



WHAT IS KAFA'H AND HOW RELEVANT IS IT IN MARRIAGE?

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
السَّلَامُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Kafa'h is ensuring suitability between two potential spouses. The nearest translation would be 'similarity in ethno-socio-economic status.' The purpose of marriage is to bring two usually complete strangers together and ensure that the couple and the family come from similar backgrounds in order to ensure that the marriage goes as smooth as possible. Therefore when guardians are looking for potential spouses they will keep this in mind.

In Kitab al-Nikah of Mukhtasar al-Quduri we find that,

Kafa'h is considered in nasb (lineage/family background/ethnicity etc) din (religiousness, Islamic learning) and mal (wealth, social status) and that he possesses mahr (dowry) and nafaqa (financial maintenance); it is also considered in sana'a (occupation, qualifications).

Therefore it is the responsibility of the guardians to ensure there is compatibility this would include considering which countries the individuals have grown up in and other issues of compatibility.

If guardians do not consider kafa'h in marriage then the nikah will still be valid as this is based on the premise that guardians consider the best for those they are responsible for.

In fact in a certain circumstance, mentioned in the same chapter, kafa'h can bring about the revocation of nikah,

Kafa'h is considered in nikah; so if a woman who marries (according to the Hanafi school a major sane woman can marry without permission of her guardian – according to other schools it is invalid) without considering kafw then the guardians have the legal capacity to separate between the two of them.

The Hanafi Law then permits the nikah to be revoked as this compatibility is important and ensuring that it is maintained is highly desirable.

والله اعلم وعلمه احكم واتم