

TRANSLATION

Speech of Mr.

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Winner of King Faisal International Prize
For Arabic Literature 1981/1401H.

Monday 23.2.1981 (19.4.1401H.)

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Your Majesty, the King
Your Royal Highness, the Crown Prince
Your Highnesses, the Princes
Your eminencies, the Ulama'
Your Excellences, the Ministers
Gentlemen

I was extremely delighted for being nominated to the prize of the late King Faisal, by many venerable academic institutions. Such nomination by itself, would have been sufficient, but Almighty God Whose satisfaction or support I always sense when I seek help has factored me with success which I am proud of, to win the appreciation of the colleagues who evaluated my humble academic output particularly that they are distinguished authorities on arts, science, integrity, and impartiality. They have discarded cheap courtesies and kept

themselves away from falsehood and whims.

The late King Faisal International Prize was born like a crown that cannot be pulled out. Its international perspective and sublime objectives confer upon its winner an honour that satisfies him, satisfies the people who admire him as it represents obvious fairness and impartiality.

The topic of the literary prize for the current year was (Editing literary manuscripts from the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.H.). The secret behind such a successful selection, might lie in the fact that these two centuries represent the first pillar and the true foundation of Arab-Islamic emergence in various fields of our original culture, during which the six imams of Al-Hadith have appeared: Al-Boukhari, Muslim, Ibn Maja, Abu Dawoud, Al-Turmuzi and Al-Nisa'i, as well as the early encyclopedias, the forerunner of whom was Imam Ahmad. The top jurists, also, were active, then, in teaching, authorship, and Ifta (giving formal legal opinion), during those two centuries. During these two centuries, others also were distinguished with transcendent abilities such as: Abu Zayd, Al-Khalil, Sibaweh, Al-Mubburid, Abu Amr Ibn Al-Ala'a, Al-Shibani, AL-Kisa'i, Al-Fara' and Ibn Al-Skeit, while the early books on grammar, language and biographies began to emerge. In this period, the greatest of Arab authors lived such as Al-Jahez, Ibn Al-Muqaffa', Abd Al-Hamid, as well as the most distinguished poets such as Abu Tammam, AL-Bohtouri, Abu Nowass, Abd Allah Ibn Al-Mu'taz, as well as the early translations appeared also, a fact which marked the cross-fertilization of cultures.

In this respect, I had a lot of interpretations and verifications represented in (Al-Bayan wal Tabyin) by Al-Jahez as well as Al-Jahez messages, which comprise 45 books and messages, and in 7 books and messages contained in rare manuscripts.

The idea of commemorating His Majesty the late King Faisal by honouring learned men and scholars who have done their best for the benefit of mankind and humanity in their various fields, has been extremely a genuine, brilliant idea.

Such honouring bestowed, annually, upon those who win the prize amongst scores of nominees from all over the world, is, in fact, an honouring of a dear memory exalted by the whole Arab and Islamic worlds without exception. The consensus of the Islamic peoples in loving and exalting him, may God have mercy upon his soul, has been exceptional, for his shrewdness, steadiness and farsightedness to the future of the Arab nation, to safeguard it from the intrigues of aggressors and oppression of usurpers, as well as his lofty stand with regard to the October war, his consolidation of Arabs, and the great triumph he made in the oil war. His dearest aspirations had been to live long in order to pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. History will not forget all that. It is a favor which the Arab nation assessed with extreme accuracy and highly appreciated. This favor has been extended to reach those in charge in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on top of whom is His Majesty King Khalid who has done his utmost efforts

represented in his successful endeavors to convene the Islamic summit conference in Holy Makkah to consolidate Islam and Muslims and bury their differences.

History, also, will not forget the effort which His Crown Prince Fahd Ibn Abd Al-Aziz has made for the service of the Arab cause and exalting Islam and Muslims.

Honouring great men who offer religion and mankind their utmost and honouring scientists for dedicating themselves and lives for the sake of Science, who would quit sleeping when slumber affords exquisite pleasure and who would sustain for its diffusion what a Mujahid would sustain, such honouring is a human rule followed by nations in all generations, where we can find innumerable examples of such honouring in our great Arabic history. As this honour when governed by sound regulations, impartiality and intelligence will be more wonderful and venerable practice.

Science and donativeness have no homeland, and could not be ascribed to any country, as science and donativeness are for the sake of the whole mankind. When a Scientist compiles a book or unveils a manuscript, or an ancient monument he would not appropriate it to a specific country, but just offers it to all people in the East as well as in the West, in the north as well as in the South. Science does not know fanaticism, and knowledge does not know affiliation.

Therefore the concept of (Universality) which the committee of King Faisal prizes has invoked is procured from the spirit of righteousness and the spirit of Islam which urges all people to seek knowledge, to be rightly guided, so the guidance prevails and the righteous path becomes clear. Conferring upon His Majesty King Khalid Ibn Abd Al-Aziz the crown of this prize, is a source of pride for the prize which would enhance its significance as result to the lofty noble position attained by His Majesty for his meritorious endeavors towards unifying Muslims, defending their Holy places, his incessant work to implement Shari'a and diffuse da'awa (Islamic Call), as well as his personal donations to realize the messages of the mosque as an institution, to publish the Holy Qur'an, and to appoint Muslim missionaries, besides his defense and support of Muslim minorities all over the world.

What pleased me is that I have taken the initiative before, to extend my congratulation to His Majesty, and I have nothing, now, but to congratulate him again on the occasion of this ceremony held under his Royal auspices.

It is Divine grace and blessing that my winning of the prize has followed His Majesty's and my name has been associated with His Majesty's name at this memorable assembly. Perhaps it is the first time in history that names of scholars are mentioned in association with the name of devoted leaders in the field of appreciation and honouring at an international ceremony in the presence of numerous scholars, eminent personalities and intelligentsia.

Praise be to God for His exuberant merits and blessings. I should like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty the King, to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and to those in charge of

King Faisal Prize, represented by the council of Trustees of King Faisal Foundation, Chairman of the Prize Corpus, selection committees, and academic institutions which backed my nomination.