

Al-Ameen Mission

NEWSLETTER

Issue 5-6, Oct'14-Jan'15

Say: "O people of Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than Allah." If then they turn back, say ye: "Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah's will)."

-Al Qur'an, Surah Al Imran, Verse 64

CONTENTS

Archive	
Flying Colours	02
Mission Samachar	
Observance of Independence Day	03
Ascent	
Glittering Gems	07
Special Story	
IIUM: A Beacon of Higher Education in the Muslim World	09
Advisors	
Ekram Ali Prof. Sirajul Islam	
Dr. Sk. Md. Hassan	
Editor	
M. Nurul Islam	
Executive Editor	
Sk Hafizur Rahman	
Associate Editors	
Najib Anwar Ekramul H. Shaikh	
Graphics	
Md. Golam Kibriya	

Published by M Nurul Islam from 53B Elliot Roa, Kolkata 700 016 on behalf of Al- Ameen Mission Trust and printed at Diamond Art Press, 37/A Bentinck Street, Kolkata 700 069.
Ph: 033-3297 3580 Fax: 033-2229 3769
e-mail: newsletter@alameenmission.in
website: www.alameenmission.in
facebook.com/alameenmission.newsletter

Editorial

Physically, a human being is weak. He cannot run like horses nor fly like birds. He is no match in strength, so to say, for the elephant, the lion or the bear. He has no natural weapons of defense like the tiger's fangs and claws. Yet he conquers all these strong and fierce beasts, and tames them. It is his knowledge and intelligence that makes him the master of creatures. This knowledge and intelligence come from education.

Education, in a sense, is also a liberating tool. Through nurturing students' intellectual and creative growth and providing them with a productive space to learn, we hope to inspire students' thirst for knowledge and encourage them to continue their education, so they may become agents of change in their communities.

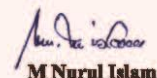
Although Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was an illiterate person, he had great interest in education. It is manifested from the tradition as quoted by Ibn Sa'd in "Tabaqat" that among the Meccan prisoners taken in the battle of Badr, there were many who could not pay for their liberty; and the literate among them however were ordered by the Prophet to teach at least ten illiterate Muslim children as a ransom.

It is recounted that a man came to Muhammad (PBUH) and asked, "What is ilm?" He replied, fairness (insaf). The man asked again, "And what more?" He replied, listening (istima). The man asked, "And what more?" The Prophet said, keeping in mind (hifz). The man asked, "And what else?" He replied, acting (amal) in accordance with knowledge. Then the man asked, "And what more?" Muhammad (PBUH) replied, spreading it (nashru-hu).

True to this spirit, we, at Al-Ameen Mission, are striving hard to spread knowledge. We are absolutely sure by spreading it we will be able to remove the darkness which pervades the Muslim community as a whole. Frankly speaking, there is so much to do but so little has been done. Our capability is also limited. We want many more people to come forward in this effort. Al-Ameen Mission pledges to stand beside them.

As we write this, good news come from afar. The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2014 jointly to Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan and Kailash Satyarthi of India in recognition to their outstanding struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. We are particularly overjoyed for Malala as this passionate and precocious 17 year old girl has shown exceptional courage against the obscurantist forces in her country. Her yearning for a good *taleem* (education) and her conviction that educated girls would be part of her country's *mustaqbil* (future) deserves unadulterated salutation. Once her life was blown apart. But she resisted, she fought back. Nothing could defeat her.

What Malala brings us is hope, hope for the future. Her indomitable spirit cannot be broken.


M Nurul Islam

I I U M

A Beacon of Higher Education in the Muslim World

Prof. Rafikul Islam



Cultural activity centre IIUM

In the golden era of Islam, for the purpose of higher education, many people used to go to Baghdad, Damascus and many other great cities in the then Muslim world. Here they used to study, in addition to Qur'an and Hadith, Mathematics, Medicine, Science, Philosophy and many other subjects. But now with the passage of time, the situation has completely changed. Today, for higher studies, they do not go to Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, rather their focus is towards USA, UK, Canada, or Australia.

