

University of Rajshahi

Rajshahi-6205

Bangladesh.

RUCL Institutional Repository

<http://rulrepository.ru.ac.bd>

---

Department of Islamic Studies

PhD Thesis

---

2009

# Unification of the Arabian Peninsula: Abdul Aziz Al Saud's Policy and Strategy

Shahjahan, A B M

University of Rajshahi

---

<http://rulrepository.ru.ac.bd/handle/123456789/754>

*Copyright to the University of Rajshahi. All rights reserved. Downloaded from RUCL Institutional Repository.*

**Unification of the Arabian Peninsula: Abdul Aziz  
Al Saud's Policy and Strategy**



**Ph.D Thesis**

**Researcher**

**Professor A B M Shahjahan**

**Session: 2006-2007**

**Roll No. 06024**

**Department of Islamic Studies  
Rajshahi University  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

# Unification of the Arabian Peninsula: Abdul Aziz Al Saud's Policy and Strategy



Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Rajshahi

2009

**Researcher**

**A B M Shahjahan**

Professor

Department of Islamic History and Culture  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi

**Co-Supervisor**

Dr. A K M Yaqub Ali  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Islamic  
History & Culture  
University of  
Rajshahi

**Principal Supervisor**

Dr. F. M. A. H. Taqui  
Professor  
Department of Islamic  
Studies  
University of Rajshahi

**Co-Supervisor**


Dr. M. Moyezul Islam  
Professor  
Department of History  
University of Rajshahi

**Department of Islamic Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
Rajshahi, Bangladesh**

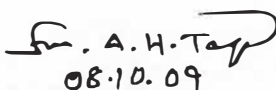
## Certificate

We have great pleasure to testify that the thesis entitled **Unification of the Arabian Peninsula: Abdul Aziz Al Saud's Policy and Strategy** submitted by Mr. A B M Shahjahan, Professor in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi is the candidate's own achievement, and is not a conjoint work. In this context it may be mentioned that the thesis was completed under our direct guidance and supervision.

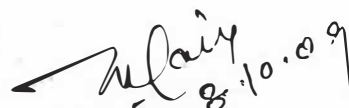
We also certify that we have gone through the final draft of the thesis and found it satisfactory for submission to the University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi in partial fulfilment of the requirements, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts, University of Rajshahi.

 8.10.09

**Dr. A K M Yaqub Ali**  
Professor Emeritus  
Department of Islamic  
History & Culture  
University of Rajshahi  
&  
Co-Supervisor

 08.10.09

**Dr. F. M. A. H. Taqui**  
Professor  
Department of Islamic Studies  
University of Rajshahi  
&  
Principal Supervisor

 8.10.09

**Dr. M. Moyezul Islam**  
Professor  
Department of History  
University of Rajshahi  
&  
Co-Supervisor

## Declaration

I the undersigned do hereby declare that the thesis entitled **Unification of the Arabian Peninsula: Abdul Aziz Al Saud's Policy and Strategy** submitted by me to the University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is an original research work, and it has not been submitted earlier wholly or partly elsewhere for any degree or diploma.

*ABM Shahjahan*  
*8.10.2009*

**A B M Shahjahan**

Professor

Department of Islamic History and Culture  
University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi

## **Acknowledgement**

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise to Allah and peace be on His prophet.

The completion of the dissertation would not have been possible but for the able guidance and cooperation of my supervisor Dr. F. M. A. H. Taqui, Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Rajshahi and Co-supervisors Dr. M. Moyezul Islam, Professor, Department of History, University of Rajshahi and Dr. A K M Yaqub Ali, Professor Emeritus, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajshahi. I am especially indebted to my reverend teacher Dr. A K M Yaqub Ali, with whom I worked very closely and without whose constant guidance and in-depth attention, it would not have been possible for me to complete the work in time.

I take the opportunity to express my gratitude to Professor Dr. M Asaduzzaman, the former Chairman of the Department of Islamic studies, University of Rajshahi, in connection with my registration, and also to Professor Dr. A K M Abdul Latif, Chairman of the same department for his official assistance. My hearty thanks are due to all teachers of the same department for their encouragement and interest in the progress of the work.

For years together it was my good fortune to be associated with a profound and indefatigable scholar Dr. A B M Husain, Professor Emeritus, Department of Islamic History and Culture, University of Rajshahi, whose advice came to my use. I owe my gratitude to him. I like to recall my colleague Professor Dr. M A Bari for his help both official and academic. Furthermore I

express my gratitude to all colleagues of my Department to inspire me all the time for the completion of the work.

I would like to thank the staffs of the Rajshahi University Library, the Varendra Research Museum Library, the Institute of Bangladesh Studies Library, the Asiatic Society Library, Dhaka, the Dhaka University Library, the British Council Library, Dhaka and National Library, Kolkata for their cooperative attitude in getting some pertinent documents for the work.

I also record my thanks to Mr. Saiful Islam, Section Officer of the Department of Islamic History & Culture, University of Rajshahi and also to Mr. Mokhlechhur Rahman, the Proprietor of Active Computer, Binodpur Bazar, Rajshahi for computerizing the dissertation with earnest interest and care.

The blessings of my mother Umme Kulsum and the persistent encouragement and inspiration of my sons Tanvir Ul Alam and Rashik Ishraq including the daughter-in-law Nahima Farhana accelerated the completion of the work.

Last but not the least I would like to express deep feeling for my wife Mrs. Nurbhan Begum to acknowledge gratefully the help and cooperation I have received from her at home and outside, and for her insistence to complete the work within scheduled time.

**A B M Shahjahan**

## **Transliteration**

Regarding the transliteration of Arabic words it may be mentioned here that the proper and place names are written in this dissertation as recorded in the modern works. As it is connected with the study of modern history it is, therefore, logical to write the Arabic terminology of proper and place names as found in the works of modern scholars. I have also tried to give Arabic names in familiar rather than more academically correct transliterations and thus to avoid the use of diacritic marks. No stiff method has been pursued in spelling names either persons or places.



## Chronology

- 1517 Ottoman authority established in Hejaz
- 1550 Ottoman authority established in Hasa
- 1670 Banu Khalid rebel against the Ottomans in Hasa
- 1744 Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab arrives in Dar'iyah
- 1780 The Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* expands in Qasim
- 1792 The Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* expands in southern Najd
- 1797 Qatar and Bahrain acknowledge Sa'udi authority
- 1801 Sa'udi-Wahhabi forces raid Karbala' in Iraq
- 1802 Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* expands in Hejaz
- 1804 Madina acknowledges Sa'udi authority
- 1811 Egyptian troops land in Yanbu'
- 1818 Egyptian troops sack Dar'iyah
- 1824 Turki ibn 'Abdulla re-establishes Sa'udi authority in Riyadh
- 1830 Sa'udi rule expands into Hasa
- 1834 Turki ibn 'Abdullah assassinated by his cousin, Mishari  
Turki's son Faisal becomes *Amir* in Riyadh
- 1836 The Rashidis establish their rule in Ha'il
- 1837 Sa'udi ruler Faisal captured by Egyptian troops and sent to Cairo
- 1843 Faisal returns to Riyadh
- 1865 Faisal dies,  
Faisal's son 'Abdullah rules in Riyadh
- 1891 Sa'udi rule in Riyadh terminated by the Rashidis
- 1893 The Sa'udis take refuge in Kuwait

- 1902 Ibn Sa'ud captures Riyadh,  
Riyadh *'ulama* swear allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud
- 1903 Ibn Sa'ud adopts the title '*Sultan* of Najd'
- 1904 Abha in 'Asir falls under Ibn Sa'ud's authority
- 1906 Ibn Sa'ud conquers Qasim
- 1908 Ibn Sa'ud challenged by his cousins, the 'Ara'if  
The Ottomans appoint Husain ibn 'Ali *Sharif* of Mecca
- 1912 Ibn Sa'ud establishes the first *ikhwan* settlement,  
'Artawiyyah, for the Mutayr tribe
- 1913 Ibn Sa'ud establishes the *ikhwan* settlement al-Ghatghat for the  
'Utayba tribe  
Ibn Sa'ud occupies Hasa
- 1915 Britain acknowledges Ibn Sa'ud as ruler of Najd and Hasa
- 1916 *Sharif* Husain declares himself King of the Arabs
- 1924 Ta'if in Hejaz falls under Ibn Sa'ud's authority  
*Sharif* 'Ali replaces his father, *Sharif* Husain, in Hejaz
- 1925 Jeddah surrenders to Ibn Sa'ud
- 1926 Ibn Sa'ud declares himself 'King of Hejaz and *Sultan* of Najd'
- 1927 The *ikhwan* rebel against Ibn Sa'ud
- 1928 Ibn Sa'ud meets the Riyadh *'ulama* to solve the *ikhwan* crisis
- 1930 Ibn Sa'ud defeats the *ikhwan* rebels
- 1932 Ibn Sa'ud declares his realm the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

## Glossary

<i>Amir</i>	ruler, prince
<i>badu</i>	bedouins
<i>bay'a</i>	oath of allegiance
<i>bid'a</i>	innovation, heresy
<i>dira</i>	tribal territory
<i>fiqh</i>	Islamic jurisprudence
<i>hadar</i>	sedentary population
<i>Hajj</i>	pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>hujar</i>	village settlements
<i>'ibada</i>	Islamic rituals
<i>ikhwan</i> (sing. <i>khawi</i> )	Muslim brothers/companions, tribal force
<i>imam</i>	prayer leader/leader of Muslim community
<i>al-jazira al-'arabiyya</i>	the Arabian Peninsula
<i>jihad</i>	holy war
<i>majlis</i> (pl. <i>majalis</i> )	council
<i>mutawwa'a</i> (sing. <i>mutawwa'</i> )	Najdi religious specialist/volunteer
<i>qadi</i>	judge
<i>Shari'a</i>	Islamic legal code and rules
<i>shaykh</i>	tribal leader/religious scholar
<i>shura</i>	consultation
<i>tawhid</i>	doctrine of the oneness of God/unification
<i>'ulama</i> (sing. <i>'alim</i> )	religious scholars
<i>umma</i>	Muslim community
<i>Wali</i>	Ottoman governor
<i>zakat</i>	Islamic tax

