again, there’s the cultural element that looks at the civil marriage conducted as, you know, as not complete. The marriage needs to be properly conducted by the Imam. There’s a lot of culture in there, okay. And in reality, the marriage conducted in the civil… the civil marriage… could well be… I’m not going to pass a *fatwah*, but it could well be conducted Islamically. Okay? |
| **I** | Okay. |
| **R** | So, between you and me [laughs], we don’t even need the Imams if that is the case. |
| **I** | Yep. |
| **R** | But we are here because the community needs us. Okay? The community is going to need 20, 30 years to come to terms with this and accept it. Okay? But as things stand now, they need the civil marriage, and they need the Islamic marriage. |
| **I** | Okay, so thank you so much. I’m going to stop recording. |
| **0:46:55** |  |