

Conference Report

Sixteenth Annual Conference of The Association of Muslim Social Scientists

The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) held its Sixteenth Annual Conference at the ISNA headquarters in Plainfield, Indiana, October 9-11, 1987. Registration listed about 200 participants from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Trinidad, and other countries. The inaugural session on October 9 provided a hospitable setting for camaraderie. Eloquent and spirited speeches by Iqbal Unus, Conference Chairman; Ibrahim Syed, AMSE Program Chairman; and Mushtaqur Rahman, AMSS Program Chairman, set the stage for the conference and the sessions.

Chaired by Salahuddin Malik, AMSS Vice-President, the first session on Political Science was held on Friday evening after Salat-ul Maghrib. Hashem Al-Jaseem of the University of California was the first to present his paper on *Islam and Politics*. He was followed by Taysir Nashif of Essex County College, who pleaded for a *Nuclear Free Zone in the Middle East*. Louay Safi of Wayne State University concluded the session with his presentation of *War and Peace in Islam*.

This session was so lively and discussions so absorbing that no time was left for the following session scheduled for the same evening. Conferees preferred to postpone the second session rather than to conclude the discussions. It was heartening that every conferee maintained the Islamic tradition of conducting debates in a spirit of good humor, disagreeing without being disagreeable.

The first full day of the conference, Saturday, October 10, began with a Tilawat-e-Quran, and a session on Education. Chaired by M.A.W. Fakhri of Chicago State University, the session had two presentations. Hakim Rashid of Howard University opened the session with his paper on "Socialization/Education of Muslim Children in America". He was followed by Nimat Hafez Barzangi of Cornell University, who presented her paper on "Perceptions of the Islamic Belief System: The Muslims in North America." Following the session on education, two concurrent sessions were held on Sociology and History dealing with Muslim minorities. This was the first time the strategy of concurrent sessions was ever tried in the AMSS. The sociology session Chairperson, Ilyas Baynus of the State University of New York, first invited

Hassan A. Yahya of Michigan State University to present his paper on *Islamization of Sociology*. He was followed by Mohammad Amjad of the Iowa Board of Parole who discussed the *Elements of Rehabilitation and Deterrence in Islamic Criminal Justice*. Farid Alattas of John Hopkins University was the session's last presenter. His paper on *Implantation of Social Sciences in the Muslim World* was much appreciated and won the AMSS award for the graduate students.

The other concurrent session was chaired by Mona Abul-Fadl of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). The session dealt with aspects of Arab and Indian Islamic societies. Haider Ali Bhuiyan of the University of Manitoba discussed Islamization of Arab Society, and Omar Khalidi of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology described the major *Religio-Political Trends Among Indian Muslims*.

The next session chaired by Mohammad Amjad also of the Iowa Board of Parole dealt with the *Afro-Asian Islamic Experience: Historical Aspects and Future Prospects* consisted of two papers. Ghayth Nur Kashif of the IIIT described the *African-American Dimensions of Islamic Conversions* and Dennis Michael Warren of Iowa State University discussed the *Spread of Islam into Central Ghana: A Century of Ethnic Migration and Islamic Impact Upon the Bono Ethnic Group*.

Saturday afternoon sessions began after the Salat-ul-Dhur and lunch. The Economics session, chaired by Akhtar Siddiqi of Indiana State University, heard presentations from Zaidi Sattar of Catholic University of America on Ethics of Profits in the Islamic Economic System and Ghouse A. Shareef of Bellarmine College on Some Fundamental Concepts of Islamic Management and Accounting.

The next session on American Muslims was chaired by Dennis Michael Warren of Iowa State University. In this session, Mohammad Arif and Kokab Arif of Clark University gave a joint paper on *US Public Opinion and American Muslims: A Case Study of the Muslim Community of Worcester, Massachusetts*. The paper represented great vitality and a new approach and was often cited as a model for other social scientists to follow to bridge the gap between local communities and Muslims. The Arifs were followed by Abu Bakr Shingeti of the University of Massachusetts, who discussed the *Representation of Muslims in American Media*.

The sessions continued until late in the evening, again leaving very little time for the Workshop and the AMSS al-Fārūqī Memorial Lecture. It was generally felt that the Program Committee should allow some time in between the sessions to enable the participants to exchange ideas and discuss relevant issues with the speakers, rather than schedule back-to-back sessions.

Since the conference banquet was scheduled at 6:15 p.m. and could not be changed, the al-Fārūqī's lecture was rescheduled after the banquet. Sister

Mona Abul-Fadl, gave the al-Fārūqī lecture. Though it was late in the evening, the attendance was large, and the presentation was exceptionally scholarly.

The last day of the conference, Sunday October 11, began with Tilawate-Quran and a business meeting. Since AMSS President, 'AbdulḤamīd 'AbūSulaymān was in Saudi Arabia, Vice-President Salahuddin Malik discharged the duties of the President. Secretary-General, Abdul Hadi Omer presented the yearly report, and Treasurer Mohammad Arif gave the financial report. The IIIT was cited for its financial assistance.

Following the business meeting, the second session on Sociology was held and chaired by Farid Alattas of John Hopkins University. Ilyas Bayunus of the State University of New York, Cortland, explored *Islamic Thought in Sociology*, and Surya Chandra Surapaty of the University of Michigan discussed *Islamic Values, Positivism, and Sociology*.

The concluding session on Islamic Urbanism, Language and Literature was jointly chaired by G.A.K. Niazi and Ala'Edin Kharufa of Chicago. The first paper on *Foundations of Islamic Urbanism: Unity and Interdependence* was presented by Omer Ertur and LaDan Omidvar Rahmati of Iowa State University. Profusely illustrated, the paper attracted much attention and was much appreciated. The next paper by Rasha al-Disqui of the University of Wales was on *Significance of Romantic Utterances and Islamic Truth*. To conclude the session and the conference, Abdul Hadi Omer of the University of Omdurman gave a paper on *Arabic As a Religious and Intellectual Heritage*. The conference concluded with a *Du'aa*, and a determination to make the Seventeenth Annual Conference still better, *Insha Allah*.

Mushtaqur Rahman
Program Chairman