

Biography

HRH Prince El Hassan

His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal was born in Amman on 20th March 1947, the youngest son of the then Crown Prince Talal bin Abdullah and Princess Zein El Sharaf bint Jamil, later King Talal and Queen Zein El Sharaf. His Royal Highness is the younger brother of His Majesty the late King Hussein. Their branch of the Hashemite family is directly descended from the Prophet Muhammad and is the forty-second generation.

Prince El Hassan had his early schooling in Amman, largely with tutors. He then went to Summer Fields School in England, and later to Harrow, graduating from Christ Church, Oxford University with a BA (Hon) in Oriental Studies, followed by an MA. His Royal Highness has also been awarded the Honorary Degree of Science, Boşziçi University, Turkey (1981); Honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Law, University of Durham (1990); Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, Chicago, Illinois (1995); Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland (1996); Honorary Doctorate from Moscow State Institute for International Relations (1997); Doctorate of Laws, University of Birmingham (1999); Honorary Doctorate from Bilkent University, Turkey (1999); Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws (Hon LLB) from the University of Hertfordshire (2000); an Honorary Doctorate of Theology from the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Eberhard-Karls-University in Tübingen, Germany (2001); Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters, University of Oklahoma (2002); Honorary Doctorate, University of York, (2002) and Honorary Doctorate of Laws, University of Portsmouth (2002); Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the International Islamic University of Islamabad (2005), the Degree of LLD Honoris Causa of the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (2005). Prince El Hassan received the Abu Bakr Al-Siddique Medal of the Organisation of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies in September 1996 and the 1995 Science and Society Prize in Madrid in 1997. In April 2001, His Royal Highness received the inaugural Gandhi/King/Ikeda Community Builders Prize at the Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel during Morehouse College's International Reconciliation Sunday. His Royal Highness was awarded the Distinguished Foreign Visitor Award at the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation in Boston in April 2002, and in June 2003, His Royal Highness received the 2003 Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Award for the Advancement of Interreligious Understanding. On 29th January, 2004, Prince Hassan received the Abraham Fund Pioneer of Co-existence Award, New York and on 15th October, 2004, Prince Hassan was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Sash for his Services to the Republic of Austria, 1st class.

His Royal Highness was officially invested as Crown Prince to the Hashemite Throne of Jordan in April 1965. Since then, and until the changes in succession brought about by His Majesty the late King Hussein in January 1999, he had served as the King's closest political advisor, confidant and deputy, as well as acting as Regent in the King's absence from the country.

Prince El Hassan initiated, founded and is actively involved in a number of Jordanian and international institutes and committees. In Jordan he chaired the committees overseeing the first development plan 1973-1975, and subsequently the three development plans of 1976-1980, 1981-

1985 and 1986–1990. His Royal Highness founded the Royal Scientific Society in 1970; the annual Bilad Al-Sham Conference in 1978; the Al al-Bait Foundation in 1980; the Arab Thought Forum in 1981 and the Jordan Higher Council for Science and Technology in 1987. His Royal Highness established the Islamic Scientific Academy; the Triannual Conferences on the History and Archaeology of Jordan; the Hashemite Aid and Relief Agency; the Centre for Educational Development; the Institute for Diplomacy and the Al al-Bait University in Mafraq.

Always interested in young people, and believing in the importance of their community, His Royal Highness founded the Forum Humanum in 1982 (renamed, in 1988, the Arab Youth Forum); the Crown Prince Award in 1984 (renamed the El Hassan Youth Award in 1999), and its affiliate programme, the Sabilat El Hassan in 1988.