Needless to say, the above mentioned countries have made huge progress in all branches of modern education. In comparison, Muslim countries are nowhere around them. It may be mentioned that some universities of USA and UK offer Islamic Studies and their standard is also world class, which leads to the same Muslim students aspire to take admission in these universities instead of considering universities in the Muslim countries. In this context, Centre for Islamic Studies in the Oxford

University deserves special mentioning. At present Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comprises of 57 Muslim countries, and Malaysia is one of them. During the last few decades, Malaysia has made significant progress in economy as well as education. Malaysian government spends a sizeable percentage of its annual budget for education sector - this is something which can be emulated by many other Muslim countries. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, who is widely known as the chief architect of modern Malaysia, at his time, inaugurated a number of universities and one of them is the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). In fact, he is the honorable founder of this University. The main objective of the present essay is to highlight few aspects of higher studies in this great university.

It may be noted that Mahathir is



IIUM Stadium

SPECIAL STORY



A GROUP OF NEW GRADUATES IN CHAT

one of the great leaders in the contemporary world, especially in the Muslim world. He realized that there is no contradiction of modern education with Islamic Studies. In fact, the meaning of Islamic education is not just studying Qur'an and Sunnah; of course, it is essential for all of us to study Qur'an and Sunnah. But in addition to this, we also need to study Science, Medicine, Law, Accounting, Geography, Mathematics, Psychology, and the list goes on. Islamic education should lead the man becoming a true khalifah of Allah (vicegerent) on the earth. This is the way through which Muslims can restore their past glory in this contemporary world.

In 1977, an international conference was held in the holy city of Mecca in order to discuss various aspects of Islamic education. As Education Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir attended this conference. At the end of the conference, he noted that there is no university in the whole Muslim world, where so called modern disciplines of education can be studied side by side Islamiyat. Yes, Al-Azhar of Egypt was there, but it was predominantly known for religious education, though of late many faculties such as Medicine, Engineering have been opened up at Al-Azhar. Mahathir felt strongly the need to establish one such university to fill out the wide vacuum. He pushed the case to OIC high level officials and he received nod as well as excellent support from them.

In 1982, Mahathir became Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister. After assuming his office, one of the first things he did is to establish a university that will restore the dynamism and prestige of the Muslim Ummah. He asked Prof. Kamal Hassan, a Muslim intellectual in Malaysia, to write a concept paper, which he did and this paper was subsequently passed by the Cabinet. Consequently, International Islamic University Malaysia or popularly known as IIUM was born and this was 20th May, 1983. The university's vision has been spelt out as:

"IIUM aims to become a leading international centre of educational excellence which seeks to restore the dynamic and progressive role of the Muslim Ummah in all branches of knowledge and intellectual discourse."

The mission statement of the university has been encapsulated by its tagline "IIICE" or "Triple ICE". In expanded form this is: Integration, Islamization, Internationalization, and Comprehensive Excellence.

By Integration, the university intends to integrate Islamic principles and ethos with the so called modern knowledge. It can be mentioned here that, one of core responsibilities of the lecturers of IIUM is to provide Islamic Perspective of the secular topic discussed in the classrooms. For example, when a lecturer teaches Human Resource Management to BBA students, he/she needs to provide the Islamic standpoint on the topic, as this will be missing in the textbook which are mostly written by Western, mostly Non-Muslim scholars. This unique teaching method makes IIUM different from the other conventional universities. So it is clear that, at IIUM, the students not only learn the modern theories of all branches of knowledge, but in addition they are exposed to Islamic Perspectives of the courses they study here.

Next is Islamization. This is the core mission of IIUM for its existence. We all know Islam is a complete and comprehensive code of life. This means we should seek solutions of all kinds of problems in Islam. Islamization is the process through which we ensure any branch of knowledge conforms to the tenets of Islam and it is particularly relevant for humanities and social science subjects. By means of this anchor activity, rich literature and culture of the past Islamic Civilization is injected with the theories of modern education.

