

An Overview of
Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain

Compiled by
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Introduction

It is not easy to write an introduction of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain, both as a poet and as a human being, as he does not like flattery or overstatements. Although it cannot easily be distinguished, there is a slight difference between stating the facts and exaggeration. Therefore, while compiling this work, we resorted to accuracy and caution, so as to ensure its perfection. Mr. Abdulaziz Juma'a, my colleague and a researcher at the Foundation, took on this task and it is to him that I owe thanks and appreciation.

And now...with all respect to his title, the most beautiful and accurate way to describe Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain is through this verse by Imam Al-Shafi'i:

"The best person among the people who is able to help others to fulfill all their needs

Do not prevent anyone from helping others

As long as you are content in doing so as happiness is momentary

Thank God that he has allowed people to need you

And not you dependant on them."

It is as if Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain has adopted this verse and abides his life by it, while demonstrating his generosity and kindness upon facing difficulties in his journey of helping and rescuing others.

Secretary General

Abdulaziz Al-Surayea

Biography

- Born in Kuwait in 1936
- He is a poet and one of the most prominent businessmen in Kuwait. His commercial and industrial activities span Europe, the United States, China and the Middle East. He also has various investments in a number of Arab countries.
- He published his first poetry diwan "Intimations of the Desert" in 1995.
- He published his second poetry diwan "Wastefarer" in 2004.
- He is a member of the Kuwait National Committee for Educational Support.
- A member of the Kuwait Writers Association.
- A member of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Cultural Forum in Beirut.

- A member of the Fez Saiss Cultural Association in Morocco.
- A corresponding member of the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus.
- A member of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Thought Foundation, and one of its founders.
- A member of the Board of Trustees of the Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain.
- A member of the Board of Trustees of the College of Arts at Kuwait University.



H.H. the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister at that time, decorates Abdullaziz Saud Al-Babtain with the Kuwait Order of the Sash, First Degree, 2005. By the order of the late Amir of Kuwait, H.H. Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

Honorary Certificates

1. An honorary doctorate from the University of Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1995, for his role in enriching Islamic culture.
2. An honorary doctorate from the University of Baku, Azerbaijan in 2000, for his efforts in the fields of Arab and Islamic culture and literature.
3. An honorary doctorate in Literature from Yarmouk University, Jordan in 2001, for his distinctive contributions in the fields of literature, culture and poetic creativity.
4. An honorary doctorate in Humanities from the Kyrgyz-Kuwaiti University in 2002.
5. An honorary doctorate in Humanities from the University of Joy, Kyrgyzstan in 2002
6. An honorary diploma from "The Progressive Social Union for Women" in Kyrgyzstan, for his efforts in supporting friendships between people on 26/04/2002.

7. An honorary doctorate from the University of Algiers on 11/05/2005.
8. An honorary doctorate from the Sidi Mohamed bin Abdullah University in Fez on 15/12/2006.
9. An honorary doctorate from the University of Khartoum, Sudan on 28/04/2007.
10. An honorary doctorate from Al-Farabi National University in Kazakhstan in 25/5/ 2009.

Accolades and Awards

1. The Cultural Order of Merit in the First Degree from His Excellency the President of the Republic of Tunis on 18/06/1996.
2. The Independence Order in the First Degree from His Majesty the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 06/02/2001, for his distinctive role in supporting and encouraging cultural and poetic movement in the Arab world.
3. A shield from King Faisal's International Award.
4. The State Award from the National Council of Culture, Arts and Letters in the State of Kuwait, 2002.
5. The Cedar Order, in the rank of Officer, from the President of the Republic of Lebanon, 2004.
6. On 02/12/2004, he was the center of Arab and Yemeni hospitality and appreciation and was awarded the Golden Prize (Gold Medal of Distinction) by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) during the closing session of the 14th Conference of the Arab Cultural Ministers at the Republican

Palace in Sana'a, (the capital of Yemen)in which Arab Cultural Ministers as well as Arab and foreign media delegations were in attendance. He is the first Arab businessman to receive this Medal of Honor.

