

ISLAMIC INSTITUTE OF TORONTO

MISSION & MANDATE

CODE OF ETHICS



Mission and Mandate

1) The Islamic Institute stands for the dissemination of authentic Islamic knowledge. We adhere to the middle path (*wasatiyyah*), being free of all sectarian biases. We shun literalism and legalism, and adhere simultaneously to the *shari'ah* (The Law), and *suluk* (The Spiritual path).

2) We will avoid identifying ourselves with all forms of sectarian tendencies.

3) We value the *fiqh* legacy of the schools (*madhaahib*), while recognizing the continued necessity for *ijtihad* and creative dialogue with the legacy of the past, in light of our fresh reading of the sources in order to arrive at the universal ideals and norms as reflected in the Islamic scriptures.

4) We refuse to be pigeonholed to either *sufi* or *salafi*, while adhering strictly to the main tenets of the '*aqidah* of *ahl alsunnah* as formulated in the esteemed works such as *al-'aqidah al-tahawiyyah* of Imam Abu Ja'afar al-Tahawi.

5) We recognize the need for the authentic spirituality as taught by the spiritual masters belonging to the *ahl al-sunna*. We abjure all tendencies of *takfir* (calling others as infidels) and *tabdi* (calling others as heretics) which have been a feature of extremists in later Islamic history.

6) In our teachings and research, we will follow the objective methods of Islamic scholarship, while seeking to benefit freely from the new perspectives as developed by the disciplines of social sciences and humanities in the modern universities. While adhering firmly to the truth of the revelation and believing in the harmony of scripture and reason, we shun all tendencies of agnosticism, relativism, and anthropocentrism; thus seeking to be part of the organic legacy of the Islamic scholarship.

6) We hold all the board members, staff, teachers, and volunteers responsible to embrace this mission and expect full cooperation in realizing it, through their words, and actions, and in faith, and action.

7) As believers in this mission they are expected not to advocate, support, or promote programs or institutions that thwart or subvert or belittle this vision and method.

8) Islamic Institute and its members are also expected to manifest in their behavior all the cardinal traits of an authentic Islamic personality: truthfulness, sincerity, humility, devotion to Allah, love of the Prophet, love of the companions, family of the Prophet, the great imams, and the *awliya Allah* (friends of Allah), and respect for the bearers of Islamic knowledge, both the past, and the present.

9) We consider ourselves firmly rooted in the legacy of our past, while envisioning the prospects of a brilliant future; thus, we shall seek to witness the truth of Islam and its abiding values through our words and actions in the contemporary world.

10) Islamic Institute does not believe in the bifurcation of the world into the East and the West, as both belong to the Creator. We also adhere to the Qur'anic mandate of standing forth as witnesses of justice and fairness in judging people and nations— regardless of their ethnicity, religion, race, or language barriers. We shun racism, stereotyping, and gross generalizations, as we believe that every individual is to be judged by his or her own action and behavior.

11) We consider ourselves as citizens of Canada, while adhering firmly to the Quranic ethics; we do not find any contradiction between our duties as citizens and our Islamic identity, for as citizens we are mandated to stand forth as witnesses of justice and fairness for all people. We are committed to the betterment of our community and society, while seeking to instill the values of peace, respect for others, and treating all people as brothers and sisters in humanity with God-given rights and freedoms.

12) Islamic Institute in its curriculum will always reflect the *fiqh* of *madhaabib*, while being open to the developments in *fiqh* in light of the modern expansion in knowledge and scientific advancements as well as the challenges facing Muslims.

13) Our curriculum will reflect genuine appreciation for the intellectual and spiritual legacy of Islam as it has evolved throughout centuries. We recognize that Islam has traveled to various parts of the world and has adapted itself dynamically to the local cultures. While recognizing the

validity of such adaptations, we do not feel inhibited by any of the cultural baggage, as we believe there is room for an authentic expression of a culture, which is at once Canadian as well as genuinely Islamic.

