

Translation

Acceptance Speech of  
**PROFESSOR ABDESSALAM M. CHEDDADI**  
Winner of the 2009  
King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies

31st Ceremony  
Saturday 28 March 2009 (1.4.1430H)

In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abd Allah bin Abd Al-Aziz  
Your Royal Highnesses the Princes  
Your Eminencies and Excellencies

Assalam Alaikum,

Getting rewarded for something that one has dedicated a substantial part of their life and effort to accomplish has a profound impact on one, any one, for it gives them the feeling that they have not been working in isolation, but rather responding to the needs and values shared by others. When that reward is as monumental as the world-renowned King Faisal International Prize, then its impact is by far deeper and as

intense as the prestige of that Prize itself across the Arab world and internationally.

I would like to express my deepest thanks and gratitude to every one involved in selecting the winners, and particularly His Royal Highness Prince Khalid A-Faisal bin Abd Al-Aziz. I thank them all, and I am very proud of being selected for this award. However, I am also fully aware that this great honor goes through my humble self - as our predecessors used to say - to knowledge at large and those pursuing it, particularly in the Arab world to which I belong.

In fact, what the King Faisal International Prize symbolizes in the Arab world, particularly at this point in time, is a fundamentally important matter - it proves that the Arab world is back on track to reconnect with its long-standing tradition of rewarding human knowledge and thought. That tradition which embraced and developed Greek, Persian, Hebrew, Syriac, Indian and partly Chinese cultures, had turned human knowledge, for the first time in history, into a global activity regardless of ethnic, religious or political considerations.

The selection of this year's topic, namely Muslim perception of Imran, or the development of human cultures and civilizations, reinforces and stabilizes the meanings symbolized by this Prize and emphasizes its internationalism. Today's world is searching for common moral values that unify mankind; it is looking for civilized principles that open new horizons for peace, rapport, freedom and creativity. Achieving this noble goal requires us to study previous civilizations and the means and ways employed by mankind in different parts of the world and through different eras to advance all aspects and constituents of those civilizations.

I was fortunate to have been engaged for more than thirty years in studying the thought of a giant Muslim thinker, Ibn Khaldoun, on different aspects of human civilization; this is a man who is justifiably regarded as the first in history to make society and civilization real and active fields of research and to advance their methodologies and concepts to previously unknown dimensions. Those who examine his works on history, sociology and anthropology will be surprised to discover that the tools employed by today's scholars in all of these fields are hardly different from those he developed six centuries ago. No doubt that studying the thought of Ibn Khaldoun, as key to understanding ancient civilization systems in Muslim and Arab societies, will contribute not only to our understanding of today's urban Arab and Islamic thought but will also open - through many universal issues that he raised - new horizons for advancing human civilization as a whole.