## Contents

Certificate.....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Transliteration.....	v
Chronology.....	vi
Glossary.....	viii
Contents.....	ix
Abstract.....	xi
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1-15</b>
Introducing the Subject.....	1
Objectives and Utility of the Study.....	2
Review of the Sources.....	3
Feasibility and Output of the Research.....	8
Period of Study.....	8
Methods and Methodology.....	11
Concluding Remarks.....	12
<b>Chapter 2 The Arabian Peninsula.....</b>	<b>16-30</b>
Geo-Physical Aspects of the Area.....	16
Historical Upheavals of the Area over the Years.....	26
<b>Chapter 3 Sa'udi-Wahhabi Relations and Expansion of the Saudi power in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.....</b>	<b>31-70</b>
The origins of Al Saud (1744-1818).....	32
The <i>Sharifian</i> Emirate in Hejaz.....	34
Rashidi Emirate of Hail.....	38
Rise of Wahhabism and the Sa'udi-Wahhabi Alliance.....	43
Expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi Power in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries and its Repercussion.....	51
Influence in outside Arabia.....	70

<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Abdul Aziz Al-Saud's (Ibn Sa'ud) Policy of Restoration and Consolidation of the Saudi Power .....</b>	<b>71-126</b>
	Occupation of Riyadh and After .....	71
	Ibn Sa'ud's policy towards the British and the Ottomans.....	78
	Ibn Sa'ud and the <i>Mutawwa'a</i> of Najd.....	90
	Formation of <i>Ikhwan</i> and its Impact .....	99
	The Saudi Occupation of Hasa and After.....	104
	The 1914 Saudi-Ottoman Treaty.....	110
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Ibn Sa'ud, <i>Sharif</i> Husain and the British during the Inter-war Period .....</b>	<b>127-145</b>
	Ibn Sa'ud's Policy and Strategy towards <i>Sharif</i> Husain	
	British Dealings with Ibn Sa'ud and <i>Sharif</i> Husain .....	127
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>A Triangular Diplomacy between Ibn Sa'ud, <i>Sharif</i> Husain and Britain during the Post-War Era .....</b>	<b>146-180</b>
	The Capture of Hail 1921.....	149
	The occupation of Asir .....	152
	The occupation of Hejaz .....	154
	International Reaction: India and Bengal .....	169
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Fulfilment and Impact of Unification Policy.....</b>	<b>181-214</b>
	The Najdi - Kuwaiti Border Dispute .....	186
	The Najdi-Iraqi Dispute .....	187
	Subdual of opposition: The question of <i>Mutawwa'a</i> and the <i>Ikhwan</i> .....	197
	Collapse of the <i>Ikhwan</i> Rebellion.....	206
	Assesment of Ibn Sa'ud's Endeavours.....	209
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>215-229</b>
	<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>230-242</b>
	Appendix I .....	243
	Appendix II .....	244
	Appendix III .....	245
	Appendix IV.....	246
	Appendix V.....	247
	Appendix VI.....	248
	Appendix VII.....	249
	Appendix VIII.....	251
	Appendix IX.....	254
	Appendix X.....	256
	Appendix XI.....	258

## Abstract

This thesis is mainly concerned with the diplomatic policy and strategy pursued by Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdur Rahman al-Saud, better known in history and in the west as Ibn Sa'ud (hereafter Ibn Sa'ud) towards the unification of the major portion of the Arabian peninsula in the early phase of the twentieth century toppling all his rivals in the area including the Porte understudy. It is an attempt to reconstruct the Saudi history during the period in between 1902-1932 putting emphasis on the political transformation of the area over the years. Hence it deals with the endeavours pursued by Ibn Sa'ud to the cause of restoration and consolidation of the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula. The work is based on original and secondary sources available so far. Mainly the thesis analytically examines and incorporates the political development that took place in the area during the period mentioned above with a brief historical prelude relating to the study. It particularly puts emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between the Wahhabis and the Sa'udis and in between Ibn Sa'ud, the Ottomans, the British, *Sharif* Husain and other pro-Ottoman and anti-Ottoman forces in the area over the years under review. Since the thesis is an attempt to highlight the situation that helped to a great extent towards the restoration and consolidation of the Saudi power in the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Ibn Sa'ud, it unveils the weakness of the Ottoman and anti-Ottoman forces of the area. It also evaluates the stand of the British for avoiding entanglement in the central Arabian affairs which

paved the way for Ibn Sa'ud to establish himself firmly in the regional politics and control it to the cause of his own dynastic interests. It is of course evident that without British blessings it was not possible on his part to achieve such a great success. With the occupation of Riyadh in 1902 till the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 Ibn Sa'ud rose from an obscure tribal chief of a vanquished dynasty to become the well accepted and acknowledged leader to the people of the greater portion of the Arabian Peninsula. Pursuing the principles of Wahhabism, the Islamic reformist movement, Ibn Sa'ud was able to induce the tribal and sedentary people including the majority of the traditionally individualistic and warlike *sheikhs* of the area underreview. Hence the main theme of this research revolves in between 1902 to 1932 during which time Ibn Sa'ud pursuing calculative policy and strategy was able to eliminate his chief rivals in the area including the pro-Ottoman Rashidis of Hail and pro-British *Sharif* Husain in the course of unification of the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Introducing the Subject

Saudi unification of the Arabian Peninsula prelude to state formation is an important phenomenon in the history of the world in general and the Arab Middle East in particular. As *Amir* of Dariyah in Najd of the central Arabia, the Al Saud espousing the cause of Wahhabism to establish pristine Islam and uproot the un-Islamic accretions exerted their endeavours for the consolidation of power in the area since mid eighteenth century. It is true that theoretically and practically the regnal power had with the Ottoman Turks leaving their allies and tributary rulers to govern in and around the Arabian Peninsula. Hence it was not easy for the Sa'udis to achieve their desired goal without facing any trouble. Moreover the inter-tribal rivalries among the Sa'udis stood as a great hurdle on their way. Naturally the early and sporadic attempts at Saudi unification of the Arabian Peninsula bore no tangible result. Even they were dislodged of their position twice in the nineteenth century. But the tide turned in their favour with the beginning of the twentieth century especially with the rise of Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdur Rahman Al Saud better known as Ibn Sa'ud (thereafter Ibn Sa'ud). As a calculating politician and diplomat, Ibn Sa'ud left no stone unturned to regain the lost power and prestige of the Saudis. His experience of statecraft induced him to take positive step with much care in this regard. Diplomatic steps and well thought out policy from the very beginning of his emergence carried effective results for the dynasty, the Al Saud. With the reoccupation of Riyadh in the beginning of the twentieth century dislodging the pro-Ottoman governor, Ibn-Saud followed the slow but steady policy for further expansion and consolidation of the Saudi realm. At the early stage of his rising, he pursued the policy of not antagonizing the Porte. Rather he adopted the policy of amelioration and paid



homage to the Porte for the time being. Concurrently, he tried to enlist the support of the British, the then only European power in the Persian Gulf with the apprehension of future disagreement with the Ottomans. The aim of such diplomatic policy was to establish himself on firm footing in the unified Peninsula camouflaging all his rivals. After the First World War, he even toppled the pro-British *Sharif* Husain (Husain Ibn Ali) of Mecca, the leader of Arab nationalist movement. He surmounted all the obstacles which stood on his way of establishing the Saud's family to power in unifying the greater portion of the Arabian Peninsula in the first half of the twentieth century. Credit goes to Ibn Sa'ud for the implementation of this Herculean task. The diplomatic policy as well as political acumen of Ibn Sa'ud acted as instrumental for the foundation of this dynasty binding together the unsophisticated mass and tribal people of four corners of the Peninsula into a bond of Wahhabi idealism.

### **Objectives and Utility of the Study**

Ibn Sa'ud's policy and strategy, regarding the state formation and nation building in the early phase of the twentieth century in the area understudy is no doubt a time consuming and painstaking research work for which nobody so far known has taken venture to its study. As stated before it is a laudable enterprise of Ibn Sa'ud to establish a state unifying the greater portion of Arabian Peninsula into a common idealistic bond. Since the very inception of the twentieth century after the reoccupation of Riyadh in 1902 and specifically after First World War with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, he had to fight against his foes and rivals in the area understudy to bring a harmonious relation among the tribal people of the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand, he had to keep the British in good humour, the then only European power active in the Persian Gulf. The success of his continuous and concerted endeavours led to the fulfilment of the desired goal of unifying the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula resulting in the foundation of the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia in 1932. The history of the unification of the Arabian Peninsula in its entirety would remain incomplete without an in-depth study of long chained policy and strategy pursued by Ibn Sa'ud. It is true that a few works have been done and also literatures available on the evolution of the Saudi state, but no research oriented work has so far been done on the subject referred to above. In consideration of the points the present study is an attempt to make the gap fill in the connected history of Ibn Sa'ud's achievements.

### **Review of the Sources**

A brief survey of scholars' contribution on modern Saudi Arabia will clear the point that none of these works has dealt with the subject of this study in an expected form. Hence the study of proposed topic vertically and to a greater depth, as we believe, will fill in the gap of the connected annals of Saudi Arabia making some additions to the domain of global history. Related published books and papers are selected here for review so that the scholars and researchers may have formed their opinion regarding the importance of study of the subject.