14) Our curriculum will also seek to come to grips with the various streams of Islamic thought: legal, theological, scholastic, mystical and philosophical: each one of them representing aspects of Islamic tradition in varying degrees as the Qur'anic vision interacted with different milieus, cultures, and thought currents.

15) In light of the Quranic mandate for the dialogue and peaceful co-existence with all people, and the principle of pluralism-as enshrined in the Qur'an and as illustrated by the Prophet in the Madinian constitution, we believe in cooperating with everyone in working for the good and the virtuous.

16) Since Islam orders us to be fair in judging others, we find it imperative to know other religious traditions as they understand and practice them. We find this to be necessary for developing greater understanding of ourselves as well as others.

17) Islamic history will be an essential part of our curriculum. We will promote the critical study of history in order to learn its lessons and avoid errors. We do not sanctify our history, nor do we romanticize about it. We believe that those who fail to learn from their errors in the past are bound to repeat them.

18) Students will be given a chance to familiarize themselves with the Western traditions, in order for the Muslims to situate themselves on the map of the modern world and in order to enable them to serve as witnesses for the truth of Islam. In this way, the Institute will seek to bridge the chasm between the two traditions and help to develop a viable synthesis.

19) We believe a true synthesis is possible by maintaining harmony of revelation and reason and cultivating the simultaneous readings of the Twin Revelations: the Scripture and Nature.

Code of Ethics for the Islamic Institute-for the members of the board, staff, teachers, and volunteers

- 1) As members of the board, the staff, and volunteers, we believe in the above mission of the Islamic Institute and its mandate in fulfilling a unique role in creating a viable Islamic identity for the Muslims in Canada— which we are proud to call our home, and home for our children and grandchildren;
- 2) We adhere to Islamic tenets of faith and practice, while keeping to the middle path, avoiding all tendencies of extremism in the faith, creed, as well as our legal and spiritual practices;
- 3) We pledge to adhere to, and tread the middle path in disseminating Islamic knowledge and values, and commit ourselves to promote it in all sincerity through our words and actions, while refraining from all such actions that may in any way undermine, or thwart, or diminish the above mission;
- 4) We seek to mould our lives to be exemplars of the above mission in our own lives to the best of our ability by emulating the great prophetic virtues: sincerity, integrity, trustworthiness, love of Allah and His Messenger, accountability, and commitment to Islam as a way of life.
5. Islamic Institute believes in the Qur’anic imperative that men and women are equal partners in shouldering the amanah (the spiritual trust); as such, it is imperative that women must be given their respectable place in all areas of life as demonstrated by the Prophet, peace be upon him.
6. In pursuance of the above goal, the Institute would allot an equally respectable place for both men and women in the prayer hall as well as in the class rooms. We believe that partition in the mosque was a later innovation; it only hampers women from contributing effectively in the affairs of the community;
7. Youth are our future and therefore, we will open the doors for them to exercise their creative role as leaders and participants in all levels- thus helping to steer the Institute in new directions while firmly adhering to our basic vision;

8. The Institute adheres strictly to the concept of the Islamic brotherhood and believes in the sacred bond of oneness of human family as enshrined in the Quranic verse (49:13). Thus, we pledge to resist all forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, race, colour or worldly status; we consider piety and nobility of character as the only criteria for excellence.

9) We shall seek to empower everyone we interact with, to accentuate the good in all, while enabling him or her to realize their full potential as endowed by their Creator;

10) We are committed to demonstrating the team spirit, and adhere to the principles of *shura* (consultation), except in regard to issues that are governed by the Islamic *shari'ah*. The principle of *shura* entails free and frank discussion, and seeking to arrive at a consensus in so far as it is humanly possible;

11) We will maintain the integrity of the institution, and place its interests above our own personal or group interests;

12) We will treat our role, or function, or job that we undertake to perform as an *amanah* (trust) for which we consider ourselves accountable to Allah and to the community, we serve.

13) If for any reason, any member finds himself/herself unable or uncommitted in upholding the mission and the mandate of the Institute, they shall voluntarily relinquish their position, and in the event of their failure to do so, the board will have no choice, but to remove them.