

Speech by
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Praise be to Allah, Lord of all worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, the Arab Prophet who taught the learners, and the Messenger who instilled hope in the hearts of the hopeless.

At the outset, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to those responsible for King Faisal Prize, for their dedicated and continuous efforts that have earned this prize a distinguished position among leading academic institutions and universities across the Arab and international worlds.

This prize embodies the pioneering role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its esteemed stature as the Land of the Two Holy Mosques, toward which the hearts of Muslims from every corner of the globe yearn.

One of the significant topics addressed by the prize in the field of Islamic Studies in its forty-eighth session is Trade Routes in the Islamic World. These routes have always represented the lifelines connecting people and nations throughout history. Along these routes caravans of merchants traveled eastward, westward, northward, and southward, laden with goods of every kind. Commercial exchange flourished along these routes, and they became conduits through which ideas, beliefs, and cultures were transmitted. They became the arteries linking civilizations. Traveling those routes were merchants and seekers of wealth, pilgrims, soldiers, adventurers, and migrants. It was also along these same routes that the Islamic conquests advanced to distant lands, carrying the noble message of Islam.

The caliphs of the Islamic state, throughout successive eras, gave great care to maintaining the land and sea trade routes. Ensuring safety for merchants and caravans was regarded as an essential condition for commercial activity, so they took measures to maintain, supervise, and secure the routes from bandits and thieves. They also built caravanserais, hostels, bridges, and wells along these routes. Tribunes were established in frontier regions to facilitate travel, encourage settlement, and maintain the routes. Naval fleets were constructed to defend the coast from pirate raids.

These efforts had a profound impact on the vitality of both local and regional trade. Muslim caravans navigated land and sea routes alike, leading to the continued growth and prosperity of commerce throughout Islamic civilization. Diverse means of transport, especially camels, mules, and donkeys, served as the backbone of overland trade across the eastern Islamic world and beyond.