It is to be noted that although many writers have devoted a section or a chapter or two to the rise of Ibn Sa'ud and his policy towards the Ottomans and the British vis-à-vis British relations with him and the *Sharifs*, only H.St.J.B. Philby has written extensively on the history of the Saudis, using local historical materials. It is indeed primarily through Philby's work that we know of Ibn Sa'ud, his life and times. As one of the outstanding Arab scholars of his day Philby has written a good many books most of which deal with the drama of the establishment of the first, second and third Saudi states. But the history of the unification of the Arabian Peninsula with special reference to the policy and strategy pursued by Ibn Sa'ud and British dealings with the Al Saud in the first quarter of the twentieth century received scant attention. For our purposes the most significant of Philby's books are the following.

*Saudi Arabia* (London: Benn, 1955) is a well produced and well documented book which covers the chronological history of the rise of the house of Saud, rise of Wahhabism, expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi supremacy in the area understudy and finally the emergence of the third Saudi State. Nevertheless some lapses, and some of his judgements are found overdrawn since the author served as an adviser to Ibn Sa'ud for several decades. Yet some important informations and documents may be helpful for the present research.

*Arabian Jubilee* (London: Robert Hale, 1951) is a well known book of the same author. It covers an excellent story of the life of Ibn Sa'ud and his dynasty. Though partially, the book may be helpful for the present study.

*Arabia* (New York: Scribner, 1930) is a well known literary work by the same author. It is no doubt a good survey of the history of Arabia. The knowledge of present study may be enriched through an in-depth study of this book.

*Forty Years of Wilderness* (London: Robert Hale, 1957) is another important book written by the same author. It gives valuable accounts relating to the period understudy.

*The Heart of Arabia 2 vols.* (London: GP. Putnam, 1923) is another book of the same author. It covers the geographical features of the Arabian Peninsula. So it has great value for geophysical aspects. Though not in conformity with the theme of the present study, it carries some value from academic consideration.

*Arabia of the Wabhhabis* (London: Constable, 1928) is a book of the same author. It mainly covers the tales of Ibn Sa'ud's conflicts with the Rashidis of Hail. It also covers the Sa'udi-Wahhabi activities in the area. It helps, to a great extent, to study the subject vertically and to a greater depth in spite of meagre amount of information.

*Around the Coasts of Arabia* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1930) is an important book written by Amin Rihani. The book contains the description of the Arab states in the Persian Gulf region. It may shade Lustre to the present research.

*Makers of Modern Arabia* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1928) is an excellent contribution of the same author. Though an older work, the book is still useful to the present study.

*The Arabian Peninsula* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954) is a book worth- mentioning. It is written by the renowned author Richard H. Sanger. The book is a good survey of the whole area. The book though does not cover the whole theme of the present study yet it relates some conceptual ideas of the topic under study. Hence it is presumed that this book will be of much help for the completion of this research.

*Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record, 114-1956*, Vol. II (Princeton: Van Nostrand and Co., 1956) is a complementary book compiled by J.C. Hurewitz. It has included in itself the pacts and treaties signed during the period mentioned above. It is a valuable document for the treaties to examine the nature of the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the nature of imperialism of the twentieth century. It seems to be an original piece of work which may add new elements to the subject of study.

*Saudi Arabia with an Account of the Development of its Natural Resources* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958 Third Edition) is a fundamental work of K.S. Twitchell. This book is divided into three main chapters namely characteristic features of Saudi Arabia, social and political development and the position of Saudi Arabia in world economy. These are all divided into sub-chapters. All these chapters put emphasis on the subsequent political and socio-economic development of Saudi Arabia after its establishment and also its importance in the Islamic World. It does not touch the diplomatic steps which were followed at the time of unifying the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula by Ibn Sa'ud. Yet it may also come to the use of this present research.

*Lord of Arabia Ibn Sa'ud An Intimate Study of a King* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1984 (First Published), written by Harold C. Armstrong is an early and useful biography of the founder. It is divided into fourteen main parts

along with eight chapters. It simply deals with the life of Ibn Sa'ud, his activities for founding the Kingdom, his relations with his rivals and finally showing his position in the outside Muslim World. It does not cover the nature of his policy and diplomacy which he had followed at the time of rising for unification of the greater portion of the Arabian Peninsula. But it has no doubt, great value for first hand and chronological information of the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

*Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1965) is another important book written by R. Bayly Winder. It appears to be the most valuable and comprehensive study of the problem. The book has been divided into IX chapters excluding appendix, bibliography and index. It also contains preface, list of illustrations and list of maps. This book finely deals with the early fragile attempt at Saudi expansion in the Arabian Peninsula. It is evident from the title that the book does not deal with the activities of the founder of modern Saudi Arabia. But it undoubtedly contains firsthand information regarding the rise and fall of the Sa'udis before the dramatic appearance of Ibn Sa'ud in the political arena of Arabian Peninsula. It is to some extent helpful for the present study.

*The Arabian Peninsula, Society and Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1972) is edited by Derek Hopwood. The book appears with the papers which were presented in a seminar on the Arabian Peninsula jointly organized by the Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and the Middle East Centre of St. Antony's Collage, Oxford in the academic year 1968-69. But the paper entitled 'Wahhabism and Saudi Arabia' of George Rentz, deals concisely with the origins of the first, second and third Saudi states in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But it fails to give any critical study regarding the diplomatic stands of the founder of the third Saudi state. In spite of this lack it is helpful to some extent for the study.

*The Desert King a Life of Ibn Sa'ud* (London: Collins St. James place, 1964) is an important book of David Howarth. This book is divided into four main parts with nineteenth sub-chapters excluding prologue, epilogue and index. It generally covers the whole events from the capture of Riyadh to the foundation of the kingdom and aftermath policy especially oil policy towards the Big Powers. But it lacks in expressing the diplomatic and statesmanlike manoeuvring of its founder to the cause of state formation. It simply narrates all his conquests which were made since the beginning of the twentieth century. Of course, the book has three sources: conversation, unpublished and published documents. Materials from all three sources being well-knit are put in the text. The book is a simple narration of facts and figures. Yet it is helpful for our present research.

*A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002) is a comprehensive work written by Midawi Al-Rasheed. The book is divided into seven chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. The contents also include list of illustrations, list of tables, chronology, and index. But only chapters I and II are relevant with our theme. It carries some sociological approach towards the foundation of the Saudi state. This book is an attempt to explore the continuities and discontinuities in Saudi social and political history. Since the relevant chapters are brief in nature, there is some information gap. Despite, it may come to the use for the present research.

*The Birth of Saudi Arabia Britain and the Rise of the House of Saud* (London: Frank Cass, 1976) is a unique book written by Gary Troeller. It deals with the drama of the immediate pre-oil era and sets the stage for the Saudi Arabia of today. The main focus of the book is Anglo-Saudi relations during the pre-war, inter-war and post-First World War era. It does not cover the policy and strategy pursued by Ibn Sa'ud towards the Ottomans and pro-Ottoman forces during the period under consideration. Nevertheless, it carries valuable information for the use of the research.

## **Feasibility and Output of the Research**

Feasibility of research depends greatly on the availability of adequate materials-primary and secondary. So far searched and traced there is no dearth of materials either archival or secondary to reconstruct the history of the subject under study. It is, therefore, presumed that in-depth study of the materials culled from various sources can be instrumental in achieving the goal for which this research is meant. Materials for this work could be searched in the various institutions of Bangladesh and the neighbouring country like the libraries of Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Jahangirnagar University, Islamic University, British and Saudi Embassy library, Bangladesh and National Library, Calcutta. In addition, the Seminar libraries of the Department of Islamic History and Culture of all public Universities of Bangladesh have also been consulted in this regard. The internet and website have been searched for the collection of materials.

## **Period of Study**

As regards the time-span of Saudi history it is to be noted that the history of Islam has been marked from the very start by waves of religious enthusiasm, and its impact is seen in all aspects of political, socio-economic and cultural aspects. Being pursued by one of the waves, the Wahhabi-Saudi forces, started its activities with fastnesses in central Arabia about 1744, changed the shape of Arabian history and half a century after their beginning, shook the slumbering Ottoman Empire. The history of the House of Saud is divided into three phases.

The first phase begins approximately with the year 1744 when Mohammad Ibn Sa'ud, a petty ruler of Dariyah in Najd, agreed to accept the religious revival of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab as his creed and to be its political arm. This agreement paved the way for its onward march. Thus the resulting movement spread gradually, as a result of both popular appeal and military force, through inner Arabia under Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud and his

successors, but was almost unnoticed by the world at large until the early years of the nineteenth century. In 1801 the Wahhabis sacked the Shiite holy city of Karbala in lower Iraq and in accordance with their doctrines overthrew the domes of various tombs including that of the Prophet's grandson, al-Husain. In 1806 they sacked Mecca and Medina. By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century this Saudi dynasty was at its height, and the doctrines of Wahhabism held sway in some form or other from the gates of Damascus and Baghdad to Yemen and the Hadramaut and from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. The new state was, however, too far extended to defend itself successfully against a determined foreign invader. Such an invader was provoked by the Saudi military success against the Ottoman Empire, and in particular by the conquest of Mecca and Medina, whose protection was an important justification for that Empire.

