

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,

Praise be to Allah, Who has said in His Noble Book:
"The Most Gracious: It is He Who has Taught the Qur'an
He has created man: He has taught him an intelligent speech."

And peace and prayers be upon His Apostle, the noblest, wisest and most eloquent of men.

First of all, let me express my gratitude and thanks to Allah, The Praiseworthy, for the bountiful rewards that He has bestowed on me and for favouring me with the honour of being selected as a co-winner of this year's King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature.

Your blessed gathering symbolizes one of the cultural values of Islam, which has its roots in the glorious past of Islam and which has been preserved to the present era by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This value is the recognition of man's achievements. Allah has favoured man and given him a high status on earth and has provided him with the means of making progress. This magnificent celebration is an example of how man's achievements are rewarded.

The King Faisal Foundation stands as a giant edifice worthy of the greatness and history of the late King Faisal, may his soul rest in peace, and may Almighty Allah guide his sons in their efforts and benevolent deeds.

On this occasion, I would like to express my thanks to each one in the Foundation and in particular to His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal Ibn Abd Al-Aziz, Chairman of the Board of The King Faisal International Prize.

A major fact which must be projected and emphasized is the prestigious position occupied by this Prize in comparison to other international prizes. The Prize is certainly one of the most leading prizes by virtue of its noble traditions, scrupulous standards, and absolute freedom from ethnic, political bias and personal influences.

These qualities of the Prize derive from the values of Islam which seeks righteousness, justice, and welfare for mankind.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, deserves to be credited for patronizing human achievements in different facets of knowledge. This role emanates from the Kingdom's responsibility in preserving Islamic

values, expressed in Qur'anic verses as well as in the Prophet's teachings, which call upon Muslims to enrich knowledge and contribute towards the advancement of human thought and civilisation.

At this point, it is imperative to praise the Kingdom's role in advancing and supporting Islamic and Arabic studies on a world-wide level. One of the closest and most splendid examples is the role played by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in creating a Department of Postgraduate Studies on Islamic Sharia in one of the leading universities in the United States. This, like many other noble deeds, will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the advancement of Islamic knowledge through the encouragement of detailed studies and research.

I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness and thanks to the universities, both inside and outside the Kingdom, for nominating me for the Prize and to thank the Selection Committees for their keen efforts to accomplish the objectives of the Prize.

In conclusion, it is a pleasure and an honour to thank the leaders and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and indeed The King Faisal Foundation, for their hospitality and encouragement of excellence in all aspects of knowledge beneficial for mankind.

I pray to the Almighty Allah to bless the Kingdom and to save the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and provide him with support in leading this country along the route of progress.
God bless you.