

ABDUL KARIM ZEDAN BIEJ
Winner of the 1997 King Faisal
International Prize for Islamic Studies
(Studies on Status of Women in Islam)

Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan Ibn Abdul Aziz
Your Royal Highnesses,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, and peace and prayers be upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family, companions and all his followers until the Judgment Day.

I would like to thank the King Faisal International Prize for this excellent organization and high standard of performance. I would also like to thank those who have nominated me for the Prize.

Gentlemen,

The woman's question - in terms of her rights and duties - has become a major issue in modern society. Every country has dealt with that issue from a different perspective, based on its own standards and beliefs. In the West, manipulation of the woman's question has sometimes culminated in social problems such as disintegration of families and of certain moral values.

In Islamic countries, on the other hand, it is noticeable that women are subjected, openly or discretely, and to a lesser or greater extent, to pressures for rebellion against their own religious and moral boundaries, so as to keep pace with the so-called "modernization" or "westernization" of women. These pressures are being continuously exerted by the media, and have been augmented by recent advances in communication technology.

I sincerely hope that my studies, which primarily constitute a religious duty and which took several years to complete, will cast some light on the principles of Islam in so far as the woman is concerned. These principles reflect, in my opinion, the prestigious status of the woman in Islam and emphasize her exceptionally advantageous rights - which she is well worthy of - as well as her duties - which she is capable of performing to her own advantage.

Once again, I would like to thank the King Faisal Foundation and all of those who have nominated me for the Prize.