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In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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## **Discouraging Islamophobia**

### **Reel Bad Arabs Clip**

This groundbreaking documentary dissects a slanderous aspect of cinematic history that has run virtually unchallenged from the earliest days of silent film to today's biggest Hollywood blockbusters. The film explores a long line of degrading images of Arabs and Muslims — from Bedouin bandits and submissive maidens to sinister sheikhs and gun-wielding “terrorists” — along the way offering devastating insights into the origin of these stereotypic images, their development at key points in US history, and why they matter so much today.

#### **Chairman's Message**

##### **Counter and Discourage Islamophobic Behavior**

Dear Friends, As Salaam Alaikum (Peace be unto you)

I am writing to you to ask your support in discouraging and changing Islamophobic behavior. Islamophobia is a growing cancer in our nation today where people target Islam and Muslims.

The Runnymede Trust has identified [eight components that define Islamophobia](#). This definition, from the 1997 document 'Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All' is widely accepted, including by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.

The eight components are:

Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.

Islam is seen as separate and 'other'. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.

Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist.

Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a 'clash of civilizations'.

Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage.

Criticisms made of the West by Islam and Muslims are rejected out of hand.

Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.

Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal.

The following 10 ideas may help to discourage Islamophobia and encourage its removal from the public sphere:

**1. Don't make assumptions about Muslims.**

Stereotypes hurt everyone. Examine what your prejudices are and make adjustments to view people based on facts not assumptions.

**2. Make an effort to get to know Muslims.**

Look for things in common with Muslims and celebrate the differences. We can learn from and appreciate something about everyone.

**3. Learn about Islam.**

Learn about Islam, even if you're not interested in exploring alternative religious ideas. This will give you a chance to reflect on your own beliefs and values. It will also empower you to discourage Islamophobia.

**4. Learn how to recognize anti-Muslim bias.**

Do you view Muslim culture as a distinct, fixed entity with separate values? If your answer is yes, you may be harboring cultural racism. All cultures are diverse and dynamic. By sensitizing yourself to this fact, you empower yourself to treat every person as an individual and thereby contribute to the promotion of a vibrant, inclusive civil society.

**5. Explore the unfamiliar.**

Attend an organization meeting or an event at the nearest religious center of a different faith community. This first-hand experience can be enlightening and give you perspective.

**6. If you witness a hate crime, report it.**

If you observe someone's property or person being attacked, call the police and let the victim know that you are a witness. This is one of the best ways to combat the violent expressions of hate. It is also a civic duty.

**7. Don't remain silent when you encounter anti-Muslim prejudice.**

Silence may be mistaken for tolerance by others. Don't let your silence speak for you. Simply say, "I don't find that interesting," or "I don't appreciate remarks like that." If the incident of bias involved a mistreatment of a Muslim, do what you can to help resolve the problem.

**8. Be a proactive parent.**

Expose your children to religious diversity at a young age. Encourage them to get acquainted with their Muslim classmates. Studies show that knowing a Muslim is correlated with a more tolerant attitude.

**9. Support anti-prejudice organizations.**

By volunteering, donating or being an advocate, working with other groups toward the same goal can be beneficial to you and the community. By getting involved, your voice can contribute to the promotion of tolerance and understanding.

**10. Be a role model.**

Practice the values of toleration and good citizenship with everyone in your life. Such behavior has a greater impact on combating prejudice than any words.

Please join CAIR-PA Board members in helping people change Islamophobic behaviors.

Sincerely,

Iftekhar Hussain

Chairperson, CAIR-PA Philadelphia Chapter

**Discouraging Islamophobia**

*written and compiled by Sheila Musaji*

*Reprinted from [The American Muslim](#)*

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