

What is the Sharee'ah?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

QUESTION: What is the Sharee'ah?

ANSWER:

This word refers to two aspects of Islam.

1) The Sharee'ah BELIEFS refer to what Muslims believe – in particular to those things we have mentioned above – such as belief in Allaah, and the Day of Judgement, etc.

These are called the usool (which means 'fundamentals') of Islam.

2) The Sharee'ah ACTIONS refer to how Muslims act.

So this includes how Muslims pray, how they conduct business, how the Islamic courts and economic system work, how Muslims fast, how Muslims marry or divorce, etc.

These are called the furoo' (which means 'branches') of Islam.

Muslims believe that the Sharee'ah, whether beliefs or actions, are dictated by Allaah. Muslims do not 'make things up as they go along'.

The Sharee'ah lays down certain basic ideas and principles which can be used by people who have studied Islam to make rulings about modern issues – such as the internet, IVF, surrogacy, etc – issues which were not present at the time that Islam was revealed.