It is to be noted at this stage that the Ottoman claims to Arabia was accepted during the period when Selim I (r. 1512-1520) occupied Egypt from the hands of the Mamluks to which land Hejaz was normally and obviously attached in medieval times. On that occasion he assumed the important title of *Khadim al-Haramain al-Sharifain* (servant of the two holy cities). During the reign of his successor, Sulaiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), Ottoman power extended itself further in the Peninsula, different tribes and confederations offering their submission to the Ottoman Sultan. Sulaiman also received the homage of the chiefs of Qatif and Bahrain in 1534 and latter installed a governor in Hasa and for a short time occupied Masqat. During this year he also extended his control in Mesopotamia. But there existed loose Turkish control in eastern Arabia. But in central Arabia the Ottomans had never established their control. It was also during Sulaiman's reign that Yemen came under Ottoman control, and thereafter the western provinces continued at least nominally to belong to the Turks. The Ottomans did have nominal control over some of the Arab provinces. For the most part even these were in reality autonomous except where garrisons were stationed. Considering the overall prevailing situation, the Ottomans of the early



nineteenth century cared little about Wahhabi expansion in Najd and the east. But when the Wahhabis created havoc while occupying the holy cities and atrocities in Iraq, it demanded action from the Porte. But local expeditions from Baghdad and Mecca proved ineffective, and finally *Sultan* Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), whose own house was far from being orderly, urged Muhammad Ali, the newly rising viceroy of Egypt to act as his deputy and drive the invaders out of the holy cities. Not reluctant to extend his own influences and to test his new army Muhammad Ali responded to the call of the *Sultan* and without any hesitation undertook the task. By this time the death of *Amir* 'Abdul 'Aziz in 1814 proved a great blow to Sa'udi power. During a bitter seven-year struggle the viceroy's armies recaptured the holy places and eventually in 1818 under the command of his son, Ibrahim Pasha, forced Abdullah Ibn Sa'ud (r. 1814-1818), the fourth ruler in the line, to surrender his capital Dariyah. This surrender marked the first major set-back of a hitherto expanding Sa'udi-Wahhabi power, and the Ottoman – Egyptian victory gave rise to foreign occupation of Arabia lasting on and off for more than twenty years. He took the next ruling *Amir*, 'Abdullah as prisoner and sent him to Constantinople where he was beheaded by the order of the *Sultan*.

The second phase of the movement was marked by a steep political recession of the *Muwahhidun* with its wider diffusion of their doctrines outside of Arabia. The second phase of Saudi history dates from 1818 until the closing years of the nineteenth century. Essentially, it is a period in which independence, within more circumscribed boundaries, is regained, maintained, and then again lost – this time not to foreigners, but to the rival House of Rashid in Hail in 1885. It seemed for the moment that this great disaster had destroyed the Sa'udi power for ever. It may be viewed as a kind of holding action by the House of Saud in preparation for the prodigious events of the third phase. On the other hand, the undisputed control of the holy cities by the *Muwahhidun* from 1806 to 1812 brought the new reform movement to the visual notice of the whole Muslim world. Their Puritanism spurred the zeal and enthusiasm of a great many pilgrims and scholars and

encouraged, directly or indirectly, many religious leaders to start similar revivalist movements in different parts of the Muslim world. As a result, religious revivalism in different forms became the most conspicuous phenomenon of the nineteenth century Islam. The political recession of the *Muwahhidun* was thus greatly compensated by their ideological expansion.

The third and durable phase of Saudi history, which forms the main theme of the subject of present study, began with the turn of the twentieth century in 1902 with the daring capture of Riyadh by a young scion of the Saudi family, the latter king Ibn Sa'ud (1902-1953). He succeeded in rekindling the fire of Puritanism from its ashes. He started his activities of revival and rule by pursuing traditional manner of combining Saudi rule with staunch and even original support and use of the Wahhabi idea. Following a series of brilliant military expeditions, he captured Riyadh from the Rashidis and re-established the old dynasty there in 1902. By 1904, he became the undisputed master of the whole of Najd. He captured Hasa in 1913 from the hands of the Ottomans. In 1921, he captured Ha'il and put an end to the Rashidi dynasty. Finally, taking advantage of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire after the First World War, and the disturbed situation in the Middle East on the one hand, and an Anglo-Sa'udi non-aggression pact on the other, he drove away *Sharif* Husain from Hejaz and occupied Mecca, Medina and Jeddah in 1924-1925. Like his forefathers in 1800 he could have overrun the Fertile Crescent had his forces not encountered the modern armaments of a great power – this time the British, who after the First World War controlled the frontiers of Iraq and Trans Jordan. Ibn Sa'ud, however, became the ruler of that Arabian society which was generally appealing a traditional one.

### **Methods and Methodology**

From the culling of the materials till the completion of the work historical method fits well in its entirety. It includes the collection of materials leaving no gap in the connected aspects of the study, the scanning of the materials, their systematisation and synchronization so that clear vision becomes apparent to complete the dissertation. Moreover, this method also covers, while writing

the thesis, the arguments in favour of and against the problems raised, and then substantiation of cogent opinion with convincing evidences and arguments. Hypothesis and imaginative assumption have no role to play in this regard.

The research work if successfully completed, it is believed, would clarify all the hazy and unearthed points of Ibn Sa'ud's endeavours in connection with the unification of the Arabian Peninsula and the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, thus making addition to the vista of knowledge in the history of Saudi Arabia.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The subject of study as outlined above seems to be an appropriate topic of research for Ph.D degree. So far worked and searched it is plausible to say that the materials would not stand as hindrance on the way of completing the dissertation. This work on its completion will come to the benefit of researchers and scholars interested in the study of the Middle Eastern history especially of the Al Saud's (Saudis) rising and the foundation of Saudi Kingdom in Arabian Peninsula in the first half of the twentieth century.

The problem outlined above has been organized in several chapters. It is to be noted that the work is based on diverse sources – primary and secondary – consisting mainly of Arabic and English works. Works of modern scholars have freely been consulted in order to be acquainted with their ideas in the field of study. These have been thoroughly utilized as source materials to enrich the qualitative value of the thesis.

In the first chapter of the thesis a brief statement of the problem i.e., synopsis introducing the subject, objectives and utility of the study have been deeply outlined. Some books relating to the subject of study have also been properly reviewed. In addition, feasibility and output of the study, period of study, methods and methodology, brief survey of the chapters including concluding remarks have been discussed.

In the second chapter of the thesis a brief geo-physical aspects and historical survey of the Arabian Peninsula over the years before the rise of Wahhabism in the first half of the eighteenth century have been discussed. It is seen that the geo-physical features of the area played a very vital role in shaping the course of the history of the area during the period under study and after.

The third chapter of the thesis deals with the process and different aspects of *emirate* and state formation in the area including the emergence of Saudi state in the mid eighteenth century in Najd in central Arabia putting emphasis on the rise of Wahhabism, Sa'udi-Wahhabi alliance to the cause of purifying Islam from all sorts of un-Islamic practices to link it to the pristine form, role of Najdi *ulama* in this regard, expansion of the Sa'udi-Wahhabi domination with the rise and fall of the first and second Saudi states, the attitude of the Ottoman government and the Egyptians including the Anglo-Wahhabi relations and the policies pursued by the local forces - pro-Ottoman and anti Ottoman have been brought to light.

The fourth chapter of the thesis analyses the historical background concerning the rise and expansion of the Saudi power in the regions with the reoccupation of Riyadh in 1802 facing boldly and toppling all the rival forces before the First World War. It also includes the policy and strategy-pursued by Ibn Sa'ud towards further expansion of his authority, overcoming all internal conflict, his overtures to the British and the policy of submission to the Porte. This also includes the process of bringing under his control the unruly and warring tribal people through the formation of the *Ikhwan* in 1812 turning them to the land for agriculture and to the holy book of Quran for making them fit to the cause of Islam. This helped him in bringing the tribal people of diverse groups under his control. In addition, it covers the role of the *Mutawwa'a* of Najd and the overtures and its nature towards the British and the policy of submission to the Porte at the time of his rise for ensuring his safety against the Ottomans and the pro-Ottoman forces of the area. To draw the attention and sympathy of the British, the then only European Power active in the

Persian Gulf, his occupation of Hasa, an economic zone on the way to the Persian Gulf, and subsequent conclusion of the Saudi-Ottoman Treaty of 1914, have been the important phenomenon of this chapter.

The chapter fifth examines the reciprocal relationship between Ibn Sa'ud, *Sharif* Husain (the Arab nationalist leader) and the British. It touches on the various phases and aspects of development during the inter-war period relating specially to the British dealings with Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain. For the cause of survival and establishing himself on firm footing Ibn Sa'ud's dealings with the pro-Ottoman forces of the area under study, his agreement with the British are also dealt with keeping in view the strategic and diplomatic stand of Ibn Sa'ud.

In the sixth chapter a critical examination of the triangular diplomacy between Ibn Sa'ud, *Sharif* Husain and British after the First World War has been dealt with. It covers *Sharif* Husain's ambitious activities and its repercussion, nature of Ibn Sa'ud's patience and stand against the provocative activities of the former, the neutral policy pursued by Britain opening the path of allowing the doctrine - survival of the fittest, Ibn Sa'ud's policy of expansion and occupation elsewhere i.e., Hail and Asir before launching attack on the touchy and sensitive area of Hejaz, which holds the holy cities of Islam-Mecca and Medina so far under the control of *Sharif* Husain. Latter on, he launched his attack on the Jeddah which culminated in the occupation of Hejaz. Repercussions of outside Muslims have also been dealt with.

The chapter seventh deals with the question of subsidies offered by Britain, conclusion of different pacts and agreements between Ibn Sa'ud and Britain leading to the cause of his recognition and consolidation and the settlement of frontiers with the neighbouring states – Iraq, Kuwait and Trans Jordan. It also covers diplomatic and strategic policy of consolidation facing such forces those stood on his way specially the ambitious *Ikhwan* leaders

who demanded equal share in formulating state policies and opposed importing western ideas for the upliftment of the society and state. It will be seen that he was able to bring them under his control after quelling their rebellion by 1930.

