

Translation

Acceptance Speech of
PROFESSOR ROSHDI HIFNI RASHED
Winner of the 2007
King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies
Monday 16 April 2007 (28.3.1428H.)

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

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

Assalam Alaikum,

I would like to start by expressing my deepest thanks for the being honor bestowed upon me by awarding me the King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies. My appreciation goes, not only to the founders, sponsors and jurors of the Prize, but also to the message it delivers. Despite being a reward for accomplishments, and a compensation for efforts as well as for difficult and frustrating times encountered during pursuit of research, this Prize is not limited to rewarding past endeavors but is also an inspiration for the future;

there are still so many questions to be answered and many fields to be explored. Although this probably applies to all prizes, this year's prize for Islamic studies has a special meaning, which I would like to reflect upon for a few moments.

Distinguished Guests,

Science was a cornerstone of the Islamic city and the Islamic community. It was a component of the Islamic civilization that was evident in its mosques, hospitals, observatories and dealings. I can even claim that it is impossible for any one to fully comprehend the attributes of this civilization even in literature, language, philosophy and theology, without understanding science and mathematics and grasping the scientific heritage of that civilization. Unfortunately this concept is taught mainly as a tribute to the dead and remembrance of the past – rather than as a means of spiritual revival and resurrection of scientific values and a motivation of the scientific mind from within the Islamic culture. The time has come for reviving these values and for motivating the scientific mind to prevail. This cannot be achieved fully except within the Arab and Islamic countries themselves, by encouraging science and scientists, promoting scientific thinking and values and enhancing communities to adopt them. The enhancement of human knowledge and progress has always been a feature and a responsibility of civilized nations, in the past and today. One of the great scholars of humanity – Abul Raihan Al-Bairuni – said: “One of the most virtuous deeds of King Khawrism Shah was embracing people of knowledge and wisdom, recognizing their worth and raising them from the bottom of the community to the reaches of the sky.”

Today, Islamic communities are in desperate need for science and scientific values and minds in order to be able to cope with many profound challenges that will soon have a significant impact upon them. The rapid progress of science and technology and the ever widening gap between nations that produce scientific knowledge and nations that don't will eventually determine the fate of nations, cultures and languages. Encouraging science is therefore a duty; building a scientific culture in Islamic countries is another duty and so is the search into our scientific heritage as an inspiration to building a modern scientific basis.

These are some of the meanings that I would envision in the King Faisal International Prize, particularly the Prize for Islamic Studies. I pray to Allah that more research institutions emerge in this and other fields, and that more encouragement and support are given to serious scientific research

Once again, I would like to thank the patrons of the Prize for this recognition and hospitality and for your confidence in us and in our Arabic and Islamic culture.

Assalam Alaikum