

Translation

Acceptance Speech of
DR. AHMAD MOHAMMAD ALI
Co-Winner of the 2005
King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam

Sunday 10 April 2005 (1.3.1426H)

Praise and thankfulness be to Allah for his bounties and beneficence,
and Peace and Prayers be upon the Seal of His messengers,
the Prophet Mohammad and all his family and companions.

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

In submission to the Almighty's glorious words: "One's expression of gratefulness is to the profit of one's own soul " and the Prophet's Hadith : "He who does not thank the people does not thank Allah" allow me to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the King Faisal Foundation for honoring me with this Prize for Service to Islam. I am also profoundly grateful to those who nominated and those who selected me for this prestigious award. This award, in fact, is not only a tribute to myself but more so to your institution, the Islamic Development Bank, which I was honored to serve from its inception through its growth from an isolated, juvenile establishment into a giant financial group embracing several institutions and funds and achieving highest rating among international financial establishments.

Distinguished guests,

This prestigious prize bears the name of one of the most distinguished makers of modern Islamic history, the late King Faisal Ibn Abd Al-Aziz Al-Saud, may Allah have mercy on him. King Faisal's luminous achievements are too numerous to cite in this brief address but it is sufficient honor for him that his call for Islamic solidarity, and struggle to achieve it - with the help of his brother, the late King Saud – culminated in the birth of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and laid the foundations of joint Islamic action through that organization. This is not unexpected, since Islamic solidarity was a mission originally held by his father and founder of modern Saudi Arabia, King Abd Al-Aziz Al-Saud, may Allah have mercy on him, and subsequently by his sons. In this respect, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia played a leading role during the reign of the late King Khalid in organizing and hosting the third Islamic summit in 1401 H. The outcome of that historic summit was the Declaration of Makkah which provided the framework for joint Islamic action. The Kingdom's tradition in promoting Islamic solidarity continues during the present reign of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. During last year's Hajj, from the holy land at Mina, the Crown Prince Abd Allah invited Islamic leaders to a summit to discuss present conditions of the Islamic Ummah and promote further solidarity, cooperation and unity between Muslims throughout the world.

This call by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince reflects the true spirit of reform which entails reviewing present constraints and seeking a brighter future by more effective and appropriate means and practices of cooperation “Such was the practice of Allah among those who lived in the aforesaid times; no change will thou find in the practice of Allah.”

I therefore appeal to Islamic scholars and thinkers to respond to Prince Abd-Allah's call by viewing carefully the present condition of the Ummah, identifying its attributes and determining how it can contribute to the present human civilization through promoting the Islamic principles of justice, equality and sanctity of human life and freedom, and the foundation of solid bases of cooperation with the rest of the world.

Distinguished guests,

Even In the middle of the crisis in which it presently lives, our Ummah should not overlook its obligation to continue being an effective partner to human civilization: “Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witness over the nations.”

Achieving this objective is met with many challenges, both within the Ummah and from the outside. We therefore look forward to seeing the Islamic Summit standing up to those challenges. One prominent challenge is the campaigns launched by some suspicious circles against the values and principles of Islam, in an attempt to stain it and unjustly stigmatize it as a kernel of terrorism. Another very important challenge is poverty and illiteracy that prevail in most Islamic countries, and the backwardness in different fields of science and technology, as revealed by current international and local economic statistics.

Distinguished guests,

For a nation to rise, it must fulfill certain conditions namely, belief in its mission, values and principles; dedication to, and perfection of, its functions and duties and a deep sense of allegiance to one nation and one destiny. The reference to unity is the Holy Qur’an:”Verily, this Ummah of yours is a single Ummah and I am your Lord. Therefore, worship me and no other.” Our nation must adopt a strategy for development that focuses on the human element; liberate people from poverty and hunger as commanded the Holy Qur’an. In this respect, this Islamic Development Bank being an international organization entrusted with helping to raise the standard of living and promote social prosperity is guided by the principles of Islam and striving to promote socio-economic cooperation within the Islamic Ummah.

Distinguished guests,

As this prize is an extension of the principles in which the late King Faisal believed, and the seeds his sons subsequently planted and nurtured by incepting the King Faisal Foundation, and as contribution to this blessed tree, I have decided to donate my monetary share of the Prize to serve as a nucleus for a fund, under the auspices of the Islamic Development Bank and to which all philanthropists are invited to contribute, to establish an annual prize for best achievement in promoting trading cooperation between Islamic countries.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you all “Oh Lord, let not our hearts deviate now after thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thee for thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure.”