The eighth is the concluding chapter of the thesis. It contains the gist of the thesis keeping in view the findings of the research in sorting out the problems faced by Ibn Sa'ud towards the unification of the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula and giving birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

## Chapter 2

# The Arabian Peninsula

### Geo-Physical Aspects of the Area

The Arabian Peninsula occupies a unique place in the history of the world for its amazing variegations.<sup>1</sup> This area, the birth country of Prophet Muhammad (sm.) is known as the *Jaziratul Arab* (Island of the Arabs) or the Arabian Peninsula comprising a vast rectangle of more than a million square miles in extent placed between Africa and main land-mass of Asia, and it is about one-fourth area of Europe and one-third the size of the United States of America. Geographically it falls in the west Asian countries. Being an isolated territory it was, at the advent of the Prophet, bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the east by the Persian Gulf, on the south by the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean and on the north by the Syrian Desert.<sup>2</sup> Hence the Arabian Peninsula is the strongly marked geographical unit, and the course of its history like that of other areas of the world, is in a large measure determined by its geography. Each of the territorial units into which it is divided has a distinct story of its own. It occupies a strategic position between the continents of Africa and Asia. To its north lie Syria and Trans Jordan, while in the east Iraq and Persia. On the north-western side lie Egypt and southern Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. In the south-western direction adjoining the Red Sea are Ethiopia and Somaliland. In the south, the Indian Ocean separates the

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Bayly Winder, *Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., first edition, 1937, reprinted 1972), pp. 8-9; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, p. 166 (hereafter EB<sub>2</sub>); Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London: The Anchor Press Ltd., first published 1950, second edition, 1954), p. 21; *The Middle East and North Africa 1976-77* (London: Europa Publications Ltd., Twenty third edition), p. 592 (Henceforth *Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*); *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, p. 534; Albert Haurani, *A History of the Arab peoples* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 89.

Arabian Peninsula from the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.<sup>3</sup> From the early Middle Ages Arabia and the neighbouring Persian, Ethiopian and Roman Empires were controlling a major part of the world trade. In the ancient East the commercial supremacy was in the hand of the Arabs. In comparison to other nations like the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, the Hittites, the Phoenicians, the Arabians stand today as they stood in the past in a most strategic geographical position astride one of the greatest arteries of world trade.<sup>4</sup>

Though surrounded by waters on three sides it had no navigable ports while sands in the other side created hindrance on the way to free exit. Now the Arabia of the then time has a multiple of states, the dominant being the Saudi Kingdom. The remarkable thing than the immensity of its area is the extreme diversity of its physical features.<sup>5</sup> The natural isolation of the Peninsula combined with its size helped to a great extent to protect it against invasion. Moreover, this vast expanse of the land is utterly uncultivable. It does not have a single river or a dependable rainy season around which any agriculture could be organized.<sup>6</sup> With the exception of fertile and rainy Yemen in the south-west, the Peninsula consists of plateaus, valleys and deserts devoid of vegetation and an atmosphere so inclement that no civilization could prosper therein.<sup>7</sup> The Arabian Peninsula allows only desert life; and desert life demands continuous movement, adoption of camel as means of transportation, and the pursuit of their pasture which is no sooner discovered than it is exhausted and another movement becomes imperative. These well

---

<sup>3</sup> Ziaul Haq "Inter-Regional and International Trade in Pre-Islamic Arabia", *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, Karachi, September 1968, No. 3, p. 207.

<sup>4</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> P. M. Holt, Ann. K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam, Volume-1A* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, reprint 1979), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Husain Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, translated from the 8<sup>th</sup> edition by Ismail Ragi A. al Faruqi (Delhi: New Crescent Publishing Co., 1976), p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*; W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East A Physical, Social and Regional Geography* (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., first published 1950, third edition, 1956), p. 435.



sought-after pastures grow around springs whose waters have collected from rainfall on the surrounding rocky terrain, allowing a scarce vegetation to grow in the immediate vicinity.<sup>8</sup> Goods out of necessity tended to flow from places where they were in abundance to those where they were scarce. Acute scarcity caused by drought and barrenness of the soil was frequent in the Peninsula.<sup>9</sup> Considering the geographical features of the area the Arabian Peninsula may be divided into as follows; (1) The Western Highlands, extending from the Gulf of Akaba to the hinterland of the Straits of Bab el Mandeb. (2) The Southern Coastlands, from Bab el Mandeb to Oman. (3) The Oman Region. (4) The Eastern Coastlands. (5) The Interior Deserts.<sup>10</sup>

The *Jaziratul Arab* had three distinct regions in consideration of her geo-physical features – the hilly region at the extreme north, the arid land in the centre beyond the Jabal Shammar and the fertile land to the south of *Rub al-Khali* (Empty Quarter) or Dahana, the largest and most forbidding of all hot deserts in the world, and the Bedouins call it simply *Ar Rahlah* (the sand).<sup>11</sup> The expanse of land in between the *Jabal Shammar* and *Rub al-Khali* has been designated in history as central Arabia. But in broader sense the country was divided into two parts viz., the Northern Arabia and the Southern Arabia. The *Rub al-Kali* or the waterless waste is considered to be the bordering point between these two divisions.<sup>12</sup>

Thus it is seen that from time immemorial Arabia was divided into North and South, not only by the trackless desert (*al-Rub' al-Khali*, the 'Solitary Quarter') which stretches across the Peninsula and forms a natural barrier to intercourse, but also by the opposition of two kindred races widely

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Ziaul Haq, *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, p. 208.

<sup>10</sup> W. B. Fisher, *op.cit.*, p. 433.

<sup>11</sup> *EB*<sub>2</sub>, p.168.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174; P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 4; *The Middle East A Political and Economic Survey* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1950), p. 81.

differing in their character and way of life.<sup>13</sup> Whilst the inhabitants of the northern province (the Hejaz and the great central highland of Najd) were rude nomads sheltering in 'houses of hair', and ever shifting to and fro in search of pasture for their camels, the people of Yemen or Arabia *Felix* are first mentioned in history as the inheritors of an ancient civilization and as the owners of fabulous wealth – spices, gold and precious stones – which ministered to the luxury of King Solomon.<sup>14</sup> The Bedouins of the North spoke Arabic – that is to say, the language of the Pre-Islamic poems and of the Quran – whereas the southerners used a dialect called by Muhammadans 'Himyarite' and a peculiar script of which the examples known to us have been discovered and deciphered in comparatively recent times.<sup>15</sup>

In Northern Arabia Hejaz (barrier) had three important towns of the name Mecca, Medina (Yathrib) and Taif.<sup>16</sup> The Northern Arabia was an arid land producing no food-grains and having no worth-mentioned water-courses. Medina and Taif had date-trees and orchards, and the people of these two cities lived on their produced dates and other fruits. Mecca had no such land, and they used to maintain their livelihood by tending the domestic animals and leading business transaction. Besides these populate cities the people of Northern Arabia in general and Hejaz in particular were nomads living in tents and moving from place to place in quest of food as the situation demanded. The people of this region had not the tradition of bowing down their heads to any foreign yoke.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the unrestricted life in the desert has also fostered in them spirit of freedom and individualism. So no dynastic rule could be found in Northern Arabia. The geo-physical aspects of the area debarred it from external attention and interest.

---

<sup>13</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of The Arabs* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953), p. xvii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Husain Haykal, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The Southern Arabia separated by *Rub al-Khali* was a populous region having moderate climate and cultivable land. Yemen, Hadramaut and Oman were considered the most important provinces of this region. This area had the mark of ancient civilizations. From the time of yore dynastic rules of various people groups continued to this region till the rise of Islam. The Sabaeans and the Himyarites are cases in point. Various kinds of food-grains, vegetables, spices and other crops were produced in Southern Arabia and the people used to live on these cultivated productions.<sup>18</sup> Both Northern and Southern Arabian people spoke Arabic language though the Northern Arabian people's language was sublime, chaste and admirable.<sup>19</sup> It is to be noted that the Himyarite Empire was overthrown by the Abyssinians in the sixth century after Christ, and by 600 South Arabic had become a dead language. From this time forward the dialect of the North established an almost universal supremacy and won for itself the title of 'Arabic' *par excellence*.<sup>20</sup>

Having such physical features it is natural that in a place like the Arabian Peninsula no people would seek to dwell and that it has a scarce population. It is equally natural that whoever settles in such a desert has done so for the sake of the refuge the desert provides and that he entertains no purpose beyond survival. The inhabitants of the oasis, on the other hand, may envision a different purpose. Except for Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula was literally unknown to the ancient world.<sup>21</sup>

It is also evident that the geographic position of the Peninsula saved it from depopulation. In those ancient times, men had not yet mastered navigation and had not yet learned to cross the sea with the confidence requisite for travel or commerce. Trade and commerce had to find another

---

<sup>18</sup> P. M. Holt, Ann. K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 5; Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> P. M. Holt, Ann. K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis, (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholson, *op.cit.*, p. xx.