On the international stage, many of Prince El Hassan's ideas and initiatives have acted as a catalyst. Addressing the 36th Session of the United Nations in 1981, His Royal Highness proposed the establishment of the New International Humanitarian Order, which led to a request by the Secretary General to found and co-chair the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues (ICHI). The final report of the Commission was adopted as a resolution at the 42nd General Assembly. An International Cultures Foundation was established in July 2002 to promote understanding among different cultures and to enhance dialogue between their thinkers and intellectuals. Its functions will be carried out through the Parliament of Cultures, located in Turkey and jointly founded by His Royal Highness and Professor Ihsan Doğramaci, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Bilkent University. In July 2003, as a joint initiative with John Marks from Search for Common Ground (SFCG), His Royal Highness launched Partners in Humanity. This project aims to improve understanding, build positive relationships and promote dialogue between the Muslim world and the U.S.

Prince El Hassan chairs and is a member of a number of international committees and organisations. These include: President of the Club of Rome (1999); President of the Board of Directors for the Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution at the University of Oklahoma International Programs Center, USA; Co-Chair of the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues; Member of the International Board of the Council on Foreign Relations; Member of the Board of Directors of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, Washington, DC (2002); Member of the Board of the South Centre (2001) and member of the Committee of Notables of the Institut Català de la Mediterrània (2001). In September 2003, His Royal Highness was elected Chairman of an Independent Eminent Experts group, appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to implement the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that took place in Durban in 2001. His Royal Highness served as Chairman of the Policy Advisory Commission for the World Intellectual Property Organisation from 1999–2002; was a Member of the Executive Committee of the International Crisis Group; was an Honorary Member of UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development; was a Member of the Committee of UNESCO International Interreligious Advisory Committee and was a Member of the Informal Advisory Group to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In the field of religion, His Royal Highness' contacts and meetings have evolved into a systematic interfaith dialogue, primarily consisting of three ongoing consultations with the

Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Chambesy, Switzerland; the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious dialogue at the Vatican; and the Independent Commission on Christian-Muslim-Jewish Relations through the aegis of the Deanery of Windsor. In Jordan, His Royal Highness established the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in 1994 to complement these activities. In November, 1999 at the 7th World Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), held in Amman, Prince El Hassan accepted the position of Moderator of the WCRP.

Decorated by over twenty nations, His Royal Highness is the holder of the Order of Al Hussein bin Ali, Jordan's highest decoration. He also held the rank of Honorary General in the Jordanian Armed Forces.

Prince El Hassan is the author of seven books:

- A Study on Jerusalem (1979) (English)
- Palestinian Self-Determination (1981) (English; Arabic)
- Search for Peace (1984) (English; Arabic)
- Christianity in the Arab World (1994) (English; Arabic; French; Greek; Spanish; Russian; German)
- Essere Musulmano – Co-author (2001) (Italian; French and Spanish.) To Be A Muslim (English - released 2003)
- Continuity, Innovation and Change: Selected Essays (2001)
- In Memory of Faisal I: The Iraqi Question (2003) (Arabic)

His Royal Highness has been a prolific contributor to newspapers, magazines, periodicals as well as publications on regional and international issues.

Fluent in Arabic, English and French, His Royal Highness studied Biblical Hebrew as part of his degree course, and has a working knowledge of German, Spanish and Turkish.

His Royal Highness married Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath in 1968. Princess Sarvath comes from a distinguished family of the Indian-subcontinent. They are blessed with three daughters: Princesses Rahma, Sumaya and Badiya, and a son, Prince Rashid; and with five grandchildren – Tariq, Zein El Sharaf, Ali, Sukayna and Aisha.

Prince El Hassan has actively promoted sports within the Kingdom. As President of the Federations for Martial Arts, Polo and Squash, His Royal Highness has overseen the development of these three activities to competitive international levels. In addition to holding a 6th Dan Black Belt in tae kwon do and captaining the Royal Jordanian Polo Team, the Prince enjoys scuba diving, swimming, water-skiing, mountaineering, hiking and skiing. He is a qualified helicopter pilot, and has several parachute jumps to his name. Prince El Hassan enjoys reading, Latin American and Flamenco music as well as cinema. However, His Royal Highness derives the most pleasure in spending time with his family