

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST MERCIFUL, THE MOST
COMPASSIONATE

Speech delivered by

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In Arabic Literature (1411H/1991)

Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdel Aziz,
Representative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
in patronizing this ceremony
Your Highnesses, dignitaries, and men of science, thinking and literature

Assalam Alaikum w Rahmatullah Wabarakatu

God's Peace be Upon You, His mercy and His Blessings –

Thanks be to God – who created man, taught him eloquence – caused his word to
descent upon him – set down Justice and Evenness – and ordered man first to read
–

and prayer and peace be upon Allah's Messenger who says:
"Verily, the Angels lower their wings for the knowledge seeker in approval of what
he does – and verily the religious scholars are the inheritors of Prophets."

These are sensational moments indeed! As an Arab I have an overwhelming sense
of happiness – we are now in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a land that God has
entrusted with the care of Two Holy mosques and the supervision of other matters
related to this Holy Land – God also granted this country success in building a
flourishing civilization.

This prestigious world prize – the King Faisal International Prize – with all it stands
for has become one of the most important landmarks of this nation.

The heart-felt gesture of dedicating this year's international prize to children's
literature reassures all of us of the significance of children's literature in shaping
the personalities of future generations. Undoubtedly, the attention paid to
children's education and literature is an important criterion of the civilized world.

Our Arab nation which bears heavy burdens, as judged by all standards, in a very
critical stage of its history is in need of God's help, its people's wisdom and
steadfastness. However, these challenges should not be allowed to divert our
attention from the future of our children. Rather, they should make us probe this
issue because the future of the young is the future of our Arab nation and the
children of today are the makers of tomorrow.

As I stand here, God makes me see for some reason, glimpses of the King Fahd
compound for printing the Quran in Al-Madina Al-Munawarah.

I imagine another project which contributes to the formation of the future of the
Islamic Arab homeland and of the new generations to share in the responsibility of
contributing to life as we approach the twenty-first century.

The vision is of the formation of a foundation to help upgrade the standards of our
children's standard of living to those of modern life and its technologies variables.
At the same time we must ensure that they preserve their Arab identity and
Islamic values. Thus, we would present our children with the most up-to-date of
other cultures while preserving the Arab culture as a separate entity among those

cultures. Our children should think of their culture with pride – about one's culture leads to loyalty and the development of affinity to it; this in turn is the drive for reconstruction. The sense of pride to be felt by our children is a genuine one since 6 centuries of their ancestors' culture is the source from which today's culture is drawn. In reference to this, the French scholar Gustav Lebon in his book "The Civilization of the Arabs" states:

"It was the Arabs who opened to Europe the golden gate of the new world of scientific, literary and philosophical knowledge. Through their cultural impact on us, the Arabs guided us to civilization for 6 centuries.

Once we establish this society for Arab children's literature, we will create an environment that is beneficial to all ages and generations. The beneficiaries would be the children of the Arab world whose number amounts to 90 million.

Allah's Messenger taught us the following:

"After the death of a person his actions stop, save behind: First, a knowledge from which some benefit may be obtained, second a continuous charity, a virtuous son who prays for him."

And

"In Islam whoever performs a good deed, will have his reward for it and will also be rewarded with those who follow his example".

May God lead sincere workers to success, may God bless those who are involved in the preparation for this event; May God protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and May God restore to the Arab nation its glory and unity to be again a source of enlightenment.

"We thus made you a moderate nation to be witness to the people and the Prophet be your witness...."

Peace be upon you.