

Acceptance Speech by H.E. Professor
Abdallah bin Yosuf Al-Ghunaim
2016 Winner of the King Faisal International Prize
For Islamic Studies

38th KFIP Awards Ceremony
Wednesday 23/03/2016 (14/06/1437H.)

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
King Salman Bin Abdulaziz,
Your Highnesses,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests

Assalamu Alaikum and May the Mercy and Blessings of Allah be upon you.

It gives me great pleasure and honor to stand before you tonight amid the reverence of sovereignty and glory of knowledge. I am deeply indebted to all academic and scientific institutions that nominated me for this Prize, and everyone who contributed to shaping my career and enabled me to reach this splendid recognition. I am also grateful to His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, Chairman of the Prize Board, and all members of the Board, for this distinguished honor that I profoundly cherish.

My pride in winning this Prize is augmented by its prestige, credibility, neutrality, and commitment to recognizing laureates solely on the basis of merit and distinction, regardless of sex, color or race.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, May Allah sustain her glory, had a major share in the knowledge I accrued. In this regard, I must mention my mentor and Shaikh, Hamad Al Jasir, may Allah have mercy upon him, who mentored me, and whose knowledge has immensely benefited me with regards to the geography of the Arabian Peninsula. I learned from him that field studies were the best way to verify information contained in books. I must also acknowledge the tremendous support I received from King Saud University around forty years ago, which facilitated my field studies around

the Kingdom while preparing for my doctorate thesis. This had enabled me to verify the earth's shapes in ancient manuscripts and collect local synonyms of geomorphological terms which, in turn, influenced a number of my systematic studies on Arabic terminology of the shapes of the earth's surface, the sources of these terms, their inferences and which of them was most relevant to contemporary studies of geographical phenomena.

In an attempt to develop an intellectual and scientific framework for studying Arabic geographical tradition and documenting Arab contributions, I presented in my book on research and readings of Arabic geographical tradition, several examples worthy of following, and exerted much effort in verification of ancient Arabic geographic texts and acquaintance with manuscripts embodying that heritage. Yet I feel that my contribution was modest. This Prize comes as a further incentive for me to do more towards reviving our Arabic and Islamic tradition and documenting its luminous path.

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques,

I am greatly honored and delighted that this is the third honor I receive under your kind patronage. It is an evidence of your support of knowledge and scholars. May Allah protect you and bestow good health upon you, and may He protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under your leadership from all evils, and keep it always a home for pride and peace, and a towering center for the service of Islam, Muslims and humanity at large.

Assalamu Alaikum and May Allah's Mercy and Blessings be upon you.