

TRANSLATION

Remarks of His Eminence Sheikh

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Joint Recipient of the King Faisal International Prize
For the Service to Islam

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Your Royal Highness Prince Abdallah bin Abdulaziz,
Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the National Guard
Your Highnesses
Your Eminences and Excellencies
Honoured guests

For sixty years I have lectured and written, but today I am overwhelmed at the prospect of preparing these remarks; for they fall within an area new to me, the likes of which I have never experienced. Have I ever received an award for my work? Indeed, have I ever thought about such an award, or expected one?

We are accustomed not to honour the man until after his departure from this world, we thus honour the dead but neglect the living; and if we do honour the living, we select someone who is outgoing, mingling and engaging. But someone as reclusive as I, contained, as I am within my home, whose only intercourse with society is through broadcasts and opinions, or magazine articles and newspapers - no one thinks of someone like that or turns to him. Furthermore, prizes are usually awarded to those who seek them and pursue them, but that I should receive a telephone call and told: "You have been awarded the King Faisal International Prize" while the prize, let alone receiving it, was farthest from my mind, this indeed is strange, but this is exactly how it happened.

King Faisal's Prize - God be merciful upon him- is venerable in meaning and in purpose. I do not say this today because I am a recipient, but this is the truth I have been repeating for years. Faisal, and Faisal's father before him, and Faisal's brothers after him, have all worked towards spreading Truth and the victory of Good when they served Islam, which itself leads to the Law of Good and Principles of Truth. The King Faisal Prize is an affirmation of beneficence and a solidification of its principles. And the greater honour is that I have been made a little soldier in the troop of servers of Islam; the service of Islam is an honour to the servant as well as satisfying the need of those served. Islam needs no one, for it is mighty in its own right. Imagine a map of the Islamic world before you and look at the countries into which Islam was brought by conquest and the

countries into which Islam entered after the flags were lowered and the armies had ceased to march and no new conquests remained for the Moslems. Who brought Islam to Indonesia and the depths of Malaysia and the Philippines? And who later brought Islam to Korea and to Japan and to the Islamic centers in Europe and America? It spread by itself, born by merchants who had no time for spreading the faith and who were not like the Christian missionaries, who are financed by others and who are given the means with which to work.

So thanks be to God and my appreciation to you for honouring me by making me a soldier in the service of Islam.

The service of Islam, as I have said, is an honour for the servant. Islam draws its might from God; whatever obstacles it faces, whoever the opponents gathered against it, whatever plots are laid to fight it, Islam is the victor in the end. Look at its long history and how often it was thought that Islam was in its final throes, only to come back every time youthfully invigorated.

During times of stagnation, weak souls believed it was the end of Islam, then it was stagnation that perished and Islam revived.

And during the crusades, all of Europe's nations led their armies against us, and the Turkish Moslem and the Kurdish Moslem rose, spreading Islam's banner and striking with Mohammed's sword; thus God turned back all of Europe's armies, and victory was ours. And when the Mongol tide came upon us and swept away the eastern Islamic countries and Baghdad fell, when Baghdad was the greatest city on earth, and only Egypt remained, weak Egypt, ruled by Mamelukes whom time had transformed into kings-when they returned to their faith and fought for God and not for earthly causes, God gave them victory at "Ain Jalout", a victory that astounds historians to this day.

Islam's power has not faded and its soldiers have not weakened; indeed victory is theirs: (...Our soldiers shall overcome them...). Examples abound: those warriors in Afghanistan, battling the mighty nation, the Soviets; or today's example of small children confronting trained troops, with their small hands casting stones at armies of transgressors, who find in their hands the richest, fiercest, most treacherous weapons; and days pass, and the first year ended and the second and the third has started and these children remain rooted in the face of the outrageous transgressing country they call the "State of Israel".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My allotted time is short and my speech is long, so I shall end with a word: God's messenger bequeathed neither Dinar nor Dirhim, all he left behind was the call to Islam,

to Truth, to what is conducive to the betterment of mankind; he who takes part in it has a portion of the Prophet's legacy and is a warrior of God.