7. On 14/06/2005, upon the order of H.H. the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and H.H. the Prime Minister, at that time, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, awarded Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain with the Kuwait Order of the Sash, First Degree, in recognition of his role in supporting and spreading Arab culture in numerous cultural and ideological Arab and International forums.
8. He has been granted the prize of the President of the Republic of Sudan, the Gold Medal of Science, Literature and Arts in Khartoum on 31/12/2005, the highest level of merit awarded by the President of Sudan.
9. The Italian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait awarded him the 'Knight Order' by the order of His Excellency President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy on 09/02/2009, in appreciation for his efforts towards dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

10. The Spanish Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, by the order of His Majesty King Juan Carlos, awarded him the 'High level Order of Civil Merits' on 07/12/2009, in appreciation for his cultural efforts in Andalusia that led the government to issue a decree to teach the Arabic language in its schools.
11. The University of Qurtuba awarded him the 'Thomas Aquinas Cultural Award' on 27/01/2010. It is awarded to international prominent figures, in appreciation for his academic services towards the university and the civilization of the Andalusia region.
12. H.H. Ruler of Ajman, Sheikh Hamaid bin Rashid Al-Nuaimi awarded him a high-level order on 24/03/2010, in appreciation for his social services offered in the fields of education, culture and poetic creativity.
13. Colonel Hassan Haroun; Advisor in the Presidency, awarded him on behalf of Dr. Ikililou 1313 Dhoinine; President of the Comoros an Honorary Order at the "Commando of Comoros Red Crescent" on 19/10/2011.
- 14 - College Dnberg awarded him the Medal of Excellence at the International level in 28/5/2012.

Forms of Tribute

He has been honored in various forms and by different institutions, among them are:

- 1. The Monday meeting (Ithnainia) of Sheikh Abdul Maqsoud Khoja has celebrated him in Jeddah, Saudia Arabia on 21/02/2000*
- 2. Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Has been chosen by the information Dept. in the University of Kuwait to be the personlaity of the year 2000.*
- 3. The Monday meeting (Ithnainia) of Sheikh Mohammad Bin Saleh Al-Naeem in Al-Ahsa, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 29/12/2003.*
- 4. Al-Arabi Magazine honored him in recognition of his efforts in the field of culture, at its annual seminar in Kuwait, 2003.*
- 5. Kuwait University honored him in April 2004, on 'Kuwait Day of Literate', in recognition of his efforts and contributions in the fields of culture and humanities.*
- 6. The 36th International Cairo Book Exhibition has celebrated him on 27/01/2004*

7. *Al-Hariri Charitable Foundation and the Arab Cultural Club in Beirut has celebrated him on 21/02/2004.*
8. *An honorary celebration hosted by Sheikh Mohammad bin Ali bin Eid Al-Khater in the town of Jubail, Saudi Arabia on 16/03/2004.*
9. *The Center for Studies and Research in Sana'a (the capital of Yemen) awarded him the shield of the center on 02/12/2004, in the presence of the Yemeni Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Abdulwahab Raweh and the President of the Center, Dr. Abdulaziz Al- Maqaleh.*
10. *The Yemeni Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Khaled Al-Ruwaishan, awarded him with the "Commemoration of Sana'a, the Capital of Arab Culture," in 2004.*
11. *An honorary celebration hosted by the journalist, Mr. Mohammad Reda Nasrallah in Qatif, Saudi Arabia on 18/11/2004.*
12. *Makassed Islamic Charitable Association of Sidon awarded him a shield on 15/06/2005.*
13. *At the 22nd International Writers Federation Conference in Lahti (Finland), from 18–21/06/2005, where he was the honorary guest and participated in the evening poetry reading. The Federation also issued a selection of his poetry translated into both English and Finnish.*