<sup>21</sup> Haykal, *op.cit.*, p.9.

road less dangerous than the Sea. It is to be noted that the Arabian Peninsula was criss-crossed with caravan routes.<sup>22</sup> Of these, two were important. The first ran alongside the Persian Gulf, then alongside the Tigris and then crossed the Syrian deserts towards Palestine. It was properly called "the eastern route". The other route ran along the shore of the Red Sea and was properly called "the western route". On these two main routes, world trade ran between East and West carrying products and goods in both directions.<sup>23</sup> The Arabian Peninsula stood astride the two roads connecting East and West, whether by way of Egypt or by way of the Persian Gulf. Its inhabitants and masters, namely the Bedouins, naturally became princes of the desert routes. It was equally natural that the princes of the desert would plan the roads of caravans so as to guarantee the maximum degree of safety.<sup>24</sup> In the vast steppes of sandy desert which the caravans had to cross, nature had sparingly allotted to the travellers a few scattered places of rest where, under the shade of palm trees and beside cool fountains, the merchants and their beasts of burden might refresh. Such places of repose became entrepôts of commerce and, not infrequently, sites of temples and sanctuaries under the protection of which the merchants pursued their trade and to which the pilgrim is resorted.<sup>25</sup>

These two routes provided the desert with income and prosperity. The peoples of the west, however, lived in total ignorance of the routes which their own trade took. None of them, or of their eastern neighbours, generally ever penetrated the desert territory because of its unbearable situation.<sup>26</sup> A man accustomed to the luxuries of town living cannot be expected to bear the discomfort of these barren mountains separated from the Red Sea only by the narrow passages of Tihamah, and leading through naked rocks to the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10; Albert Hourani, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>24</sup> Haykal, *op.cit.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

apparently infinite expanse of most arid and desolate desert. The desert had never known any urban order prevailing or enjoyable in modern cities. Its people lived in the shadow of retributive justice. They repelled attack by attack, and they sought to prevent aggression for the fear of counter aggressions. The weak had no chance unless somebody took them under protection.<sup>27</sup> That is why the Arabian Peninsula remained an unknown continent throughout the world until the circumstances of history permitted its people, to tell about their country in subsequent time and give the world the information it lacked.<sup>28</sup>

The only exception to this universal ignorance of the Arabian Peninsula concerns Yemen and coast line of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. This exception is not due to merely to their near location to the sea and ocean but to their radical difference from the rest of the Arabian Peninsula. Rather than being a barren desert profitless to befriend, explore, or colonize, these lands were fertile and had well-defined seasons with a fair amount of rainfall. They had an established civilization with many urban centres and long-lasting temples.<sup>29</sup> With the passage of time, the political order of Yemen was disturbed because of the geographic circumstances of that country and the political wars of conquest. Indeed, the political system-whatever the term may mean or may have meant to the civilized peoples of old-was literally unknown in the areas of Tihamah, Hejaz, Najd, and other wide spaces constituting the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>30</sup> The sons of the desert were then, as most of them are today, nomads who had not taste for settled life and who know no kind of permanence other than perpetual movement in search of pasture and satisfaction of the wish of the moment. In the desert the basic

---

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

unit of life is not the state but the tribe.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, a tribe which is always on the move does not know of any universal law nor does it ever subject itself to any general political order. To the nomad, nothing is acceptable that falls short of total freedom whether to the group as a whole or to an absolute ruler, in exchange for peace, security, and the prosperity which order brings.<sup>32</sup> But the desert man who disdains the prosperity and security of settled life and derides the comforts of urban living cannot give any of his freedom for such "gains". Neither does he accept anything short of absolute equality with all the members of his tribe as well as between his tribe and other tribes. Naturally, he is moved like all other men by the will to survive and to defend himself, but such will must accord with the principles of honour and integrity demanded by the free life of the desert. Therefore, the desert people have never suffered with patience and injustice inflicted upon them but resisted it with all their strength.<sup>33</sup> If they cannot throw off the injustice imposed upon them, they give up the pasture and move out into the wide expanse place of the desert. Nothing is easier for them than recourse to the sword whenever a conflict seems insoluble under the conventional desert rules of honour, nobility, and integrity. It was these very conditions of desert living which led to the cultivation and growth of the virtues of hospitality, bravery, mutual assistance, neighbour protection, and magnanimity.<sup>34</sup> It is not by accident that these virtues are stronger and more popular in the desert but weaker and more scarce in the cities. For the above mentioned economic reasons the external powers like Byzantium or Persia entertained any ideas of conquering the Arabian Peninsula with the exception of Yemen. For they know that the people of the Peninsula would prefer emigration to the life of subjection and they would never yield to any established authority or order.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

These nomadic characteristics influenced in large measure a few small towns which grew up in the Peninsula along the caravan routes. To these centres the traders used to come in order to rest. In these centres some religious points were set up wherein they used to remember the almighty lord for bringing them safely through their travels and for safeguarding their goods while in transit. Such were Mecca, Taif, Yathrib, and others scattered between the mountains of the west coastland and the desert sands.<sup>36</sup> In their order and organization these towns followed the pattern and laws of the desert. Indeed, their being closer to the desert than they were to civilized life was reflected in the system of their tribes and clans, in their morals and customs, and in their strong resistance to any imposition upon their freedom, despite the fact that settled life had somewhat restricted their movements in comparison with their desert cousins.<sup>37</sup>

The vast majority of the inhabitants of the Peninsula are Arabs, descended from indigenous tribes. The Arabs belong to the great family of nations. The term 'Semites' includes the Babylonians and Assyrians, the Hebrews, the Phoenicians, the Aramaeans, the Abyssinians, the Sabaeans, and the Arabs, and although based on a classification that is not ethnologically precise – the Phoenicians and Sabaeans, for example, being reckoned in Genesis, chap. x, among the descendants of Ham – it was well chosen by Eich-horn (1827) to comprehend the closely allied peoples which have been named.<sup>38</sup> Whether the original home of the undivided Semitic race was some part of Asia (Arabia, Armenia, or the district of the Lower Euphrates), or whether, according to a view which has lately found favour, the Semites crossed into Asia from Africa, is still uncertain. Long before the epoch when they first appear in history they had branched off from the parent stock and formed separate nationalities.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Nicholson, *op.cit.*, p. xv.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

Racially the people of Arabia either of northern region or of southern region belonged to the Semitic stock whose ancestor was Biblical Sam, son of Hazrat Nuh, the prophet. According to their chronological descent and progeny, the Ad, Thamud and Jadis were considered the ancient races of Semitic stock those made their habitations in Southern Arabia. These aboriginal races were called *Balidah* or the ancient Arabs.<sup>40</sup> On the destruction of these races came the rise of Banu Qahtan whose home land was Yemen in Southern Arabia. In course of time the Qahtanites migrated to north Arabia habitating in Mecca and Medina. The Aus and Khazraj of Medina were the offshoots of this group of people. Even some of the Qahtanites with the permission of Hajirah settled at Mecca and made matrimonial relation with the descendants of Hajirah. These emigrants Qahtanites are known to history as the *al-Arab al-Aribah* or the pure Arabs.<sup>41</sup> Last in racial stratification came the progeny of Hazrat Ismail who was taken by his father Hazrat Ibrahim at his infancy with his mother Hajirah from Nineva in Babylon, and he made them habitated near the house of Kaba in the valley of Mecca. Adnan, the descendant of Hazrat Ismail was the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad (sm). This group of people, having the original homeland outside Arabia came to be known as *al-Arab al-Mustasribah* or the naturalized Arabs in history. On the eve of Islam the descendants of the race *al-Arab al-Aribah* and *al-Arab al-Mustariba* existed to show their mark in history of the time.<sup>42</sup>

It was, no doubt, the consciousness of this racial distinction that caused the view to prevail among Moslem genealogists that the Arabs followed two separate lines of descent from their common ancestor, Sam b. Nuh (Shem, the son of Noah).<sup>43</sup> As regards those of the North, their derivation from 'Adnan, a descendant of Isma'il (Ishmael) was universally recognised; those of the South were traced back to Qahtan, whom most genealogists

---

<sup>40</sup> *EB*<sub>2</sub>, p.163A.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*; Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 32

<sup>42</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup> Nicholson, *op.cit.*, p. xviii.



identified with Yoqtan (Joktan), the son of 'Abir (Eber).<sup>44</sup> Under the Yoqtanids, who are the elder line, we find, together with the Sabaeans and Himyarites, several large and powerful tribes – e.g., Tayyi, Kinda, and Tanukh – which had settled in North and Central Arabia long before Islam, and were in no respect distinguishable from the Bedouins of Ismaelite origin. As to 'Adnan, his exact genealogy is disputed, but all agree that he was of the posterity of Isma'il (Ismael), the son of Ibrahim (Abraham) by Hajar (Hagar).<sup>45</sup>

### **Historical Upheavals of the Area over the Years**

On the sketching of this backdrop let us see the successive and chronological development of the dynastic rules of various people groups over the Arab land till the foundation of Saudi suzerainty.

With the development of settlements in the south-east and north Arabia, there emerged a number of kingdoms which lasted with varying degrees of power until the sixth century. It is to be noted that the kingdoms maintained to a loose federation of city states than a centralized monarchy.<sup>46</sup> As an important trading station between the east and the west, southern Arabia was brought into early contact with the Persian and Roman Empires. Politically south Arabian principalities enjoyed independence though there was an abortive Roman expedition in 24 and two brief periods of Abyssinian rule in the fourth and sixth centuries<sup>47</sup>

By the end of the sixth century the centre of gravity had shifted to the west coast to the Hejaz cities of Taif, Mecca and Medina. While southern regions fell under spasmodic control of the Sasanid rulers of Persia, the Hejaz grew in independence and importance as a trade route between the Byzantine Empire, Egypt and the East. From the fifth century onwards Mecca

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Middle East and North Africa 1976-77*, p.593.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

was dominated by the tribe of Quraish.<sup>48</sup> Before the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the Arabian Peninsula was under diverse and various external influences. During the fifth and sixth centuries the northwest of Arabia was held by the Ghassanids, who claimed descent from one of the South Arabian tribes, and were under Byzantine influence; in the northeast the Lakhmids of the Kingdom of Hira were under the protection of the Sassanid Persians. In the south the remains of the Himyarite kingdom were controlled first by the Christian Abyssinians and latter by the Persians.<sup>49</sup>

The above briefing reveals the fact that the physical character of the Arabian Peninsula combined with religious and political barriers did not make it easy for the western explorers and scholars who ultimately found their way to its oases and deserts always to make correct assessments of this singular land and its people.<sup>50</sup> When the area came under Islam, it played a very vital role under the pious caliphs. During this period with a halo of sacredness around it, Hejaz a part of the Arabian Peninsula and as the cradle of Islamic centres holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of the Muslims all over the world. This manifestation is still in force and will remain the same in future. But it is to be noted here that when Islam had expanded northward in the seventh and eight centuries this region was isolated for nearly a thousand years.

