

Acceptance Speech of professor  
**RAMZI MOUNIR BAALBAKI**

Cor Winner of the 2010 King Faisal International Prize  
For Arabic Language and Literature  
32nd Awards Presentation Ceremony

Tuesday 9 March 2010 (23.3.1431H)

Your Majesty, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques,  
King Abd Allah Ibn Abd Alr Aziz,  
HRH Prince Sultan Ibn Abd ALr Aziz  
Crown Prince, Deputy Premier  
Minister of Defense and Aviation and Inspector General  
Your Highnesses,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests

There is hardly a language that has been as passionately and continuously studied as Arabic since early Islamic times. This surely stems from the fact that Arabic is the language of Revelation through which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) transmitted God Almighty's Message, starting with the divine commission iqra' (Read!), which laid out for the whole umma the most essential element in seeking the path of knowledge and intellect.

As of the first century of the Hegira, the Arabs and Muslims began to examine their language in its capacity as the language of Revelation. They thus dwelt on the intricacies of its huge corpus and meticulously recorded linguistic usage by the Bedouin. Most remarkable, however, is that by the second century A.H. they had established a grammatical theory which tries to justify the various linguistic phenomena of Arabic, and in particular the syntactic relationships among the constituent elements of structure. By virtue of the fact that, despite a certain degree of complexity and abstractness, this grammatical theory survived almost intact for over a thousand years as the basis for language teaching at the various levels of education, it became a unique phenomenon. Over this lengthy period, virtually a countless number of

grammatical works were authored, making the Arabic grammatical tradition the most extensive in the world, surpassing the Sanskrit and Greek traditions.

In more recent times, and particularly during the past five decades, Arabic grammatical studies witnessed a significant leap. Arab and Western scholars alike became actively engaged in producing critical editions of grammatical works, expanding the scope of their investigation of the beginnings of Arabic grammatical activity, and proposing new approaches to the study of the analytical methods of the grammarians. For my part, my modest contribution to the field may be summed up in three points to which I would refer as "attempts". The first of these was to demonstrate, mainly by examining early terminology and concepts, that Arabic grammatical thought is a genuine intellectual product of Arabs and Muslims, rather than the result of borrowing from other nations. The second attempt was to highlight the central position which the grammatical tradition occupies within the gamut of the Arabic and Islamic scholarly tradition, particularly because grammar is firmly linked to exegesis, Qur'anic readings, stylistics and literary criticism. Finally, I attempted to demonstrate that early grammarians, unlike later authors, were more keen to disclose the intricate relationship between structure and meaning - a method of study which, if adopted by contemporary scholars, would bring Arabic closer to the hearts and minds of the generations to come.

I wholeheartedly thank the custodians of the King Faisal Foundation for generously granting me this prestigious international prize. More importantly, I would also like to extend my thanks to them for having encouraged, over the last thirty years or so, researches in Islamic sciences, humanities, medicine and pure sciences to compete for the best service of humanity (and for this let those aspire, who have aspirations).