



How can each of us Change the Perception?

# **DEFENDING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM – UNDERSTANDING SHARIAH**

# Introduction

## Why are we discussing Shariah?

In the past year or so, one of the hottest topics in the America is Shariah. There are those who spend tremendous amount of resources to create the fear that Shariah is about to reign over USA causing:

- *“destruction of the national existence of the United States”;*
- *“destroying Western civilization from within...”*
- Not only is the ignorance of the man in the street but politicians *“an infiltration ... into all of our operating systems in our country as well as across Western civilization. So we must be willing to recognize that enemy.”*

# Introduction...

- one such presidential hopeful calls Shari'ah "*a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it.*"
- As a result of this false propaganda and made-up fear, the term **Shari'ah** has **not only** become a bad and ugly term **but currently** there are almost two-dozen states that have proposed legislation to prohibit the use of Shari'ah.

# Introduction...

What that would mean for us Muslims?

- ❖ we are caught talking about Shariah we can be jailed.
  - ❖ Or if we make Wudhu (ablution) in a public place we can be fined or jailed.
  - ❖ Even if we offer our daily Salah (prayer) openly we can be jailed.
- Basically anything to do with Shariah would be enough to get us in trouble.

# So, What is the Perception?

- American Muslims cannot be trusted
- Against women rights (women cannot drive in Saudi Arabia, Honor killing, etc)
- Islam does not belong in America (foreign religion)
- Muslim Organizations have a secret agenda
- Islam is against religious freedom

So, know the facts – be knowledgeable


# Challenges in Challenging the Perception

- Islamophobia
  - Hollywood has not adopted it yet. It has not become a bad word.
- Popular Opinion not in our favor
  - 37% have favorable opinion of Muslims
  - 58% of New Yorkers support NYPD surveillance of Muslims in New York
  - 39% support special ID card for Muslims



# Challenges.....

## Discrimination on the rise (Zogby)

- In 2003, 38% of young Arab-Americans reported being discriminated.
  - In 2004, 65% of young Arab-Americans said the same.
  - In 2007, 76% of young Arabs said they were personally discriminated against.
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# Shariahphobia

- Almost 25 States have considered some kind of anti-Shariah bill (passed in LA, AZ and TN)
- A 42 million dollar funded campaign to flame Shariahphobia
- Islamophobic organizations are actively pushing Shariaphobia agenda.
- Main media and Right Wing social media



# Definition of Shariah...Religious

- **Shariah** is the embodiment of ALL of the, guidance and directives that Allah (SWT) has prescribed for humanity in the Quran or given by Prophet Muhammad (SAS) through his sayings and actions (in order to perfect their lives) whether they pertain to matters of:
  - **Belief**
  - **Deeds/Actions**
  - **Character**

# Definition of Shariah: Connecting the meanings

## ◆ Source of something as Allah (SWT):

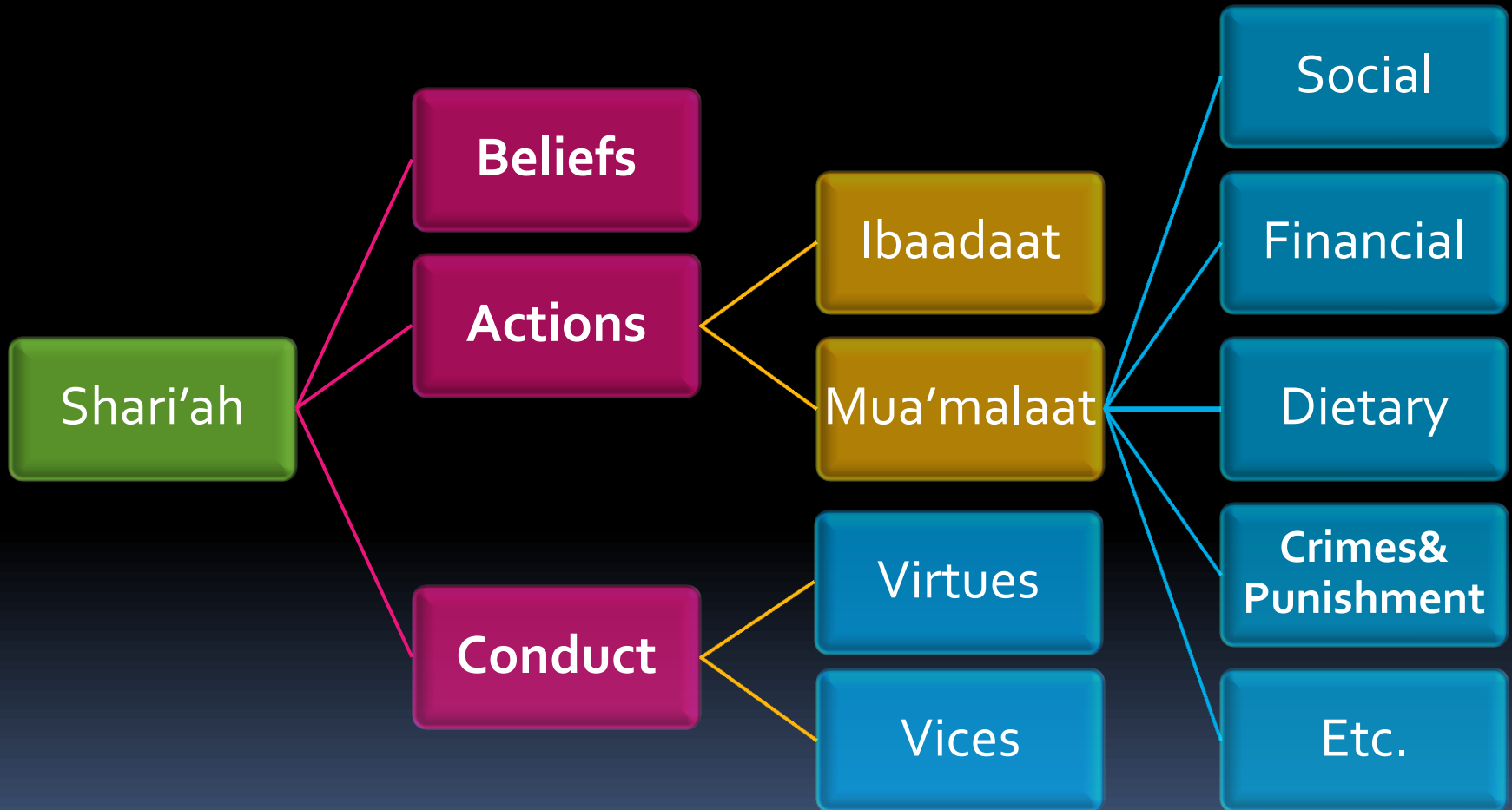
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- ◆ **Watering place:** As water is vital to human life so is the Shariah vital to the human soul.
- ◆ **Path to a watering place:** Shariah is that path that leads to source of energy and life.

