

Speech of Professor
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Co-winner of the 1995 King Faisal International Prize
For Arabic Literature
(Studies Dealing with Prominent Modern Arab Writers)

Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn Abd Al-Aziz,
Your Royal Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

It is dignifying, exhilarating, and indeed a great honour to receive this recognition. The King Faisal International Prize stands as the most prestigious and respected Arab prize by virtue of its high-ranking place and increasing international recognition, to the extent that it is now reputed as the equivalent of the Noble Prize in the Islamic and Arab worlds.

Of course, this prestigious status of the Prize could not have been accomplished from a vacuum, the credit goes to its patrons who have set extremely important principles for the awards. The first of these principles is the strict, impenetrable confidentiality with which the nominations are processed, whether at the level of peer reviewers, referees, or final Selection Committees. This confidentiality is one of the solid foundations for fair judgments and objective decision.

The second principle is the setting of the highest standards for nominated works, which are not under any circumstances deviated from. On that ground, the Selection Committees would not hesitate to withhold the awards if the nominations fell short of the anticipated

standards. This has happened once previously in Medicine, three times in Science, four times in Arabic Literature and five times in the case of Islamic Studies.

In my opinion, the strict application of these two principles in addition, of course, to the generous monetary reward that goes with the award, are the foundations on which the prestige of this Prize is built and consolidated world-wide.

Honourable guests, this is not the place for an extended speech. I conclude by wishing The King Faisal International Prize further progress. I also extend hearty wishes for success and flourishing of the King Faisal Foundation which carries the name of the late King Faisal Ibn Abd Al-Aziz whose memory is alive in the heart of every Muslim and Arab.

God bless you.