

### Seminars, Conferences, Addresses

## **Social Sciences and Social Change: An Islamic Perspective**

The 19th Annual Conference of the AMSS

Dearborn, Michigan

*Rabi' al Akhīr 6-8, 1411/October 26-28, 1990*

The second decade of the association's existence culminated in a very encouraging conference in Dearborn, Michigan this year.

The conference highlights included a keynote address by Ali Mazrui, Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities, State University of New York at Binghamton, and addresses by 'AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān, past president of AMSS and current rector of the Islamic University of Malaysia, and Munir Ahmad Khan, director of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Mazrui, who focused on the Gulf crisis, spoke about the double standards practiced by the West in dealing with the Muslim ummah. AbūSulaymān stressed the need for reform of character at the individual level for achieving lasting social change.

The Ismā'īl and Lamyā' al Fārūqī Memorial Lecture was delivered by John Esposito, director of the Center for International Studies, Holy Cross College, Worcester, Massachusetts and past president of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA). He reminded the Muslim social scientists of Ismā'īl al Fārūqī's tradition, urging them to become activists and scholars of Islam at the same time.

The conference proceedings were spread over nineteen panels which offered a variety of papers on Islam and Muslim life by scholars from North America and overseas.

The tradition that had been revived three years ago was maintained, and thus the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE) also held their annual conference concurrently with this year's AMSS conference. The other tradition that continued was the dialogue between representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths.

Another feature of the program was the incorporation of the AMSS Business Administration seminar. This program featured two panels. In the first panel, Ahmed M. Abo-Hebeish of Northrop Corporation discussed the framework of debtor-creditor relations as the foundation of financial accounting in Islam, and Mohamed A. El-Badawi of California State University addressed the issue of computing zakatable funds.

The other panel (Session 5: Panel 10) in this discipline had four presentations. The seminar chairman, Ghouse A. Shareef of Bellarmine College in Kentucky, spoke on "Accountability, Congruency, and Equilibrium as the

Pervasive Principle of Individual and Group Behavior for Motivation and Performance.” Mahmoud A. Moursi of Central Michigan University lectured on the “Concept and Principles of Work in Islam,” and Ola Abdel-Kawi of Nova University in Florida presented the “Islamic Perspective of the Expectancy-Valence Theory.” Inaam Al-Hashimi of SUNY at Brockport, New York spoke on “Economic Theories in Islam: The Missing Link between Capitalism and Socialism.”

The first session, a roundtable, was devoted to an exposé and discussion of the freedom movement now raging in Indian-occupied Kashmir. The discussants were Ghulam Nabi Fai, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Kashmiri-American Council, AMSS vice president Salahuddin Malik, and Manzoor Ahmad of Hamdard University, Karachi, Pakistan.

The second session comprised three panels: Women’s Issues, Communications for Social Change, and Business Administration (see above). In the first panel, Ilyas Ba-Yunus of SUNY at Cortland, New York discussed the dilemma of Muslim working women in North America in search of their status. His empirical study of the subject found divorce rates in Muslim families almost as high as those among non-Muslim families. Ola Abdel-Kawi’s presentation was also based on empirical data as part of her exploration into Muslim women’s attitudes toward the Islamic family system and feminism. The results indicated that despite their preference for combining family and career, Muslim women in America maintained a relatively strong feeling vis-à-vis the Islamic family system. In the case of conflict between career aspirations and healthy matrimonial relationships, they preferred to opt for the latter.

The second panel in this session, entitled “Models of Social Change,” featured Sharaf N. Rahman of Lamar University in Texas, who devoted his time to discussing the portrayal of Arabs in the Western media. Eric Winkel of the International Islamic University of Malaysia spoke about television and how it affects one’s perception of reality. Fawzia Bariun of Detroit, Michigan talked about Malik Bennabi, an Algerian Muslim thinker well known among French-speaking Muslims but not among their English-speaking counterparts, as a proponent of social change. Osman Eskicioglu of the Ninth of September University in Izmir, Turkey focused on bringing about social change through the interaction of religion and science.

