

Speech of
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Secretary-General of The King
Faisal International Prize

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In the name of Allah

Praise be to Allah and peace and prayers be upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family, companions, and all his followers until Judgment Day

Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

Assalam Alaikum,

It gives me great pleasure to present the winners of the 1996 King Faisal International Prize for *Service to Islam, Islamic Studies, Arabic Literature, Medicine, and Science*.

The King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam has been awarded to Dr. Abd Al-Rahman bin Hamoud Al-Sumait (Kuwait), Secretary-General of the philanthropic Africa Muslims Agency. Dr. Al-Sumait was nominated for the Prize by the Muslim World League in Makkah Al-Mukarramah. He is a remarkable example of the new breed of Muslim philanthropists whose dedication to humanitarian causes is reminiscent of the example of our forefathers.

Dr. Al-Sumait has been awarded the Prize in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments in the field of *Service to Islam*. He is the founder of the Africa Muslims agency and has personally directed its field operations in Africa since 1981. Under his leadership the Agency has built more than 1,000 mosques and scores of Islamic centres, schools, women's training centers, hospitals, and medical field units. Other humanitarian activities of the Agency include the sponsorship of preachers, teachers, and students, financial nearly 10,000 orphans, the drilling of hundreds of artesian

wells, the construction of numerous water conservation and agricultural projects, and the distribution of large quantities of food, medicine, and clothing.

The King Faisal International Prize for *Islamic Studies* (topic: The life of the Prophet Muhammad) has been awarded to Professor Akram Dia'a Ahmed Al-Umari of Iraq, professor at the College of Shari'a and Law, Qatar University. He was nominated for the prize by King Saud University in Riyadh and the College of Shari'a and Islamic Studies, Um Al Qura University in Makkah.

Dr. Al-Umari is a leading scholar of Islamic history. He has authored several important publications dealing with the life and history of the Prophet Muhammed. One of his best contributions is his two-volume book *The Authoritative of the Prophet Muhammad (As-Sirah As-Sahihah)* in which followed strict authentication methods and produced exhaustive analyses and interpretations of events in the Prophet's life.

The King Faisal International Prize for *Arabic Literature* (topic: Literature Analysing the Writings of Early Arab Travellers) has been awarded to Shaikh Hamad bin Muhammad Al-Jasir of Saudi Arabia, founder of *Al Arab* magazine. He was nominated for the Prize by King Saud University and by the College of Arabic Language, Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, Riyadh.

Shaikh Al-Jasir has been awarded the Prize in recognition of his prolific contributions to the Prize's topic, including his numerous studies on the writings of early Arab travellers. This is best exemplified by his highly academic publications *Kitab Al-Manasik*, attributed to Al-Harbi, and *Ad-Durer Al-Faraid* by Abd Al-Gadir Al-Jaziri. In analysing both of these manuscripts, Shaikh Al-Jasir extensively researched the life works of the authors and thoroughly documented each text.

The King Faisal International Prize for Medicine (topic: Management of the Premature Infant) has been awarded jointly to Professor Bengt Anders Roberston of Sweden, Director of the Division of Pediatric Pathology at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, and Professor Tetsuro Fujiwara of Japan, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, Iwate Medical University, Japan.

Dr. Robertson was nominated for the Prize by Riggs Hospital in Denmark while Dr. Fujiwara was nominated by the Iwate Medical University and the National Children's Hospital in Japan and the Japanese-Saudi Society. Dr. Robertson was awarded the Prize for conducting much of the pioneering work on the physiology and pathophysiology of the respiratory tract in relation to respiratory distress syndrome in prematurely born fetuses. He showed that the introduction of surfactants into the airways of premature primates could prevent respiratory distress and subsequently established the curative value of administering surfactants to premature human infants.

Dr. Fujiwara carried out pioneering research on gaseous metabolism in premature infants and the development of improved methods of treating respiratory distress syndrome. The discovery that this syndrome is a surfactant-deficiency state led him towards searching and eventually developing an improved artificial surfactant. His studies with a diagnostic test for the prediction of the development of respiratory distress syndrome, based on testing amniotic fluid from the mother or gastric aspirate from the newborn, made another significant contribution to the early detection and treatment of that condition.

The King Faisal International Prize for Science (topic: Biology) has been awarded jointly to Professor Gunter Blobel, American, Professor of Cell Biology at Rockefeller University, USA, Dr. Hugh Reginald Pelham, British, Head of the Division of Cell Biology, Molecular Biology Laboratory, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, England, and Professor James Edward Rothman, American, Chairman of the Cellular Biochemistry and Biophysics Programme at the Rockefeller Research Laboratory, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Research Centre, New York.

Dr. Blobel was nominated for the Prize by Rockefeller University, USA, Dr. Pelham by the Medical Research Council, UK, and Dr. Rothman by the Sloan-Kettering Institute, USA.

Dr. Blobel's pioneering work in the field of biology has defined the study of protein sorting and targeting. He established the intellectual framework within which are formulated, the experimental these questions and the key discoveries advanced the present understanding of transport and organelle and membrane biosynthesis.

Dr. Pelham's distinguished work has been discovering how molecular traffic is regulated in cells. He developed the chaperone concept, discovered the molecules that aid protein folding and transport, and mechanisms for the retrieval and retention of protein in the endoplasmic reticulum.

Dr. Rothman has made the important discovery that intracellular protein transport can be reconstituted in cell-free extracts and in particular that vesicular transport between the compartments of Golgi apparatus can be accurately reproduced. This discovery has had a profound impact on the present understanding of intracellular secretory pathways and has opened new fields of research in cell biology.

In conclusion, I would like to extend, on Faisal International Prize, our sincere thanks to His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn Abd Al-Aziz for kindly attending this ceremony on behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and to all of you for sharing this happy occasion with us.

I would also like to thank everyone who cooperated with the King Faisal International Prize during the nomination, referral, and selection processes and to extend warm congratulations to our distinguished winners.

Assalam Alaikum.