14. *An honorary celebration at Molise University in Campobasso, South Italy on 28/07/2005.*
15. *He was honored at a cultural festival hosted by Sheikh Abdullah Bin Abdulmohsen Al-Madi in Riyadh on 10/12/2005.*
16. *On 30/06/2006 the former Prime Minister of Lebanon, Mr. Fouad Siniora, in the presence of the Minister of Culture, Dr. Tareq Mitri, honored Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain for donating 10,000 books towards the project of rehabilitating the Lebanese National Library. They expressed their love and appreciation to Al-Babtain in all his efforts towards culture, poetry and creativity in the Arab world.*
17. *An honorary celebration at a cultural evening at the Opera House in Cairo on 16/05/2007.*
18. *He was honored by the Union of Tunisian Writers on 23/06/2007, in recognition of his status as one of the most prominent figures and supporters of the Arabic poetry movement.*
19. *Arabian Business Magazine, issued by the ITP Publishing Group for Information Technology, honored him on 16/12/2007, and awarded him a prize in recognition of his social responsibility initiative in this field.*
20. *University of Yazd in Iran awarded him its 'Golden Key' on 24/12/2007, in recognition of his role in*

holding a session concerning Arabic-language skills and the appreciation of poetry.

- 21. The Monday meeting (Ithnainia) of Sheikh Othman Al-Saleh, has celebrated him in Riyadh, Saudia Arabia.*
- 22. The "Lisan Al-Arab Association" honored him at the 14th International Arab League Conference on November 2007.*
- 23. Al-Sharq Newspaper honored him in January, 2008, at the Kuwaiti Creativity Festival for 2007.*
- 24. Received a shield from University of Alexandria on 17/04/2008, in recognition of what he has contributed to the field of Arab poetry in general and in particular to the University of Alexandria.*
- 25. He has been granted a premium membership at Al-Washm Club in Shaqraa, Riyadh, 2008.*
- 26. The Minister of Information in Kuwait honored him by awarding him a commemorative shield on 15/04/2009.*
- 27. Suez Canal University in Egypt honored him for his active role in the fields of Arabic language, culture and poetry in April 2009.*
- 28. Al-Ahsa Literature Club honored him on 25/11/2009, in the presence of a group of regional poets and intellectuals.*

29. *He has been chosen as Emeritus President of the Medical Association of Kuwait on 14/02/2010.*
30. *The American University of Kuwait has chosen him as Emeritus President of the University's Arab Literature Club on 23/02/2010.*
31. *The Arab Media Forum honored him by awarding him a media creativity prize called "The Cultural Media Adaptation Award" on 25/04/2010, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, The Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.*
32. *The World Poetry Academy in Verona, Italy chose him as Honorary President of the Academy and a member of the Supreme Council of its Governing Body in 11/6/2011, successor to the late world poet Leopold Senghor.*
33. *The Governor of Verona awarded him the gold medal of the city and Honorary Citizenship in 11/6/2011.*
34. *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) awarded him its Honorary Medal for his role in protecting the environment in the area of Shait in 11/6/2011.*
35. *The longest main street in the Province of Embeni north of the Comoros is named after Abdul Aziz Saud Al-Babtain.*

- 36- *The center of Arrawdah of Sudair in Saudi Arabia , honored him on the occasion of the Center's Annual Award in 12/5/2011 .*
- 37- *Kuwait Blind Association honored him for his role in the service of social and cultural life.*
- 38- *Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Representative, Stapejano, and a welcome letter from the representative of the State of Michigan in the congress, Carl Levin.*
- 39- *Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Congressman Jhon Dingell.*
- 40- *The Burda of Poetry and the shield of the Country of Million Poets, from the Foundation of Chinguetti for Culture and Development on 28/4/2012 .*
- 41- *The European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium , honored him in recognition of his role in promoting dialogue among civilizations.*

His Efforts in Various Fields

Firstly, in the cultural field...

