

International Conference of Muslim Social Scientists

Madinat al Hikmah, Hamdard Centre

Karachi, Pakistan

Jumādā al Akhirah 28 – Rajab 3, 1412/January 3-7, 1992

Without much fanfare, the Association of Muslim Social Scientists-Hamdard University conference began on 3 January 1992 at Madinat al Hikmah, a city established by the Hamdard Foundation exclusively for education, science, and culture. The conference was inaugurated by Saeeduzzaman Siddiqi, Acting Governor of Sindh. Mushtaqur Rahman, AMSS Ex-officio President, presented the introductory address, and Manzoor Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor, Hamdard University, gave the keynote address. Hakim Mohammad Said, Chancellor, Hamdard University and President, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, presented

the closing address. The message of Ṭāhā Jābir al 'Alwānī, President of IIIT, Herndon, VA, was read by Hakim Rasheed, a member of the Executive Board of the AMSS. The inauguration ceremony, attended by more than four hundred guests, was followed by a lunch and *ṣalāt al jum'ah*.

All conference arrangements were meticulous. The delegates were housed at the Scholars House, which was specially constructed for the conference. The program, abstracts, and addresses of the governor and others were beautifully printed, and copies of the papers were distributed one day before their presentation. The registration bags also contained medicines, thread, and even rubber bands for any emergency. Each participant received a silver medallion commemorating the conference, a program miniature, and a magnifying glass encased with the name-tags. Also included with the registration material were picture postcards of Karachi and a set of postage stamps.

The first afternoon session was chaired by Hakim Rasheed, a member of the Executive Board of the AMSS. Asusaf Ali, San Pedro, CA, delivered a paper entitled: "Social Sciences in the Twentieth Century and Beyond: An Islamic Perspective." He was followed by Charles Kennedy, Director, American Institute of Pakistan Studies and professor of political science at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, who tested the "Repugnancy to Islam: Legal Reform in Pakistan 1979-1991." Shariful Mujahid, Department of Journalism, International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, discussed the historical dimensions of Islamization in Pakistan. He was followed by Khalid bin Sayeed, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, Canada, who discussed the Western challenge and the faltering Islamic and Arab response.

The first full day of the conference began with a plenary session. Sayyid Mohammad Syeed, General Secretary of the AMSS, discussed the work which the AMSS and the IIIT are doing to Islamize the social sciences. The next session featured Syed Habibul Haq Nadvi, University of Durban, Durban, South Africa, who talked about the historical background to the consolidation of Muslims in South Africa and the Islamization of education process. Hakim Rasheed, Howard University, Washington, DC, discussed secular education and the political socialization of Muslim children; Ilyas Ba-Yunus, State University of New York, Cortland, NY, discussed the myth of Islamic fundamentalism; and Mirza Arshad Ali Beg of Pakistan gave a paper on interpretation of the rise and fall of societies in terms of Qur'anic revelations and the thermodynamic principle.

The following session had four presentations. Mushtaqur Rahman, Iowa State University, Ames, IA, presented a paper on Pakistan, Islam, and the new world order. Raja Ikram Azam, Director, Pakistan Futuristic Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, discussed the future of the Muslim world by outlining a geopolitical futuristic focus. Afak Haydar, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR, discussed the accountability of public officials in a Muslim society, while

Abbas Alkhafaji, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Slippery Rock, PA, presented a paper which asked the question: "Could the Gulf War Have Been Avoided?"

An Urdu language *mushā'irah* (poetry symposium) was held in the evening. The participation of prominent Pakistani poets made it a very successful event. In addition to Pakistani poets, Dilnawaz Siddiqui, Abidullah Ghazi, and M. A. W. Fakhri from America also recited their poems.

During the first session of the following day, Sayyid M. Syeed, International Institute of Islamic Thought, Herndon, VA, presented his paper on the Islamization of knowledge. This session was also attended by the faculty and students of the Pakistan Study Center, Islamabad, Pakistan. They were specially instructed by the centre to attend the lecture as a part of their study curriculum. The session became very lively with questions about the Islamization of knowledge and its implications for the ummah.

The next session featured Ghulam Haniff of St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN, who discussed the Muslim world and the challenge of development. Dilnawaz Siddiqui compared research paradigms and global agenda setting through the media, and Rahim Bux Shahin of Pakistan gave a paper on Iqbal and Muslim identity.

The afternoon session was exclusively devoted to the vision of the Iqra Foundation concerning Islamic education. Abidullah Ghazi, Iqra Foundation International, Chicago, IL, presented a comprehensive program of Islamic education, and Abdul Wahid Fakhri, President, Iqra Foundation, enlightened the conference on the achievements and prospects of the Iqra Foundation.

In the evening, the delegates and participants attended a lecture entitled "New Reagents and Reactions" given by Nobel Laureate D. H. R. Barton. The lecture was held as a part of the Fifth International Symposium on Natural Product Chemistry concurrently held in Karachi. The evening program terminated with a dinner and a launching ceremony of *Essays on Science: Felicitation Volume in Honor of Dr. M. D. Shami*, a former chairman of the National Science Foundation.

Next morning, the conference was shifted to Shaykh Zayd Islamic Centre at the University of Karachi so that a large number of the university's faculty and students could participate. Aatur Rahim spoke on the development of social scientific thought among the Muslims of British India. He was followed by F. A. Shamsi who discussed the Shari'ah Act and Islamization in Pakistan, Naseem A. Zaidi, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India, then described the problems of sustained development in South Asian countries. Iftikhar Malik, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK, presented a paper entitled "Islam, the West and Ethnonationalism: A Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Central and South Asia." Theodore P. Wright, Jr., State University of New York, Albany, NY, the final speaker, presented a paper on the problem of empiricism in comparative

political research by Muslims, in which he proposed a research agenda for Muslim social scientists.

The business meeting began soon after the breakfast on the last day of the conference. Mushtaqur Rahman reviewed the conference, its presentations, and discussion, and also invited the conferees to express their opinions. Everybody present at the meeting noted that it was the most successful conference and expressed their desire that the AMSS would assume a more active role in serving the ummah. They recommended that the AMSS establish a branch in Karachi and hold international conferences every two years. They proposed Egypt or Malaysia as possible sites for the next conference. The delegates adopted resolutions commending the Hamdard Foundation for establishing Madinat al Hikmah as a city of education, science, and culture. The delegates also recorded their appreciation and thanks to the Organizing Committee for making the best possible arrangements for the conference.

The concluding session on January 7 was presided over by Muhammad Afzal Muneef, Minister for Planning and Development of Sindh Province, Pakistan, who thanked the Hamdard Foundation for holding the conference in Pakistan and assured his government's full support for any AMSS-Hamdard conference in the future. Sadia Rashid, Vice-President, Hamdard Foundation, Karachi, Pakistan, and the person behind all the arrangements, proposed a vote of thanks to the Minister, the AMSS, the delegates, and all the participants. The conference concluded with a beautiful *du'ah* by the children of Hamdard Public School.

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