The third session had two panels: “Population and Social Change” and “Strategies in Social Change.” In the first panel of this session, Sulaiman Bah of the University of West Ontario of London, Canada put forward suggestions for reducing mortality and morbidity among Muslim populations. Bah showed specific examples of common ailments found among certain Muslim populations, and then proceeded to derive several low-cost preventive measures for them from the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. He argued

that "low levels of mortality are not only achievable at high levels of economic development, or under socialist or liberal political systems, but also at high levels of moral and religious development."

Ghulam M. Haniff of St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota spoke about social change through Islamic activism. Through an in-depth analysis of the contemporary phenomenon of Islamic resurgence, Haniff was able to show that it is a result of generations of agitation among Muslims. He discarded the single-factor theories of Western observers such as "oil wealth," "anti-modernism," or "anti-development," calling them suspect and oversimplifications of a complex social reality. With historical evidence, he showed that, contrary to the fallacious view, a technological society may even call for the practice of Islam.

Recep Senturk of New York City's Columbia University looked into societal transformation in Turkey, and Imtiaz Ahmad explained his Mercy International model for organizing viable programs to assist needy communities.

The fourth session had three panels: "Muslims as a Minority in the U.S.A.," "Some Islamic Movements," and "Educational Planning and Social Change." In the first panel, Dawood A. S. Adeyola of Buffalo, New York talked about the challenge of preserving Islam in North America. Syed Ibrahim of Louisville, Kentucky discussed the problems of immigrant Muslims, and Sulayman Nyang of Howard University in Washington, D.C. focused on continuity and change among Muslims in the United States. Each of these discussants analyzed various economic, sociocultural, and political factors as problems and prospects for Muslims in America—both indigenous and immigrants. They emphasized the need for upholding the unifying principles of Islam and for managing their linguistic, national, and ethnic differences. They also pointed out the lack of public relations skills among Muslims.

The panel on "Some Islamic Movements" opened with Rasha al Disuqi of the University of Wales, U.K., who built a connection between decisions on Palestine and the Muslim image in contemporary American fiction. Al Disuqi illustrated how "contemporary American literature about the Middle East is a tool for advancing certain policies by prescribing public opinion into accepting them through exaggerated propaganda," a technique which emphasizes the archaic and erroneous view known as "the white man's burden." Her examples from such propagandist fiction clearly showed how they have contributed to widespread feelings of disrespect for Muslims, their resources, and their holy places. She stressed that "when propaganda gains force in the public mind, decision-making policies become acceptable to the masses unfamiliar with the truth about Islam and Muslims from their original sources."

Najib Ghadbian of CUNY, New Brunswick, New York discussed the potential for democratization in the Arab world by way of the Islamic

movements. Fadel Abdullah of Chicago, Illinois talked about the social responsibility of Islam in the face of worldly strife, and Louay Safi of Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, presented a survey of important concepts in Islamic political theory.

The third panel in the session was on "Educational Planning and Social Change." Wasiullah Khan of East-West University in Chicago discussed a practical model for Muslims in America to use when they begin to establish their own institutions of higher learning. He shared with the audience his invaluable experiences as a founder and chancellor of a university, and showed the practicality of a fee-driven model for institutions of higher learning in America. Hamed M. Sallam of Mankato State University in Minnesota complemented this with his paper dealing with a conceptual outline of the planning function in Islam.

The fifth session had a panel on "History and Humanities as Instruments of Change" as well as a panel entitled "Business Administration II" (see above). In the first panel, M. Yusuf Siddiq of Harvard University, who discussed epigraphy and Islamic culture, took the audience through a calligraphic journey to an eastern Islamic region. Abdelghani Khalafallah of Maryland talked about the openings of the Qur'anic chapters in his paper entitled "Transcultural Implications of Fawātih al Suwar."

