

TRANSLATION

Speech of Professor
Fuat Sezgin

Winner of King Faisal International Prize
For Islamic Studies 1979/1399H.

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You're Majesty King of Saudi Arabia
You're Royal Highness Crown Prince
Your Royal Highnesses
Distinguished Guests

Assalam Alaikum,

Praise is to God the Almighty for His favor to award me ~~the King~~ Faisal International Prize. Actually, this day is one of my most delightful days in the history of my academic life. I have the honour to submit my many thanks to His Majesty King Khalid for being granted the King Faisal International Prize for my book "The History of the Arabic Heritage". Would your Majesty, please, let me say that I have been writing this book, which wins this all great evaluation, for thirty years. These years passed hard and tiresome, and the way I walked across was a severely unpaved one, and I hardly saw guidelines or clear images. As a matter of fact, many times I was about to drawback because of ~~the many~~ handicaps and obstacles, but my great faith in the mercy and help of God, and my feeling of how much magnificent my liability towards the Muslim world and the history of the mankind sciences was, pushed me ahead with renewable determination, and persistent patience.

There was always something which boosts my ties with the history of the Arabic and Islamic sciences and increases this tie day after day until my life has become confined to the study of these sciences. The nature of these sciences and its characteristics has proved to me that it forms a huge epoch in the public history of the mankind sciences. The historical of sciences haven't given this epoch what it might deserve of appreciation, but it was discussed as a vague age named "The Middle Ages". But the truth that I believe in, after a prolonged study, is that the Muslims started from the first Hijri century taking trustfully and daringly what other nations have of sciences without inferiority complex. They took those sciences honestly and impartially contributing them to their predecessors of nations, whatever their religion or creed was. They were able to finish the period of taking and assimilating sciences in about two centuries, to then enter the period of fundamental creation in the middle of the third Hijri century. This creative nature dominated all sciences in an extraordinary acceleration. The Muslims became capable of developing and improving what they took from the other nations. They corrected a lot of what they took, and created new methodologies and scientific rules. They used devices they created in their experiments and measurements. They established new sciences which were not known for their predecessors of the other nations. They brought forth ethical rules to criticize the works of the predecessors. This distinctive situation continued until late eighth Hijri century when the Islamic sciences influenced another environment which created a new age named, in contrary of the historical truths, The European renaissance, or a new reproduction of the Greek sciences in Europe.

I will come back after this day to my normal life in my library and among my people to continue writing "The History of the Arabic Heritage", which I dedicated myself to. I am quite sure that this day will leave a deep effect which drives me to continue my writing and production. I am quite certain also that one person, or a few number of persons are not sufficient to explain the Islamic heritage and showing how high the position of the Arabic and Islamic Sciences in the history of mankind sciences and civilisation is. I appeal to Your Majesty to go on your eminent patronage to this magnificent cause that the dedicated one might grow faithfully and honestly.

In —conclusion, I repeat my many thanks and deep gratitude to His Majesty the King and to His honourable Crown Prince for their patronage to me. I also express my many thanks to His Highness, Prince Khalid AL-Faisal, the director general of the King Faisal Foundation and the President of the Prize Board. I also thank the General Secretariat of the Prize and the reverend refereeing committee.