During this period, the centre of the gravity of the Islamic World was shifted first to Damascus and then to Baghdad, and the very centre and birth place of Islam lost its predominant influence and former position.<sup>51</sup> The great flowering of Arab civilization in Syria and Iraq barely affected Arabia. The area was deprived of its previous political status under the successive khilafat of

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Area Handbook for Saudi Arabia* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 26.

<sup>50</sup> The account of European travel in Arabia was brought up to his time by D.G. Hogarth in *The Penetration of Arabia* (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1904) and carried on by R. H. Kiernan in *The Unveiling of Arabia* (London: George Harrap & Co., 1937).

<sup>51</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 738.

the Umayyads and the Abbasids. It rather accepted the rule of Damascus and Baghdad without any hesitation or protest. An expression of this unenthusiastic acceptance can be found in the ultimate drifting away of the Peninsula, early under the 'Abbasids, from the main stream of Islamic history and the founding of several heterodox dynasties on the south and the east.<sup>52</sup> Only for a brief period during the tenth century when the Carmathians, an Ismaili offshoot dominated the country, was it unified under a single government. Otherwise it was governed by a myriad of tribal leaders, and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina were ruled by local aristocrats, *Sharifs*<sup>53</sup> who for long period of time submitted to the authority of Muslim leaders in Syria, Iraq and Egypt. The *Sharifate* of Mecca was itself established in mid tenth century; but the unique status of the two holy cities – haramain of Mecca and Medina lost its predominant influence and former position and invariably involved the Hejaz in the ups and downs of the fortunes of Baghdad and Cairo.<sup>54</sup>

With the passage of time, the defeat of the Mamluks at the hands of *Sultan* Selim I (r.1512-1520) in 1517 brought Arabia, in theory, under the control of the Ottoman *Sultans* but, in practice, the traditional anarchy, broken only by the dynastic rule of hereditary *Amirs*, mostly prevailed.<sup>55</sup> In spite of their lofty pretensions, the *Sultans* exercised very little power in the affairs of Arabia.<sup>56</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that they maintained their loose control in the area for its defective communication and also for its far away geographical location from the Ottoman capital. As a result, the local chiefs seemingly worked out a balance of power, each generally respecting the

---

<sup>52</sup> M. A. Bari, "The Early Wahhabi s: Some Contemporary Assessment", *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 35.

<sup>53</sup> The descendents of the Prophet were called *Sharifs*. They held upper position in the society.

<sup>54</sup> M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, *op.cit.* p. 35; Philip K. Hitti, *op.cit.*, p. 738.

<sup>55</sup> M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, *op.cit.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

others' zone of influence; together they tolerated the Turkish claim of sovereignty as a not unmixed evil.<sup>57</sup> This unhealthy situation continued till the beginning of the eighteenth century. After the Ottoman conquest in 1517, the Persian Gulf and Red Sea coast regions, including the holy cities, became a part of the Ottoman Empire. Yemen and Oman were able to retain their separate identities, because they were isolated from the rest of the Peninsula by rings of mountains. It is to be noted that within the sandy and mountainous interior, there was no established order and as a result, tribal life continued much as it had for centuries before the rise of Islam.<sup>58</sup>

It is reckoned that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, one foreign power had a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula, the Ottoman Empire in the Hejaz. The Ottoman *Sultan* proudly styled himself the servant of the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, where his delegates held office. At the same time, the Ottoman government recognized as the local authority in Mecca and much of the Hejaz the Hashimite *Sharif*, a descendant of the Prophet, whose line had been established in Mecca since the tenth century.<sup>59</sup>

At that time, the Makramid dynasty of the Ismaili or extremist Shi'ite persuasion was strong in the remarkable valley of Najran near the northern border of the Yemen.<sup>60</sup> In the Yemen itself the Ottomans, who had first occupied the country in the sixteenth century, were gone, and the *Imam* of the Zaidi or moderate Shi'ite persuasion held sway in the highlands.<sup>61</sup> Oman was the home of the Ibadis, the spiritual heirs of the first Islamic sect, the Khawarij, but their line of Ha'rubi *imams* was declining and soon to disappear. The chief

---

<sup>57</sup> See C. Niebuhr, *Description de l'Arabie* (Amsterdam: 1774), pp. 177-178, 302-303 & 3283-31, cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Don Peretz, *The Middle East Today* (Praeger: Praeger Special Studies, Praeger Scientific, 1983), p. 463.

<sup>59</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *The Arabian Peninsula Society and Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), p. 54.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

of the tribe of Banu Khalid dominated the oases west of Qatar on the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, whence his tribe had driven out the Ottomans.<sup>62</sup>

Not only was Arabia rent by sectarianism, but an old and deep division also set the nomads against the town dwellers. Scores of Bedouin tribes and scores of little towns all sought to maintain themselves as independent, and they were often at war with each other. Islam in Arabia drifted far away from the Islam preached by the Prophet. Reverence for sacred stones and trees and the cult of saints, both living and dead caught the imagination of the people due to their ignorance of the dictates of pristine Islam. Hence the prevalent anti-Islamic forces and heretic practices ought to be stopped.<sup>63</sup> Thus the situation needed reformation. The demand of reformation opened the door for modern history of the Arabian Peninsula.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

### Chapter 3

## Sa'udi-Wahhabi Relations and Expansion of the Saudi power in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The unification and consolidation of the Arabian Peninsula by Ibn Sa'ud within a period of more than twenty years in the early phase of the twentieth century appeared as an outstanding example of nation building in the history of the Arab Middle East.<sup>1</sup> This unification owes its credibility to the eighteenth century reform movement popularly known as Wahhabism which demanded purification of Islam from all un-Islamic practices prevalent all over Arabia. Toynbee and other historians consider the Wahhabi movement as the first reformist movement of modern Islam.<sup>2</sup> Before dealing with policy and strategy pursued by Ibn Sa'ud for his early exploits and contacts with the British and the Ottomans including other rival forces i.e., the *Sharifian emirate* in the Hejaz and the *Rashidi emirate* of Hail of the Arabian Peninsula it is cogent to throw light on the rise of Wahhabism, the Sa'udi-Wahhabi alliance and its repercussion in the Peninsula including those aspects of nineteenth century Anglo-Ottoman, Anglo-Wahhabi and Saudi-Ottoman relations and Saudi history as a background to dive into the main theme of the problem of the thesis. Before entering into the depth of the problem it is fair to deal with the origin of the house of Saud in Najd, the *Sharifian emirate* in the Hejaz and the *Rashidi emirate* in Hail.

It is to be noted that a good number of factors were responsible for *emirate* formation in Arabia. These were - the internal dynamics of population movement and sedentarisation, military force and conquest, economic and

---

<sup>1</sup> Fouad Al Farsy, *Saudi Arabia: A Case Study in Development* (London: Stacey International, first published, 1978, 2nd edition, 1980), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> H. B. Sharabi, *Governments and Politics of the Middle East in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, INC., 1962), p. 226.

mercantile interest and religious motivation.<sup>3</sup> All these factors played a very vital role to the interaction between the sedentary and nomadic communities of Arabia with the ultimate result of political, social and economic symbiosis between the two groups at the heart of political centralisation. Some of the oases and towns of Arabia became important centres integrating the pastoral economy of the Bedouins with the agricultural and merchandise activities of the sedentary population.<sup>4</sup> The strong leadership of the *emirates* with their enough surpluses sufficed to maintain a balance between the interests of the Bedouins and those of the sedentary communities. This balance was crucial for the durability of these *emirates*. With the passage of time, external factors, diminishing resources and rivalry among members of the ruling groups undermined the stability of the *emirates* and led to total disintegration at critical historical moments. Keeping this reality in consideration, let us examine the origin and decline of some of the *emirates* in the area under study.<sup>5</sup>

### **The origins of Al Saud (1744-1818)**

Geographically the remote plateau of Najd belongs to the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. The region lay outside the sphere of effective Ottoman power. Sandy deserts largely isolated the hill-country of Najd from neighbouring areas of settlement, but its remoteness was mitigated by two major routes which converged upon it. One of these ran south-east wards from Syria, by Wadi Sirhan, to Jabal Shammar, the northern outpost of Najd, the other a Pilgrimage-route, lay across the Peninsula, from the coastlands of the Persian Gulf to the Hejaz.<sup>6</sup> Before the foundation of the Saudi *emirate*, it had small settlements. A good number of them were agricultural communities

---

<sup>3</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> P. M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent 1516-1922 A Political History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966, second impression, 1967), p. 149.

having sufficient water for irrigation, that produced a meagre surplus of agricultural commodities. The passage of pilgrims and merchants through the country stimulated trade and enhanced the economy. Politically, the region was divided among powerful local families, who were virtually sovereigns of greater and smaller *emirates*.<sup>7</sup> The outsiders especially both the *Sharifs* of Mecca and the Banu Khalid rulers of Hasa exerted their energy to extend their control over Najd with the hope of extracting meagre surplus produced by its agricultural communities.<sup>8</sup> However, neither the Hejazi *Sharifs* nor the Banu Khalid chiefs were able to integrate Najd into their sphere of influence. Najd itself was not attractive region as it produced little surplus in dates and livestock. Its own population had always looked towards the coast of Hasa and beyond to survive. Its small number of merchants travelled (for the same) as far as Basra and India, to supplement their limited resources.