The sixth session featured a luncheon followed by two speeches. Amr Mohsen, CEO & chairman, Connectus Corporation, Saratoga, California, dealt with the phenomenal revolution in computer and information technology and its implications for the world in general and for the Muslim world in particular. This was followed by John Esposito's deliverance of the Al Fārūqī Memorial Lecture.

The seventh session consisted of three panels. The first one, "Business and Management," began with Shakura Sabur of Columbia, Missouri. She offered a tried and tested Islamic model for developing a multicultural corporate climate which, according to her, is desperately needed in the increasingly global marketplace. In addition, she pointed out that "fundamental Islam is conspicuous in its unique respect for all humanity. The significance of Islam is in its conception of the unity and oneness of God and mankind regardless of creed, color, or race." She stressed the point that "racial and ethnic conflict will remain an ugly fact of American life unless a greater spiritual awakening is achieved and adopted into the corporate scene." Thus, she showed the practical dimension of the "Islamic foundation of Oneness as the authentic basis from which to recreate a corporate culture that values the richness inherent in a multicultural workforce."

Ghouse A. Shareef, in his second paper of the conference, reflected on the Islamic perspective of a conceptual framework for the field of accounting. Abbas Al-Khafaji of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania discussed his

comparative study of divine and man-made laws as they relate to business economics and management.

The panel on "Socialization of Children and Social Change" had four papers. Mazen Hashem of California discussed the need for change in the philosophy of the curricula of Islamic weekend schools and the related topic of the cultural assimilation of Muslim immigrants into American society. He advocated an interactive process on the level of extrinsic cultural traits and a counterassimilation position on the level of intrinsic cultural traits, following the well-defined Islamic principles of equality in dealing with ethnic, national, and racial issues.

Kamal Nimer of the Islamic Saudi Academy in Virginia spoke on the effect of American culture on Muslim students. He traced the history of Muslim interaction with the political forces controlling the Americans, leading to the contemporary pattern of Muslim reaction instead of initiation vis-à-vis the American political scene. He then concentrated on how Muslim children need to cope with inimical cultural assimilation, and made a strong case for the Islamic duty of all Muslims to get themselves effectively organized in this regard.

Hakim Rashid of Howard University in Washington, D.C. spoke about growing up in America using case studies of African-American Muslim youth, while Faiz Ali of Orange County, California addressed the issue of "Socialization for Social Change." Ali analyzed diverse positive and negative factors impacting upon children's character formation and resultant behavior patterns, and recommended a few strategies to overcome the negative forces. Rashid, who has written extensively on the subject of raising Muslims in Western culture, shared with the audience a great deal of empirical data on African-American Muslim youth. He dealt with a variety of socio-economic problems facing these youngsters and offered practical solutions for them.

In the "Law and Jurisprudence" panel, Farrukh Hakeem of CUNY, New York presented a historical analysis of colonial India's criminal justice system. Yusuf Kavakci of Richardson, Texas spoke on "Ilm al Khilāf and its Importance in America: Comparative Legal Systems," and Suleyman Atesh of Istanbul, Turkey discussed "Muḥkam and Mutashābih in the Holy Qur'an."

The eighth session had two panels: "Socio-Political Changes in South Asia" and "Finance and Economic Justice." In the first panel, Kazim Sajjadpour of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. presented a post-Cold War analysis of the international system and the security of the Muslim world. He investigated the problems and prospects of the apparent friendship between the East and the West for the Muslim world, and thus analyzed the new threats to its security, including the recent build-up of American military forces in the Gulf.

Omar Khalidi of M.I.T. discussed the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir

and the current situation of Indian Muslims. Khalidi, who had spent several months in India talking with sociopolitical elites, especially Muslims, dwelt upon the implications of the Kashmiri independence movement for the minority Muslim community within India. He spoke of Hindu chauvinist threats, linking the survival of secularism in India with the Kashmiris' forced agreement to forego their right to self-determination.

