

## God, Life and Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives

The international Islamabad conference titled God, Life and Cosmos: Theistic Perspectives was held in Islamabad, November 6-9, 2000. Sponsored and organized by the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences (CTNS), Berkeley, United States, Islamic Research Institute (IRI), Islamabad, Pakistan, and International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Islamabad, Pakistan, the conference drew over fifty scholars from the fields of natural sciences and religious studies. A number of interesting papers were presented on various aspects of the relation between religion and science, and each paper was critically evaluated and responded to by a respondent.

The conference commenced with the introductory remarks of Muzaffar Iqbal (National Library, Alberta, Canada) and then the keynote speech which was delivered by William Chittick, the renowned scholar of Islamic intellectual history and Ibn Arabi. Chittick's keynote address titled "Modern Science and the Eclipse of Tawhid" focused on the sharp contrast between the Islamic concept of *tawhid* (Divine unity) and the secular worldview of modern science. Drawing on the traditional distinction between the transmitted (*naqli*) and intellectual (*aqli*) sciences, Chittick emphasized the importance of intellectual sciences in confronting the challenges of the modern world. As respondent to Chittick's keynote paper, Hasan al-Shafi'i (President of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan) further elaborated on the points raised by the keynote speaker. The first day of the conference closed with a wonderful presentation about Pakistan and its history by the son and daughter of Muzaffar Iqbal, the indefatigable convener of the conference.

The papers presented at the conference touched upon nearly all of the major aspects of the religion-science relationship: the rise of modern physical sciences and the responses of the Islamic as well as Christian worlds, philosophy of science, modern cosmology, theory of evolution and its meaning for the religious worldview, history of Islamic sciences and its rel-

evance for today's Islamic world, and the question of causality both in its religious and scientific context. The scholars and participants present were of considerable variety, and this proved to be a good occasion for a number of stimulating discussions. William Chittick, Roshde Rashed, Hashim Kamali, Muzaffar Iqbal, Mahdi Gholshani, Mustansir Mir, Naumana Amjad, Audrey Chapman, Ahmad Dallal, Mark Worthing, Bruno Guiderdoni, Syed Nomanul Haq, Yamina Mermer, Ayub Omayya, Ebrahim Moosa, and Ibrahim Kalin presented their papers during the conference. Several scholars sent their papers prior to the conference and were not able to attend. The papers of the Islamabad conference can be reached at [www.kalam.org](http://www.kalam.org). We were informed that the proceedings of the conference will be edited by Muzaffar Iqbal and Syed Nomanul Haq and published under the same title sometime next year.

The closing remarks of the conference were delivered by Zafar Ishaq Ansari (director of the Islamic Research Institute and editor of Islamic Studies). Ansari underlined the high level of discussions during the conference, and expressed his hopes for the further articulation of the issues raised by the participants. In addition to the content of the conference, the organization committee, headed by Muhammad Jamil (International Institute of Islamic Thought) did an excellent job in handling everything from transportation to room arrangements. Unanimously, the participants proclaimed the Islamabad conference a true success, and all of the people who made it possible are to be warmly congratulated.

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