The Muslim ummah is in deep, unprecedented crisis today. So, Mahathir realized that the university will not only serve the cause of Malaysia, but it will also contribute to the greater, global ummah. So, Internationalization has been a pillar of the university. At present, students come to study in this university from more than 100 countries in the world. They hail from all corners of the world. There are a sizeable number of students from India studying at IIUM. But they are mainly from South and North India. It seems that the Muslims from South and North India penetrate the world more than other parts of India including West Bengal.

The fourth and final part of the mission statement of IIUM is Comprehensive Excellence. This means that highest level of efficiency is the order of the day



A seminar room



A bird's-eye view of IIUM

for all activities carried out at IIUM – be it academic or administrative.

Presentably, IIUM operates from four campuses of which the main campus is located in Gombak, about 10 km north of Kuala Lumpur. The medical and bioscience related Kulliyyas (in IIUM, Faculties are known as Kulliyyahs) are located in the Kuantan city, about 240 KM away from Kuala Lumpur.

IIUM is widely considered as one of the largest universities in the Muslim world. At present, there are about 25 thousand students who come from more than 100 countries in the world. Teaching staff community is also very diverse which represents about 35 counties. Majority of the academic staff hold PhD degree obtained from UK, USA or Australia (for modern education) and Al-Azhar or Medina University (for Islamic studies). The lecturers who are educated in traditional branches of knowledge, such as Architecture, Engineering, Business, also need to possess a certain level of knowledge about Islam and its heritage. Those lecturers, who do not have adequate knowledge about Islam, can enroll themselves in Diploma in Islamic Studies offered at IIUM and the program is exclusively tailored for them.

During the last three decades, IIUM has not left any stone unturned to make itself a truly global university. In fact, it is one of the top 30 universities in the world in debating competition; in QS Asian university rankings it holds the 145th position (2014 ranking). Its graduates (Bachelor degree holders) are accepted in all major universities of the world.

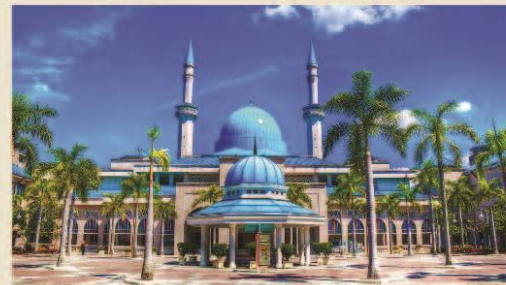
In this context, it can be mentioned that many students from Bangladesh come here to study various bachelor programs and after that they further their studies in USA, UK, Canada, or Australia. There are scores of Bangladeshi students who are IIUM graduates working in many world renowned organizations including

World Bank. Our brothers and sisters from West Bengal can learn a lot from them. It seems that the higher education search area for our students is confined to that state only (e.g., medicine and engineering) or at the most India. They hardly extend their search outside India.

IIUM has, at present, 16 faculties, 75 departments, names of which can be found from the university's website www.iium.edu.my. For undergraduate study, it requires a good pre-university degree (equivalent to our Higher Secondary) and proficiency in English (IELTS or TOEFL). If English proficiency proof is not available, then admission can still be offered but after joining the university, they need to take an

English Placement Test or EPT, failing which they need to enroll English courses first and take the Test again. The fees structure for various programs can also be obtained from the website. Scholarships are available, but that is not offered in the first year of study and needless to say it is very competitive and limited in number.

As mentioned before, at IIUM, the students are moulded to develop a balanced personality. They receive a top class education imbued with Islamic values and norms. It should be mentioned that the medium of instruction at IIUM is English, but students also need to learn basic Arabic language so that they can read and understand



IIUM Mosque

the Qur'an. It might also help them conversing with their brother and sisters from the Middle East and other parts of the Arab world. In the job market, IIUM graduates are widely sought after due to their balanced personality as they are truly vicegerents of Allah on earth.

Today, IIUM has been able to position itself as a top destination for higher education and it is considered as beacon of light that can prepare the ummah to uphold the peace and prosperity in the Muslim world, in particular and the humanity, in general. ■