



research papers. Mohammad Kamal Hassan (International Islamic University, Malaysia) spoke on the Islamic worldview, which he stated is "theistic and ethical" and in sharp contrast to secularism and atheism. Topics discussed included how the Qur'an fulfills the human urge to have a vision of divine reality by personifying God's attributes, how "Mother Nature" could not have created itself, God's creation of the universe and nature's as well as humanity's purpose and role (i.e., vicegerency), and the requirements and expectations of God as regards humanity's control over nature. The speaker concluded with a reminder that humanity is subject to perpetual tests as regards the use of God-given bounties and resources and that collapse can be the result of upsetting the balance and harmony instituted by God in nature and life.

Osman Bakar (University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur) spoke on a major western misperception of Islam: its spread by the sword. He cited the works of Roger du Pasquier, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, and Francesco Gabrieli, who have documented that Islam was not introduced into Europe by the sword:

The real factor that proved decisive in the spread of Islam the religion and its permanent presence in all the territories to which it has spread, except in Spain and Sicily, was certainly not the power of the sword, but rather the power of its truth and simplicity.

Most of the paper was focused on this "accusation" and the discussion succeeded in clearing that misconception by suggesting other valid ideas.

In her paper "Towards a Positive Worldview of Islam," Jane Smith addressed several important issues of concern to Muslims living in North America: that Islam has occupied the primary place in a Muslim's life since the days of Adam, that Muhammad is the last prophet, and that Islam emphasizes that the present life and the afterlife are linked. Dealing with the "practical side," she discussed five points related to the current Islamic revival: a) Islam never deprived women of their rights, for during the time of the Prophet they were full participants and active members of the new society. After his death, however, their situation moved from "inclusion to exclusion and, finally, to seclusion"; b) Although communal interests are paramount, and not individualism as in the West, Islam recognizes and respects individual privacy; c) Increasing pride in Islam has resulted in the quest for westernization coming into conflict with the desire to throw out the West. Tunisia and the United States were used as examples; d) an emerging Muslim-Christian-Jewish dialogue; and e) that *tawhīd* is perhaps the "key concept in understanding the worldview of

