

Presentation of the
2000 King Faisal International Prize Winners

By

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In the name of Allah

Praise be to Allah and peace and prayers be upon the Prophet Mohammad and all his family,
companions and, all his followers until the Day of Judgement

Your Royal Highness, Prince Sultan ibn Abd Al Aziz
Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defense and Aviation
And Inspector General
Your Royal Highnesses
Your Excellencies
Brothers and Sisters

Asslam Alaikum,

It gives me great pleasure to present the winners of the 2000 King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam, Islamic Studies, Arabic Literature, Medicine and, Science.

The King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam has been awarded to Al-Azhar Al-Sharif. Al-Azhar was nominated by the World Assembly of Muslim Youth in Riyadh and has been awarded the Prize in recognition of its exceptional services to the Islamic World, particularly its leading role in disseminating knowledge among thousands of students and scholars of Islamic religion, as well as its role in promulgating Islam and conserving Islamic and Arabic culture and identity.

The King Faisal International Prize for Islamic Studies (The spread of Islam outside the Arab World, and its Cultural Impact) has been awarded to Professor Muhammad Mohar Ali of Bangladesh. Professor Ali was nominated by Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, and has been awarded the Prize for his 4-volume book: *A History of the Muslims of Benal*, an authoritative and highly reliable source on the origins and the spread of Islam and its impact on the spiritual and cultural life of Bengali Muslims.

The King Faisal International Prize for Arabic Literature (Studies Pertaining to Early Arab Literary Critics) has been awarded jointly to Professor Abd-Allah Al-Tayyib of Sudan, and Professor Ezz El-Din Ismail Abd El-Ghani of Egypt.

Professor Abd-Allah Al-Tayyib is Chairman of the Arabic Language Academy in Sudan and Professor Emeritus of Arabic Literature at Khartoum University. He was nominated by Khartoum University and has been awarded the Prize in recognition of his distinguished contributions to the study of Arabic poetry as well as his classical and highly original work on Arabic literature and literary criticism.

Professor Ezz El-Din Ismail Abd El-Ghani is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University, Cairo. He was nominated by that university and has been awarded the Prize in recognition of his prominent role as a literary critic. Professor Abd El-Ghani insightfully associates literary concepts with classical views, and his writings are characterized by profundity and vision as well as moderation; this has gained him recognition and allowed him to make significant contributions to contemporary and traditional schools of Arabic literary criticism. His research into the aesthetic foundations of Arabic literary criticism represent a landmark in this field of knowledge.

The King Faisal International Prize for Medicine (Aging) has been awarded to Professor Cynthia Jane Kenyon of the USA. Professor Kenyon is the Herbert Boyer Distinguished Professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the University of California in San Francisco. She was nominated by that university and has been awarded the Prize for her fundamental contributions to the study of aging; Professor Kenyon has shown that the aging process is controlled by several hormonal systems and regulated by signals from the reproductive tract as well as signals from the environment. These studies have opened up new avenues for identifying genetic and metabolic factors that might be involved in regulating aging, and the potential use of such information in slowing down the aging process.

The King Faisal International Prize for Science (Biology) has been awarded jointly to Professor Edward Osborne Wilson and Dr. J. Craig Venter, both from the US.

Professor Wilson is a Professor at Harvard University, which nominated him for the Prize. He has been awarded the Prize in recognition of his outstanding contributions to many fields of biology, including ecology, biodiversity, developmental and systematic biology, biodiversity, biogeography and other fields. He is the founder of sociobiology, a field that seeks to establish the biological basis of behavior. He is also the founder of the modern biodiversity movement, and his work in this field is a cornerstone in the global efforts for conservation of species and biological ecosystems.

Dr. Craig Venter is the co-founder, president and chief scientific officer of Celera Genomics Corporation and founder and chairman of the Institute of Genomic Research in Rockville, Maryland. He was nominated for the Prize by the University of Maryland at College Park. He has been awarded the Prize for pioneering novel techniques for rapid identification of genes and sequencing of entire genomes. He was the first to sequence the entire genome of a free living bacterial organism and has since been able to uncover the complete genetic make-up of more complex organisms, including the entire sequencing of the human genome.

On behalf of the General Secretariat of King Faisal International Prize, I would like to extend our utmost thanks to his Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abd Al-Aziz, representative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, for sponsoring this ceremony, and to all of you for kindly attending the occasion. I would also like to thank everyone who cooperated with the General Secretariat of King Faisal International Prize during the various stages of nomination, refereeing, and final selection.

I conclude by extending warm congratulations to the winners.

May Almighty Allah guide and support those engaged in virtuous deeds. May Almighty Allah help our laureates in their endeavours to serve humanity, enrich human knowledge, and reduce human suffering.

May I also thank all of you for accepting our invitation to share this occasion with us.

Best wishes and assalam alaikum.