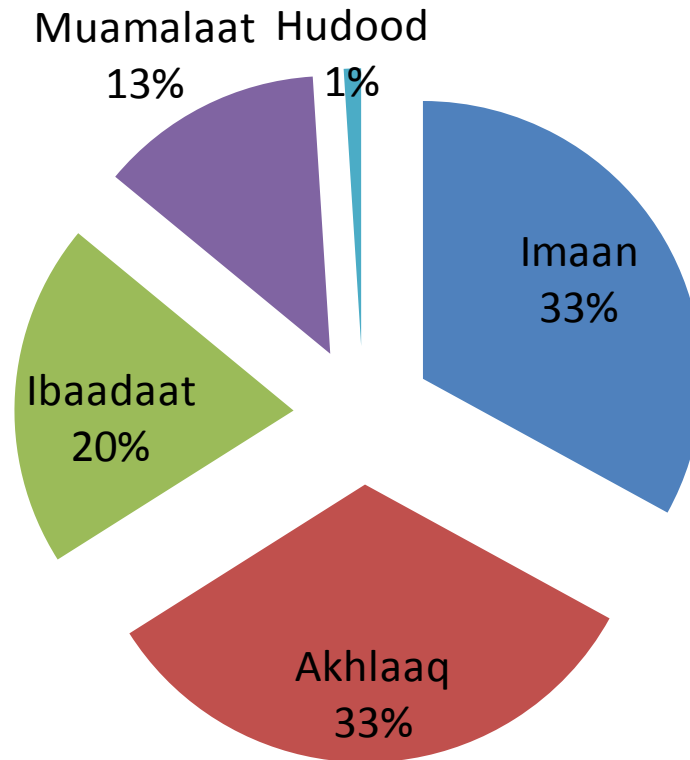
# Definition of Shariah: Connecting the meanings

- ◆ **Straight Path:** Shariah is that Straight Path that we remind ourselves in every unit of Prayer
- ◆ **Equal:** Shariah is based on equal grounds for all.
- ◆ **Legislation:** A good portion of the Shariah deals with legislation regulation and law

# Scope of Shari'ah



# Misconstruing Shari'ah with Penal Laws



# Maqasid (Objectives) of Shariah

SHARIAH  
MAQASID

Faith

Life

Intellect


Lineage

Property



# Shariah and The constitution

And these are the very objectives that resonate with the Constitution In the United States, majority of Muslims view Shariah in the context of living in a Democratic society which is religiously pluralistic free to practice the basics of their faith.



# Shariah and The constitution

- *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

This is precisely what Shariah is based on *justice, mercy, wisdom, elimination of prejudice, alleviating hardship and addresses the common good for all*



# How to Change it?

- First thing First: Have you burn your boat yet?
- Is this your Home?  
You moved here, you live here, you pay your taxes  
but the boat is still there



# How to Change the Perception?

- When was the last time your neighbor (not Muslim) visited your home for tea? (pakoray, samosay, chai...)



# How to Change the Perception?

- 62% of Americans (not Muslim) say “they personally do not know a Muslim” (Time Poll 2010)

So, who should we blame for that?

One Dollar Challenge:  
Do you the names of your  
10 neighbors?



# How to Change the Perception?

- Be cool, be seen, be heard and be known  
(in your neighborhood, at your office and at your children's school)
  - Be As-Saadiq
  - Be Al-Amin
- ICNA Relief  
(Back 2 School, Soup Kitchens, Disaster Relief and more) [www.icna.org](http://www.icna.org)

# What's your skill?

- Can you write? (Op-Ed, Letter to the Editor, blog and comments)

## One Dollar Challenge



How many times have you written to any news media?

- Do you read? (papers, website, etc)
- Are you active on Social Media (twitter, facebook, etc)



[www.defendingreligiousfreedom.com](http://www.defendingreligiousfreedom.com)

Have you seen this site?

Have you forwarded it to your contacts?

Leave me a note:

What can you do to help? [pr@icna.us](mailto:pr@icna.us)





# Other ICNA Projects

- ICNA Relief
  - WhyIslam / Gain Peace
  - Islamic Learning Foundation
  - ICNA Council for Social Justice
  - Young Muslims Brothers
  - Young Muslims Sisters
  - Muslim Children of North America
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