

Acceptance Speech of Professor
HUSNI MAHMUD HUSAIN

CoP Winner of the 2002 King Faisal International Prize
For Arabic Literature
Saturday 9 March 2002 (25 Dhu AlP Hajjah 1422H)

Read by His Son
Engineer DlaALP Din Husni Mahmud Husain

Your Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Ibn Abd AlP Aziz
Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defense and Aviation

And Inspector General
Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests

Al-Salam alaikum,

This is a great cultural and scientific event that symbolizes the goodness in people, while echoing our glorious past, when Arabic and Islamic civilisations led the world. It is particularly apt that this event takes place at this time when the entire world is in turmoil, and when instead of serving the welfare and prosperity of mankind some of the tools of science and technology are being used to serve aggression and to destroy life; there is nowhere a better example of this than the suffering of the Palestinian people.

The failure to invest science and technology entirely for the benefit of mankind has led to a serious moral crisis, more devastating than any form of natural disaster, because it replaces the core values of humanity with the lust for destruction of life and properties.

I wished my father - may Allah have mercy upon him - were here, attending this magnificent ceremony and accepting by himself the recognition of his more than thirty years of hard work, but it is Allah's Will that he died and we have but to accept His judgment.

Your Royal Highness Prince Sultan, Your Royal Highnesses,
Brothers and Sisters

My late father's accomplishments in the topic of Palestinian literature have been the product of an uninterrupted research - since 1969 - into the Poetry of the Palestinian resistance movement and the works of prominent Palestinians poets, novelists and literary critics. His interest in this field started when he was living in a remote and rather isolated Palestinian village, at the time of the occupation of Palestine. At that time he was fortunate to have a young, dynamic tutor who played an important role in explaining to him and his colleagues the dimensions of the Palestinian crisis, its causes and its aftermath. At that time, my father tried, and was encouraged by his tutor, to write a novel by the name of "The Son of Palestine" which was an attempt on his part to communicate with his fellow countrymen, and to encourage them to adhere to their national identity, and the independence that they are still struggling to regain.

I was deeply moved by the words of my father wrote in the original speech that he had prepared for this occasion. He wrote: "I am very proud of Allah's bounty upon and very grateful for this recognition of my endeavors that consumed more than half of my life; what makes me particularly delighted is that this prize is unlike most other prizes in the Arab world that recognize people after their death."

Brothers,

Palestinian literature was the topic of my father's PhD thesis, which he had written under the able supervision of a great intellectual, the

late Dr: Shukri Ayyad, in Cairo. When he completed that thesis, my father published it in four volumes, hoping that it will become the nucleus of a library of "Palestinian Literature and Culture," which had since included several additional books, biographies and poems, in addition to unpublished works. We now hope to compile the papers he had written in various Arabic journals to add to his library.

In the name of Palestine, I would like to thank the Patrons and the General Secretariat of King Faisal International Prize for selecting Palestinian literature as the topic for this year's prize in Arabic literature and to wish them success in achieving their noble objectives. I would also like to thank you all and wish you happiness and prosperity. May Allah have mercy and forgiveness upon my father.

Al-Salam alaikum.