

Translation

Speech by H.E. Bahaa' Ud-Din Rafiq Al-Hariri
On behalf of
AL-HARIRI FOUNDATION
Co-Winner of the 2005
King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam

Sunday 10 April 2005 (1.3.1426H)

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

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.

Salam Alaikum.

My father, May Allah have mercy upon his soul, had several reasons to be profoundly pleased by the news that Al-Hariri Foundation was awarded the 2005 King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam. Firstly, this honor came from a Saudi institution, and he had always held the Kingdom in high esteem because of its benevolence and support to him, his small family and his countrymen. It was here that he began and it is to the Kingdom that his profound affection continues to be present in the hearts of his family and citizens.

The second reason for his happiness was the stature of the Prize, which advanced during the past two decades to the forefront of prizes in the Arab and Islamic worlds, as evident from the quality of its laureates.

The third reason for my father's happiness was that the award is given for serving Islam; thus bestowing upon Al-Hariri's Foundation the honor of joining exceptional laureates previously recognized for serving this great religion, promulgating its message and promoting its magnanimity. The joint award of the Prize to Al-Hariri Foundation and the President of the Islamic Development Bank, Dr. Ahmad Mohammad Ali, underscores the belief my father had held throughout his life that Islam combines benevolence and mercy with moral and economic development of mankind and that the Prophet Mohammad, PPBUP, was indeed an embodiment of those attributes. The Almighty Allah say of His Prophet: "We sent you (O Muhammad) not but as a mercy to the entire creation)" while the Prophet says of himself: "I am a gift of mercy."

The fourth reason for my father's happiness was because this prize went to an institution that he – May Allah have mercy upon him – considered one of the most important achievements of his life that shall remain after him, namely the Al-Hariri Foundation. Incepted 25 years ago, that foundation rapidly evolved into one of the giant institutions of civil society and development in the Arab world. It has not only supported the education of nearly 35,000 college students, but has also sponsored and administered schools in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan, built social and health care centers, orphanages and facilities for the elderly throughout Lebanon and supported social welfare institutions both in Lebanon and the Arab world. The Foundation was also active in preserving Islamic architecture, restoring historic mosques and building new ones, the latest being Mohammad El Amin Mosque that my late father was eagerly looking forward to praying in, but was martyred before realizing that dream. That was why the Grand Mufti of Lebanon suggested laying him close to that mosque as a tribute to his benevolence and service to his country, nation and humanity.

Your Royal Highness,
Distinguished Guests:

The martyred Prime Minister, Rafiq Al-Hariri, shouldered enormous responsibilities and public duties in Lebanon and was instrumental in building stronger ties between Arab countries and the rest of the world. He was driven by two visions: one – that also promoted the establishment of Al-Hariri Foundation – was to achieve economic, social, educational and human development. His other vision was “politics of development.” The inception of Al-Hariri Foundation in the late 1970s and the launching of the “Reconstruction Workshop” in the 1990s represent the first and larger aspects of the first vision that dominated Rafiq Al-Hariri’s actions and enabled him, with the help of the Almighty Allah, to serve his country and countrymen. The other vision pertaining to his political actions entailed a firm commitment to efficient, uncorrupted administration of public interests. Apart from the honor of serving people, he considered that vision of “moral” politics, if I may say, as a form of “development” in no way different from the mission of Al-Hariri Foundation. These two visions were clearly manifest in Al-Hariri’s real life activities and deeply inscribed in his conscious.

The martyred Prime Minister received the news of the award of King Faisal International Prize upon his return from Barcelona where he had just been awarded another prize from HABITAT, the United Nation’s Center for Human Settlements, for his creative work in the reconstruction of metropolitan Beirut and other vital city facilities in Lebanon. Reconstruction – in the words of Ibn Khaldoon - is civilization; civilization is development and development is virtue, morality, humanity and Islam – or is it Islam which is all of that combined.

Your Royal Highness,
Distinguished Guests:

On behalf of Al-Hariri’s family I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the King Faisal Foundation for recognizing the achievements of

Al-Hariri Foundation in both fields of development and philanthropy. We would have loved the achiever to be present tonight, sharing our happiness, as he always did.

We miss him, as do millions of Lebanese and Arabs, and numerous friends worldwide standing by our side, for better or for worse. He died at the hands of criminals and we lost him dearly, but as I stand witness to this great moment of recognition and faithfulness to this man, I pledge in front of you all that Al-Hariri's legend shall live and that his virtuous deeds that bloomed and fruited shall continue to bloom and fruit, for the sake of Allah, and the good of the people.

Rafiq Al-Hariri's deeds shall remain because he was seeking only the acceptance of Allah.

Rafiq Al-Hariri's deeds shall remain because they served the good of people.

Rafiq Al-Hariri's virtuous deeds shall remain because they represented his contribution as a Muslim to prosperity of land.

Our condolence, dear father, is this profound love you left for us in the hearts of millions, especially in our two homelands: Lebanon and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Kingdom that received the Lebanese and embraced them during tragic years of the civil war and fostered peace among them in Tai'f shall remain, as always, a friend, a sister and a moral example for the Lebanese.

And our condolence, dear father, is that the Almighty Allah, chose you to His side, while blessing us with the strength and determination to continue, without ever yielding, along your path - to give what benefits people and remains on the land.

May Allah have mercy on Rafique Al-Hariri; and thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the King Faisal Foundation. May we meet time and again along the paths of virtue, knowledge, development, construction and all that benefits people.

And farewell, Rafiq Al-Hariri.