



Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center

2505 Technology Dr., Suite # 2-01 Hayward, CA 94545

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2006

IECRC'S HOLDS 4TH ANNUAL *MILAD SHAREEF* CONFERENCE FREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Fremont, California (July 12, 2006) - The Islamic Educational and Cultural Research Center (IECRC), a non-profit, non-political, 501(c)(3) community service organization based in Northern California held its 4th Annual *Milad Shareef* Conference dedicated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (b. 570 C.E., Peace Be Upon Him) on July 8, 2006 in Fremont, California. According to Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the final in a chain of Prophets from God Almighty including the great Prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them all) who were all sent to guide humanity. Muslims believe that the religion of Islam culminates the Judeo-Christian tradition. *Milad Shareef* refers to the Noble Birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

Each year the IECRC conducts a *Milad Shareef* Conference themed on one or two Blessed Attributes of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) who is referred to in the Holy Quran, as a "Complete Role Model" for humanity. This was the fourth in a series of annual conferences that the IECRC has been conducting with the aim and purpose of educating about essential human values modeling the Blessed Character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This year's Conference focused on the essential human value of "Truth" which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) epitomized and thus became known as *Sadiq-ul-Ameen* - The Truthful and Trustworthy.

Those attending the IECRC Conference were Prof. Arthur Kane Scott, Assistant Professor, Humanities Department Dominican College, San Rafael, CA (also teaches at 5 other universities and colleges in the Bay Area); Dr. Mohammad Azadpur, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, San Francisco State University; Pastor 'Dotun Kukoyi, The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Jesus House, San Francisco; Fremont Mayor Bob Wasserman; Fremont Police Chief Craig Steckler; numerous local Muslim scholars, and inspiring poets.

Fremont Mayor Bob Wasserman stated that the truth is something one accepts as a reality without questioning. He related anecdotal experiences on how the truth always saves the day.

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He concluded that as communities we must uphold this crucial human value because the “Truth shall set you free.” The origins of this statement can be found in the saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) 14 centuries ago, “Truth liberates and falsehood destroys.”

Dr. Mohammad Azadpur explained that the *Shari'ah* (Law) is like the circumference of a circle, each point of which represents a Muslim who stands on that circumference. Each radius that connects every point on the circumference to the center symbolizes the *Tariqah* (Inner Path), and the center is the *Haqiqah* (The Truth), which generates both the radii and the circumference. The whole circle, with its center, circumference, and radii, may be said to represent the totality of the Islamic tradition.

Pastor Kukoyi discussed fundamentalism and secularism stating that strains of the former can be found in every religion and that unfortunately faith is slowly disappearing from societies being replaced by secularism. He said that it was the challenge of the leadership, be that of any religion, to bring the message of faith especially to our youth who are our future. He said that there must be dialog between religious groups with an openness that there isn't just one version of the truth. The Pastor's wife Floretta Kukoyi, an ordained pastor in her own right, was deeply moved by the presentation of her fellow brother speakers. Pastor Kukoyi stated that their acceptance to this event was a result of their deep regard and respect for the Managing Director of IECRC, Mr. Ayyaz Yousaf Qadri and his wife, Syeda Zille Humma Qadri due to their conduct of openness to mutual understanding.

Prof. Arthur Scott expounded on some basic Sufi principles. He quoted Hazrat Ali (may Allah ennoble his countenance), 4th of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, that we may think we are small, but we have the entire universe within us. He explained that what the popular culture refers to as a “mid-life crisis” is the entry of the spiritual into the physical as a wake up call to our true spiritual nature. He further explained that the Message, i.e. The Holy Quran, and The Messenger, i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) are intrinsically intertwined and cannot be separated. Prof. Scott, a Muslim scholar, constantly referred to the Pastor as his “brother.” Prof. Scott further shared how Mr. Sharaaz Khan Qadri, Director at IECRC's Sacramento branch, led him into Islam due to his respectful conduct. Prof. Scott, a prior college teacher of Mr. Qadri, also contributed towards the IECRC Director reconnecting with his own traditional roots.