Abu Hamid M. A. Qadir of the University of Utah talked about the dynamic impact of al Afghānī (1837-1897) in awakening the Muslims of India. He presented al Afghānī's model of social change and then proceeded to use it in the context of British India. Qadir showed how al Afghānī's ideas inspired Indians in general, and Muslims in particular, to fight for independence from the British.

The second panel, "Finance and Economic Justice," featured papers by Abdel-Hameed Bashir of University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as Mary Lehman and Hamza Yusuf of Missouri, M. Rehmat Ali of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India, and Ali M. Iskender of Ankara, Turkey.

In their paper entitled "Keeping Your Money Interest Free: A Practical Plan," Lehman and Yusuf suggested a practical way of keeping money interest-free in un-Islamic economic systems by returning to pure trade money. A distinction was made between the two sources of money, i.e., the economic source (permissible) and the political source (impermissible interest income plus bank-inflated money). The essence of their strategy is to clear the debt periodically with a view to keeping money interest-free. Ali M. Iskender elaborated on the macro-financial device of liquid mechanism used by individual nations vis-à-vis bilateral and multilateral creditors. He showed how the interest-free banking/lending system can succeed in developing a nation (without resorting to borrowing money on interest).

The first panel of the tenth session was again dedicated to Muslim children. Shaaban Ismail of the Islamic Society of North America, located in Plainfield, Indiana, spoke about the "Challenges and Opportunities in Public Schools," while Faiz Ali reflected on the "Challenges and Opportunities in Islamic Schools." Shabbir Mansoori made a presentation on the projection of Islamic history in American public schools, and Saleem Kiyani of American Trust Publications in Indianapolis, Indiana informed the audience about the possibility of "Social Change through Children's Literature."

The other panel, "Social Science Research," was chaired by Mona Abul-Fadl of IIIT, who presented a paper dealing with the *tawhīdī* perspectives of contemporary social theory. Selina Rawe of Ontario, Canada focused on reestablishing the Islamic paradigm in the new sociosphere. Manzoor Ahmad of Hamdard University, Karachi, Pakistan put forth the Islamic perspective of social science research, and Muhammad Ahmadullah Siddiqui of Western

Illinois University gave the Islamic perspective on ethics and responsibility in mass communications.

The last session consisted of a group discussion on the impact of non-Muslim culture on business ethics. The discussants were Zain Ansar of the University of Cincinnati, and Abdullah Mitchell and Hussain Mehmood of Chicago.

The AMSS Executive Committee meeting culminated in the appointment of A. Waheed Fakhri as the chair of the Nominating Committee to oversee the elections of the 1991-92 Executive Committee.

Messages of good wishes were sent by President George Bush and James J. Blanchard, the governor of the state of Michigan.

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### Islamic Perspective on Ethics

Session on the Islamic Perspective on Business Ethics and Responsibility in Mass Communications

Dr. Waheed Fakhri, Chairman

Dr. Abdullah Mitchell

Dr. Hussain Mehmood

The first session of the AMSS Executive Committee meeting was devoted to a discussion on the Islamic perspective on business ethics and responsibility in mass communications. The session was chaired by Dr. Waheed Fakhri, who presented a paper on the Islamic perspective on business ethics. The session was moderated by Dr. Abdullah Mitchell, who presented a paper on the Islamic perspective on business ethics. The session was also attended by Dr. Hussain Mehmood, who presented a paper on the Islamic perspective on business ethics. The session was a very successful one and provided a good opportunity for the participants to discuss the Islamic perspective on business ethics and responsibility in mass communications.

The session was held in the AMSS Executive Committee meeting room at the University of Michigan. The session was held on the 15th of October, 1991. The session was held from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The session was held in the AMSS Executive Committee meeting room at the University of Michigan.