

Acceptance Speech of
Professor
Ibrahim Abu Bakr Harakat

Co-Winner of the 2003
King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies

Saturday 8.3.2003 (5.1.1424H)

Your Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Ibn Abd Al-Aziz
Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defence and Aviation
and Inspector General
Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Guests

Assalam Alaikum,

It is a great honour to stand before your distinguished gathering to express my gratitude and profound happiness for being able to visit; for the first time - the capital of Saudi Arabia, the cradle of Islam, and for being awarded this year's King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies. It was an overwhelming surprise to receive the news officially via the Secretary General of the King Faisal International Prize, along with a congratulatory letter from the Chairman of the Prize's Board, His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, and to read full coverage of the event, including synopses of the research carried out by the laureates and information about the selection process, in the media.

"Islamic studies" is a vast field of research that encompasses many different aspects of Islamic thought, culture and heritage, past and present. That, in addition to Arabic literature and linguistic studies, provides an insight into the richness and creativity that characterize the Islamic civilization, and show how it interacted with and derived from other cultures, and offered to the rest of the world a wealth of values, innovations, sciences and arts. The Islamic civilization survives to this day through the principles and ideals of Islam, which seek the welfare of all mankind.

Selecting the history of Islamic economics as the topic of this year's prize for Islamic Studies should draw attention to one of the most important aspects of Islamic history that impacted other nations during the earlier eras of the Islamic civilization. In fact, had there not been internal political conflicts within the Islamic nation that resulted in the negligence of trade routes and sea transportation capabilities after the 5th Century A.H., the influence of Islamic economics on the rest of the world could have lasted for several more centuries. It is gratifying to note that present efforts towards the revival of Islam, which will undoubtedly succeed if technology and economic development are brought to the forefront of Muslim objectives - needless to say that Islam does not contradict with any constructive aspect of modern civilization.

Your Royal Highnesses
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Some years ago, His Majesty King Muhammad the 6th of Morocco, bestowed upon me the Moroccan Grand Prize for Culture. That was a pleasant surprise conveyed to me by Mr. Muhammad Al-Asha'ari, then the Moroccan Minister of Culture. The second surprise - as I mentioned

earlier - was my selection for this awesome international honour: the King Faisal Prize. This prestigious award is recognition, not only of me, but also of all Muslim intellectuals and scholars. I am particularly delighted that I share the Prize with my dear friend, Dr. Izz El-Din Omar Musa, one of the brightest scholars in the Sudan and the Arab world.

I am privileged to be the first Moroccan to receive the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies. Other Moroccans have won the illustrious award for Arabic Literature. On behalf of all Moroccan scholars, I would like to express thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abd Al-Aziz, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, members of the Saudi Royal family, and the Saudi people, for this honour. I am also grateful to the King Faisal International Prize Board for selecting me for the award, and the King Faisal Foundation for its great hospitality - yet another example of the long-standing Arabic and Islamic traditions that thrive in this country. Al-Salam alaikum.