1. The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, literature in the Arab world began to surge and its role and relevance began to diminish, particularly in the field of poetic creativity. This sparked a comparison between the current unfortunate position of literature and the painful neglect of the creative poets and poetry, the primary art of the Arabic language and the Arab divan, as well as to record their good deeds and pride and its prosperous past. It was this reality that influenced Mr. Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain to establish a foundation that patronizes literature and honors the intellectuals. He called it "The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity" and made it a body for honoring the creative poets and poetry critics and publishing manuscripts about them. It was established in 1989 in Cairo, the capital of culture,

art and Arab creativity. Since then the Foundation has flourished and has opened regional offices in Tunisia and Kuwait, in addition to its main office in Cairo.

Since its establishment, the Foundation has held eleven sessions and it is currently undergoing preparations for the 12th session, which will be held in Sarajevo from 19 – 21/10/2010. It includes six literary symposiums, which are: El-Oyoun Poetry (Morocco, 1997), Mohammad bin Laaboun (Kuwait, 1997), Saadi Al-Shirazi (Tehran, 2000), The Centennial Death and Birth; in celebration of the two great poets Abdullah Al-Faraj and Amin Nakhla (Kuwait, 2001), The First Kuwaiti Forum for Arab Poetry in Iraq, (Kuwait 2005), and Mohammad Abdulmunem Khafaji and Adnan Al-Shayji (Cairo, 1-2/11/2009); on the occasion of the Foundation's 20th Anniversary "The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity 1989-2009".

The Foundation has also issued several publications about poetry and poets(1989-2010), among them is the "Al-Babtain Encyclopedia for Contemporary Arab Poets," which was first issued in

1995 and then again in 2002. It also issued the "Al-Babtain Encyclopedia of Arab Poets in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in 2008 and it includes 25 volumes and features around 10,000 poets. The Foundation now is preparing to issue "Al-babtain Encyclopaedias in Five Centuries 1301-1800 AC".

As of 2011, the Foundation's Board of Trustees has decided to allocate the even numbered years for literary seminars and odd numbered years for the inter-civilization dialogue seminars.

The Foundation invites around 500 dignitaries to attend and participate in each session it holds in the host countries in addition to participants from inside host country.

It has also made many contributions in various cultural fields and it takes part in celebrating the cultural capitals of Arab and Islamic countries, among them the selection of Kuwait as the capital of Arab culture in 2001. On this sole occasion, the Foundation issued 11 publications.

2. *The Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Prize: "The Grandchildren of Imam Al-Bukhary"*

It is an annual prize worth US\$100,000 and its

aims to restore the original cultural bridges between the Arab nation and the Islamic countries in Central Asia that have recently gained their independence from the Soviet Union. It also aims at reminding this generation as well as future ones of what those cultural relationships have accomplished for human civilizations, through Islam. The product of this was intellectual and cultural thought, which resulted from the merging of Arab and beyond the river ideologies.

The prize is supervised by a committee, which comprises of Dr. Khaled Al-Mazkour, Dr. Abdullah Al-Mohareb, Dr. Adel Al-Falah, Dr. Ibrahim Al-Sharida and Mr. Osama Al-Babtain.

3. The Al-Babtain Central Library for Arab Poetry in Kuwait

It was established as a gift from the Foundation's President on the occasion of Kuwait being selected as the capital of Arab culture in 2001. Its first stone was laid during a ceremony on 06/01/2002 and it was inaugurated on 08/04/2006 under the patronage of H.H. the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. More than 200 Arab and foreign dignitaries in the fields of culture, intellect, media

and politics were invited to attend the ceremony. In addition to directors of national and central libraries, deans of Arabic language departments in Arab and foreign universities and a large number of dignitaries from within Kuwait. Many Heads of State, government officials and VIPs, who visit Kuwait, will pay a visit to see this great monument dedicated to civilizations.

The library contains tens of thousands of valuable and rare books and manuscripts and more than 3,500 university dissertations.

4. The Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Library in Jerusalem

It was founded in 1999 at the campus of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jerusalem, and was inaugurated in 2004 to provide research facilities to the citizens of Jerusalem and Palestine.

