

Acceptance Speech of

PROFESSOR IBRAHIM A. AL. SAAFIN

Coc Winner of the 2001
King Faisal International Prize for Arabic
Literature

Friday 16 February 2001 (22 Dhu Al-Qedah 1422H)

Your Royal Highness, Prince Abd Allah bin Abd Al-Aziz
The Crown Prince, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and
Head of the National Guard
Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests

Assalam Alaikum,

I am overwhelmed by the honor of being selected as a co-winner of this year's King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature jointly with my colleague, Professor Mansour Al-Hazmi. I am proud to receive this great honor and hope to remain worthy of it.

King Faisal International Prize is not only the most prestigious of its kind in the Arab world but also one of the most esteemed prizes worldwide. Many people aspire to receiving it. As for me, this recognition has two important meanings: it commemorates the end of a long journey into the realm of Arabic literature, from ancient

times to the present, a search in which I have seen how this great literature has grown and flourished through the centuries without ever being separated from its roots. The second point is that this prize puts a great responsibility on my shoulders, namely to search more deeply into the treasures of Arabic literature. I fully realize that, in essence, this recognition is meant to be an incentive for more endeavors on my part. This is the real objective of the award. However, I am only one person in a great nation, surrounded by many enemies using all kinds of arms, military and cultural. What is taking place right now in Jerusalem and Palestine symbolizes the dangers surrounding our nation.

I praise Almighty Allah for all the bounties He has bestowed upon me, and for enabling me to be here among this distinguished group of great scientists and intellectuals. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my parents, who nurtured and supported me steadfastly. May Allah have mercy on them. I also take this opportunity to thank my small family—my wife and children—for bearing with me for so many years. Without their support and patience I would not have been able to pursue my research endeavors. I should also mention with gratitude my larger family: my teachers who set the example of commitment to learning and moral integrity for me, and my numerous colleagues, students and friends for their noble feelings and support at times of difficulty. I am also greatly indebted to the University of Jordan for nominating me for the Prize. This nomination shall always be a source of pride for me.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks to King Faisal International Prize, and particularly His Royal Highness Prince Khaled Al-Faisal bin Abd Al-Aziz, Chairman of the Prize's Board of Trustees, His Highness Prince Bandar bin Saud bin Khaled, Secretary General of King Faisal Foundation, His Excellency Dr. Abd Allah Al-Uthaimin, Secretary General and His Excellency Yousuf Al-Hamdan, Deputy Secretary General of King Faisal International Prize. I wish them all success.

Salam Alaikum.