

IECRC Conducts Its 1st Annual Women's Milad Shareef Conference In The Greater Bay Area

The Islamic Educational & Cultural Research Center of Northern California conducted its 1st Annual Women's Milad Shareef Conference on Saturday, May 6, 2006 in the city of Fremont. The event was a wonderful gathering of women of all cultures and ages from cities far and near whose hearts shared one thing in common: an overwhelming love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him & His Noble Family & Companions) coupled with the great desire to learn more about His Prophetic Way.

This year's conference was dedicated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) most Beloved Daughter, Hazrat Fatima Zahra (may Allah Almighty be pleased with her). The conference had a full agenda with inspiring speakers and moving *Naatkhwans* (poets) reciting poetry in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). The topics covered included the Miracles of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), His Blessed Birth, His Beautiful *Shamail* (Physical Attributes), women's rights, message for social betterment, unity based on love for the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), and the role of the Hazrat Fatima Zahra (may Allah be pleased with her) as a wife and role model for all women to follow. "Hazrat Fatima Zahra's (may Allah Almighty be well pleased with her) concern for the *Ummah* (community) of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) was akin to that of her Blessed Father as was her stellar character," explained Syeda Zille Humma Qadri, Chair of IECRC's Women's Committee.

Dr. Syeda Saiqa Zubeda, Executive Director of the Canadian Women Counselling Centre of British Columbia, Chief Guest at this important conference, commented that the Muslim *Ummah* is suffering from divisions & defeat. She advised that the only consummate unifying & uplifting force is to rekindle unconditional love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in the hearts of people, especially those of our children. She further explained that "just like one needs light to read a book, one needs the Light of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) to understand the last and final Divine Book of Allah Almighty: the Noble Quran." Dr. Syeda was accompanied by Sister Adiba Iqbal of Canada who impressed the audience with her beautiful recitation of the Holy Quran and *Naats*.

Amongst the other speakers were Mrs. Sohab Hamdani (El Cerrito), Sister Benazir Bath (Yuba City), Sister Shaheen Rasheed (Hayward), Sister Amira Mian (Fremont), Sister Aqila Aswat (San Ramon), Sister Nikhat Malik (Antioch), Sister Frozan Khojizada (Hayward), Sister Fatima Sharaaz Qadri (Sacramento), and Sister Shagufta Ahmad Qadri (San Jose). The presentations were interspersed with *Naat* recitations by both the old and young. Lively children warmed the hearts of the audience with their touching performances reciting poetry praising the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) written by poets both traditional and modern. Included was the famous poem for children by the great 19th century poet, philosopher and Sufi, Hazrat Allama Iqbal (may Allah Almighty have mercy on him): "*Lab pe aati hai dua.*" Also recited were numerous poems of the 19th century *Mujaddid* (Reviver) Hazrat Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi (may Allah Almighty have mercy on him). The presentations were made in Urdu, English, Arabic, Farsi, & Punjabi. There was also a slide show presentation by the young

and enthusiastic Sister Zahara Chaudhry who shared her experiences at IECRC's part time Islamic school.

IECRC also put up a stall with its literature and media productions featuring talks and articles by its Founding Director, Dr. Mohammad Ahmed Qadri, who had words of inspiration & encouragement in a booklet that IECRC published specifically for this occasion. About 150 women and children participated in this one of its kind event in the Greater Bay Area. Free childcare was available with the program being broadcast live for the convenience of the mothers and the volunteers. Complimentary dinner was served and admission to this important event was free.

IECRC intends to conduct its Women's Conference each year, dedicating it to the many great women of the Islamic intellectual and spiritual tradition who lived their lives in the Blessed Footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), "Mercy to the worlds," in general and to women, in particular.

IECRC welcomes all comments and can be reached at info@iecrcna.org or 510-732-6786.