5. The Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Award for Arabic Poetry in Palestine

It is directed for the Palestinian youth under the

age of 35 years.

6. *The Al-Babtain Translation Center*

It was established in 2004 and it contributes to the Foundation by translating foreign languages, specifically from English to Arabic and vice versa.

7. *Al-Babtain Center for Authenticating Poetic Manuscripts*

It was established in 2007 and began work on 14/11/2007 and aims at publishing poetry diwans and cultural books related to poetry, under the condition that they are exclusively published. The Center has issued 12 poetry diwans to date, which have been neglected for many centuries.

Secondly, in the educational field...

1. *The Saud Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Commission for Higher Education*

This Commission was set up in 1974 and

it annually grants 100 scholarships to students in Islamic countries in central Asia to study at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. It also grants 50 scholarships annually to students in Africa and 100 to Iraqi students. The Commission also covers accommodation, food and clothing, air travel, tuition and book expenses, as well as medical treatment they may require during their stay in Cairo. The total number of students and graduates that have benefited from this commission has now reached some 3,000.

The Head of this Commission has received 45 students from Africa, Asia and Europe, and the Commission has granted all of them the "Saud Al-Babtain Kuwaiti Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies," enabling them to continue their education until they obtain a doctorate degree from Al-Azhar University.

2. Training Courses in Prosody, Appreciating Poetry and Arabic Language Skills

These courses are free of charge and were set up in 2000 in cooperation with over 46 Arab and

foreign universities. The course's objective is to raise awareness and understanding of poetry, prosody and linguistics. It has held 270 courses throughout the Arab world and the Islamic countries till the mid of 2010 and has graduated more than 20,000 students.

Since 01/05/2009, the Foundation has initiated 15 simultaneous training courses over the next 15 years, with the aim of introducing Arabization to the Comoros Islands; where the majority speaks Comorian (similar to Swahili) and the elite speak French. The Imam Al-Shafi'i College in the capital, Moroni, is equipped with a linguistics laboratory with a capacity to fit 50 trainees.

3. The Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Center for Inter-Civilization Dialogue

This Center was established in 2005 and Dr. Abdullah Al-Mihna was appointed as its advisor. The Center works in collaboration with foreign universities to supervise the "Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Professorship of Arabic Studies" and to organize the scientific training courses in the fields of linguistics and historical and cultural tourism. The Center specializes in the following activities:

• *Spanish Tour Guide Courses*

The first courses were set up in 2005 in collaboration with the University of Cordoba and fully financed by the President of the Foundation. It is a comprehensive cultural course in which 118 Spanish tour guides in Andalusia participated to correct their knowledge of the historical sites and monuments within the region, under the supervision of an elite group of Arab and Spanish specialist professors. The duration of the course is 50 hours over the space of six months. 85 tour guides graduated from the second course and the third course is currently ongoing for the academic year of 2009/2010.

Moreover, the tour guide courses began at the University of Granada from the academic year of 2008/2009 and 89 tour guides have graduated to this day. It is currently holding its second session.

The tour guide courses also started at the University of Malaga during the academic year of 2009/2010 and they are currently preparing to set up a similar course at the University of Seville.

However, the agreements that the Foundation has signed with the four universities require them to provide the courses for the Spanish tour guides.

• ***Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Chair of Arabic Studies at the University of Cordoba***

The Foundation signed an agreement with the Head of the University, Professor Eugenio Dominguez Velches, to establish this chair on 08/10/2004. The University thereby committed to following modern scientific methods that enabled their students to master the Arabic language. 400 students have benefited from this chair so far and they have organized the "First National Symposium in Arabic" at the Faculty of Literature in the University of Cordoba.

The Foundation has renewed their contract with the University until the year 2013 and a global publishing house will issue the conclusions of the symposium in English in the near future.

• ***The Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Chair of Arabic Studies at the University of Granada***

The agreement was signed to establish this chair on 12/04/2007 with the Head of the University of