Fremont Police Chief Craig Steckler relayed the importance of truthfulness in running the police department. He mentioned that the police officers' testimony is often decisive in resolving difficult situations and hence the quality of honesty as a character trait of police officers is absolutely crucial. He mentioned that his department proactively undergoes sensitivity training for various cultural groups so that they may most effectively perform their duties.

Joining the program from the Holy City of Madina Munawwara was Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ahmed Qadri, Founding Director of IECRC. He conveyed his important message of how each community regardless of religious affiliation must work together for the unconditional service

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of humanity which can contribute towards true world peace. He congratulated all the attendees for their dedication and love and paying tribute to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) through their participation in IECRC's 4th Annual *Milad Shareef* Conference, making a special prayer for all.

Other speakers from the Muslim community were Maulana Ramzan (San Francisco), Maulana Amin Nauman (Live Oak), and Maulana Rafiq (Mountain View) who gave talks on the greatness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Sister Syeda Zille Humma Qadri, Chair of IECRC's Women's Committee, gave a talk on the historical context of the *Milad Shareef* and how this celebration of the Blessed Birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) has been practiced for the past 1400 years and was a practice of the *Sahaba*, i.e. the Noble Companions (May Allah be pleased with them). There were many inspiring *Naatkhwans* (poets) both amongst the men and the women.

There were also many wonderful children's *Naat* poetry presentations. The children and youth of IECRC presented a moving play based on the famous prayer *Lab pe aati hai dua* of the great Poet of the East and philosopher of the 20th century CE, Hazrat Allama Iqbal (may Allah have mercy on him.) This prayer asks Allah Almighty to help us to help the poor, needy, and elderly, and to increase love for the light of knowledge.

The inspiration behind this year's theme of Truth was a 5-volume video CD set titled "The Truth" which is an excellent exposition in both Urdu and English by Founding Director Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ahmed Qadri on some very pertinent topics such as the Soul, Tolerance, Sufism, Patience, Code of Ethics, Relationship with Other Faiths, Gratitude, and Women in Islam as they relate to our modern times where every sincere soul is in search of the Truth. This set was released at the Conference.

There was a PowerPoint presentation made on IECRC and its services by Mr. Sharaaz Khan Qadri, Director of IECRC who runs its services along with his wife Sister Fatima Sharaaz Qadri in Sacramento. The presentation covered IECRC's accomplishments including publishing, past conferences, success in spiritual healing, community outreach courses, disaster relief efforts, future goals, and needs. The Conference was skillfully emceed by Mr. Ayyaz Yousaf Qadri, Managing Director of IECRC and Mr. Sharaaz Khan Qadri. Mr. Ayyaz Qadri thanked all the speakers and the *Naatkhwans* and the dedicated team of IECRC volunteers whose tireless efforts contributed to the success of the program. Mr. Ayyaz Qadri also presented awards to all the distinguished speakers and *Naatkhwans*.

Complimentary dinner was served as per the Muslim tradition of "*Langar*" always a part and parcel of the blessed *Milad Shareef* gatherings. The program ended with the standing salutation (*Salam*) to the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him.) About 200 people attended from around the Greater Bay Area including Sacramento, Yuba City, Woodland, Fresno, Antioch, San Francisco, Alameda, San Jose, Hayward and Fremont. Admission was free and the event was open to all. Despite the intense heat of the day much of the audience stayed on till the end of the program benefiting from its spiritual aura.

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The IECRC is very pleased with all credit attributed to God Almighty at the coming together of various faith communities to exchange honest views on common human values, such as the one of “Truth” focused on at its 4th Annual Conference. It is IECRC’s goal to be a spiritual and academic resource from the Islamic perspective in the world arena, as we as a global community attempt to understand ourselves and one another, bridge gaps, and heal rifts for the purpose of achieving peace and harmony for humanity.

More information about IECRC can be obtained from www.iecrcna.org.