

## **Institutes/Organizations**

### **Al-Mahdi Institute**

The Al-Mahdi institute was established in 1993. The purpose of establishing it was the perceived need for an educational institute in the United Kingdom and Europe which would provide students with a structured degree course in the field of Arabic and Islamic sciences within a multi-cultural and pluralist society. There continues to be a rapid transformation and re-interpretation of religious tradition in contemporary society as a result of pluralism and modernity. This creates an intellectual and cultural dichotomy within society between traditionalism and modernity regarding the interpretation and application of religious and cultural values. Al-Mahdi Institute aims at establishing a *modus Vivendi et operandi* between the two approaches.

The fact that the members of the institute come from diverse intellectual and philosophical schools of thought is a reflection of the institute's philosophy and mission. The curriculum is a modified form of the curriculum taught in the traditional Islamic colleges. The major addition and difference between the Institute and the traditional colleges of Islamic studies is that there is great emphasis on the use of modern theories in the study of religion, theology, and language. The other noted addition and difference is the institute's use of English and Arabic as the main languages of instruction. The reason for introducing this modified system is to address the need to train and prepare students who upon graduation will be able to function within the Western academic tradition as participants (not spectators) in contemporary intellectual discourse.

The Institute comprises an academic body of proven ability and creative scholarship. Through their teaching, research and publication they are known for their commitment to the enrichment of contemporary Muslim society. The core faculty is augmented by visiting professors of international repute who offer courses and seminars in their areas of specialization designed to reinforce student opportunities for learning.

The Institute is an independent establishment that operates through the support and encouragement of generous and good-hearted people. However, the Institute is a living and growing entity, and in order to maintain its vigour and grow in the need for further contributions is still vital.

*The vision of the Al-Mahdi Institute*

In light of its origin and history, the vision of the Institute is to appreciate and promote Shia Islamic studies through a process of combining the eastern and western intellectual cultures and to serve the Muslim and the wider community through it.

*The ethos of the Al-Mahdi Institute*

The Institute respects people of all faiths, traditions and cultures and considers itself a part of the greater human community. It respects human learning per say and considers it the heritage of humanity at large. The institute is committed to the teachings of the Prophet and his progeny believing that these teaching embrace human goodness and can provide much needed answers for the modern world. The Institute strives at understanding this noble heritage of the Prophet and his progeny and endeavors to share them with other from academic and non-academic platforms

The Institute is located at Birmingham, U K

**Zakat Foundation of India**

Zakat Foundation of India was established in 1997 as a grassroots level organization by some concerned residents of new Delhi.

It is a non-governmental/non-profit organization which collects and utilizes 'zakat' or charity for socially beneficial projects in a transparent and organized manner.

Its' projects include running an orphanage, charitable hospital providing stipends to widows, micro credit etc.

It also has International partners in USA, Canada, and UK.

It invites donation amount of zakat, sadaqa, imdaad and other charity through a number of available options for donation.

The Foundation wholeheartedly welcomes suggestions for the improvement of its projects.

### **Aliah University**

Aliah University started its glorious journey from the 2008-2009 academic session with great potential and immense opportunities. It is hoped that this University, harmonizing tradition and modernity, will emerge as a unique institution of higher studies and research. As per Aliah University Act 2007, Section 3 (3), it has been conferred the status of a minority educational institution. Aliah University is an autonomous university under the Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal, it is hoped that along with the people of any race, creed, caste, this university will play a crucial and leading role in the advancement of higher education for socially and educationally backward classes belonging to the Minorities.

#### *Aliah University: A Historical Note*

Aliah University has with it the rich heritage of the 230-year old educational and cultural institution, Mohammedan College of Calcutta, popularly known as Madrasah-i-Aliah or Calcutta Madrasah, the first educational institution set up in India in 1780 by Warren Hastings, the then Governor General of India. Thus, one of the oldest centres of higher learning and culture, the institution is steeped in history. Many eminent scholars were associated with this institution as administrators, principals, teachers as well as students.

Calcutta Madrasah was upgraded to Calcutta Madrasah College and then to Aliah University by the Government of West Bengal through Aliah University Act XXVII of 2007 passed in West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The Government of West Bengal, in 2001, constituted a Madrasah Education Committee under the Chairmanship of the great educationist and the former Governor

of West Bengal and Bihar, His Excellency Professor (Dr). A.R. Kidwai. Among its seven members were Justice K.M. Yusuf and Dr. Abdus Sattar, the then President of West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education, now the Hon'ble Minister of State, Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education Department, Government of West Bengal. In its report submitted in 2002, the Committee made many thoughtful and far-reaching recommendations regarding Calcutta Madrasah and its curricula and syllabi. This Committee recommended that the Calcutta Madrasah should offer courses in both Islamic Studies and modern social sciences and humanities under the aegis of different units. It should continue to have scope for higher learning and research in Islamic Studies including Kamil and M.M. courses at Maulana Abul Kalam Azad institute of Islamic studies ; modern Economics, Sociology, Political Science and History under the Faculty of Social Studies; apart from Arabic and Persian, English, French, German, Chinese, and Japanese at the School of Modern Languages and Literature; 3-year degree course in Journalism and Mass Communication and 1-year diploma course in Television Journalism at the Institute of Mass Communication and Journalism; and B.Ed, and M.Ed courses under the Faculty of Education and Education Technology. Thus Calcutta Madrasah should develop as a leading centre of higher education in Eastern India. Gradually it should be recognized as a Deemed University. Several initiatives were taken by the Government in pursuance of its recommendations. Finally, the Aliah University Act was passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly in 2007. The Act came into force on 5 April 2008 and then and there the History changed.

#### *Aliah University : Present and Future*

The academic programmes of Aliah University have already started. All necessary steps are being taken to develop Aliah University as a primer institution of higher learning and research. The process of acquiring land for a beautiful, sprawling, state-of-the-art campus of the University is on. The development of elaborate infrastructure will start as soon as the process is completed.

In the mean, an eight-storied building, which has been named as Maulana Azad Bhawan, is ready in Salt Lake; soon some of the department will be shifted there. The University has purchased two and half acres of land for the city campus) at

Gorachand Road, behind Lady Braboume College, Park Circus, Kolkata; construction of two high-risers will start soon to accommodate several of our academic and other programmes.

*Vision of the University*

Aliah University is marching on with a vision to recapture the ambience and dynamic cultural heritage of the Madrasah system, to expand and deepen it, to evolve it further with a successful outreach into the emerging areas in each branch of modern science, technology, social studies, and humanities. We would like to instill the dynamism of the glorious heritage of the past among all our students, so that they can successfully cope with the critical needs and challenges of the present and contribute to the future advancement of science, technology, and human civilization, develop love and respect for fellow citizens of the country, and integrate themselves to the nation.