In the eighteenth century Dariyah, being a small settlement in Najd, did have a mixed population of farmers, merchants, artisans, minor *ulama* and slaves. Besides the settled townsmen and villagers, Najd also had its nomad tribes, a more primitive element in the population. It has been mentioned in a source that the settlement did not have more than seventy households.<sup>9</sup> Since 1727, a member of the Al Saud clan, Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud, had been the local ruler. The descendant of Al Saud is often attributed to the Masalikh of Banu Wail, a tribal section of the North Arabian camel-herding 'Aniza tribe.<sup>10</sup>

Most probably the Al Sauds were a sedentary group that founded the settlement of Dariyah. The settlement accepted the authority of the Saudi *Amir* without any hesitation. This may be attributed to a number of reasons;

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> H. Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf 1745-1900* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> Abu Hakima, A. (ed.), *Lam' al-Shihab fi sirat al-Shaikh Muhammad Ibn 'abd al Wahhab* [The Brilliance of the Meteor in the Life of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab] (Beirut: 1967), cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta: Government Print House, 1908), p. 1053.



(a) his residence in the oasis and his ownership of cultivated land and wells around the settlement; (b) the Al Sauds were originally of the landholding merchant class of Najd. Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765) was a landowner and a broker, financing the journeys of long-distance merchants.<sup>11</sup> (c) political skills of mediation and the ability to defend the settlement against raids by other oasis *Amirs* and tribal confederations.

The members of the settlement used to pay tribute to the *Amir*. In return the *Amir* was responsible for the defence of the inhabitants. The inhabitants, of course, rendered military service to the *Amir*. Collection of this tribute strengthened the *Amir* and his lineage from that of other residents in the settlement. In the 1740s, as a traditional form of rule, the *Amir* of Dariyah enjoyed limited authority beyond his own settlement. With the exception of his right to collect tribute, the executive authority of an oasis ruler was fairly weak.<sup>12</sup> Lacking an identifiable tribal origin and having no great surplus of wealth along with keeping the commercial interests at the underdeveloped stage, the Saudi leadership was not in a stage to expand their authority over other settlements or control a large network of caravan routes. So the Saudi authority remained confined to the small settlement of Dariyah. But the fortune of the Al Sauds began to change with their adoption of the Wahhabi movement having been associated with the reformer Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-92).

### **The *Sharifian* Emirate in Hejaz**

Hejaz belongs to the Arabian Peninsula having the testimony of the homeland of the most sacred sites of Islam. In this area, the Najdi pattern of *emirate* came into being.<sup>13</sup> But the character and formation of the population of Hejaz

---

<sup>11</sup> H. Fattah, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Juhany, M. 'The History of Najd prior to the Wahhabi s: A Study of Social, Political, Economic and Religious Conditions in Najd during Three Centuries preceding the Wahhabi Reform Movement', Ph.D thesis, University of Washington, 1983, p. 179. cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p 30.

<sup>13</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p 30.

had always been distinct from that of Najd. Hejazi society included tribal confederations claiming unity through essentially eponymous genealogical links. Harb, Utayba, Billi, Hutaym, Amarat Shararat, Banu Atiya and Huwaytat were among the best known Hejazi tribal groups.<sup>14</sup> The Hejazi confederations differed from those in Najd as they had to overarching tribal leadership capable of claiming authority over the whole confederation. It seems that the large Hejazi tribal groups were fragmented into small units under the leadership of a prominent *Shaikh*, who could not claim authority beyond his section. This political fragmentation could be interpreted as a result both of geography and of the presence of an overarching leadership in the person of the *Sharif* of Mecca. Yet Hejazi tribes were territorial groups, similar to those in Najd. Harb, for example, controlled the area between Mecca and Jeddah: Utayba dominated eastern Hejaz, with one section predominate in Taif and its environs.<sup>15</sup>

Tribal confederations coexisted with other groups claiming holy descent from Quraysh and the Prophet Muhammad through his grandsons, Hasan and Husain, known as the *Ashraf*. Descendants of the *Ashraf* lived in Mecca and Medina, but were also scattered among the Hejazi nomadic population, as well of course as in other parts of the Arab and Islamic world. This happened as a result of the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate.<sup>16</sup> The holy descent of the *Sharifs* predisposed them to play a prominent leading role in the *emirates* of Mecca and Medina from the eighth and ninth centuries, to the exclusion of other 'non-holy' descent groups. They also played a prominent role as religious specialists, for example judges and preachers in the holy cities and as heads of Sufi orders.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> D. G. Hogarth, 'Wahhabi sm and British Interests', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. IV, 1925, p. 17; *Admiralty Handbook of Arabia*, (London: HMSO Naval Intelligence Division Agate, 1997), p.100 ('L' Arabie Saoudite: quel etat et quel(s) droit(s)', in A. Mahiou (ed.), *L'Etat et droit dans le monde arabe*, Paris: CNRS, 1916).

<sup>15</sup> D. G. Hogarth, *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. IV, 1925, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition to Hejazi tribal confederations and *Sharifian* clans, the population of the Hejaz included Muslims whose ancestors or themselves had come from Turkey, Africa, India and Asia and who now resided in the major towns and ports. This diversity was extended to the religious domain as the various Islamic legal schools were recognised by the Ottomans.<sup>18</sup> Sufi circles flourished in Mecca and Medina. *Sharif* Husain (1908-24) and his sons were Shafi Sunnis. Equally important was the presence of a Shi'a community, especially in Medina and among some *Sharifian* clans. According to Ende:

For many Shiite authors, the *Sharifs* of Mecca and Medina themselves were actually Shiites, who for obvious reasons, posed as Sunnites - an attitude considered lawful, as *taqiya*, under Shiite Law. Some sections of the Harb (the Bani Ali) and Juhaina were also Shi'a, settled around the date palms of Medina, where another Shia group, the Nakhawla seem to have been living since the days of the early Islamic empire.<sup>19</sup>

This Hejazi diversity was reflected in a sharper distinction between the urban and rural areas. In Hejaz, the urban-rural division was more pronounced than in Najd. In the cosmopolitan urban centres of Jeddah and Mecca were not comparable in size, specialization and sophistication to any settlement in Najd or elsewhere in Arabia. These were urban centres where travellers did not fail to draw the boundaries between the desert and the sown. In this diverse region, the *Sharifian emirate* maintained a rather prolonged presence, predating that of both the Sa'udis and Rashidis in central Arabia. *Sharifian* authority had fluctuated since the sixteenth century depending on developments outside the region, mainly Ottoman policies towards this vital area. While the central Arabian *emirates* faced the tension between their power and that of the tribal confederations, a further restraining agent burdened the *Sharifian emirate*, which was capable of both empowering and disempowering its leadership.<sup>20</sup> In Hejaz, the *Amirs* of Mecca were caught between the tribal confederations and the Ottoman *Sultan* and his

---

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Ende, W., "The Nakhawila: A Shi'ite Community in Medina, Past and Present", *Die Welt des Islam*, 37/3: 1997, pp. 264-286, cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 31.

representatives. A system of dual authority was established, the *Sultan's* urban-based representatives dealt with commercial, political and foreign relations while the *Sharif* dealt with the affairs of the Holy cities and the tribal confederations, a dualism which was occasionally violated. The two authorities vied with each other without being able to subdue the other.<sup>21</sup>

This dual authority distinguished Hejaz sharply from Najd. The Ottomans were the official guardians of the holy places, but they could not exercise that privilege without the *Amir* of Hejaz. This dualism provided a perilous equilibrium.<sup>22</sup> Government in Hejaz differed from that in Najd, the latter being outside the direct control of the Ottoman Empire, although the Ottomans regularly interfered in its affairs. The climax of this sort of intervention reached its climax with the invasion of Muhammad Ali early in the nineteenth century, which was an attempt both to prevent further Sa'udi-Wahhabi expansion and to impose Ottoman rule.<sup>23</sup>

In Hejaz, the Ottoman *Sultan* retained the power to appoint the *Amir*, whose garrison was funded from the Ottoman treasury. The Ottomans also paid the Hejazi *ulama* their salaries.<sup>24</sup> The Ottomans used to maintain peace and control in the cities with the presence of the military and administrative machinery. While the duty to control the territories and population in the regions between the major urban centres was delegated to the *Sharif*. Prominent *Sharifs* were rewarded for performing extraordinary jobs for restraining the tribal confederations, especially during the pilgrimage season. In return for guaranteeing the security of the pilgrimage caravan from Damascus, the *Amir* of Mecca received regular subsidies and his urban constituency was exempt from Ottoman taxes. Hejaz as a whole was exempt

---

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> F. Peters, *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 335.

<sup>23</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

from military service in deference to its special and elevated status among the various Ottoman provinces. Its ports and trade were, however, subject to taxation.<sup>25</sup>

The *Sharif* of Mecca continued to execute Ottoman policies not only in Hejaz but also in the interior of Arabia. They also stood against the Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirates* in favour of the Ottomans from time to time. The *Sharifs* relied on their prestigious Hashimite descent to extract recognition of their authority both from city dwellers and tribal confederations; in addition their religious authority was sanctioned and backed by the Ottomans. This authority was not sufficient to guarantee obedience. Sometimes, the *Sharifs* had to follow other immoral ways to control and pacify the tribal confederations.<sup>26</sup> Disputes over the question of succession took place and this weakened the *Sharifian* polity. The Ottomans used to interfere regularly the internal rivalries of the *Sharifs*. The Ottomans were directly involved in setting one clan against the other and this prolonged the rivalries of the *Sharifs*.<sup>27</sup>

### **Rashidi Emirate of Hail**

As regards the Rashidi *emirate* of Hail it is to be noted that the great Bedouin Shammar tribe of north-central Arabia was united under the leadership of the Rashid family in 1835, when the dynasty of the Rashidi *Amirs* of Hail was established, in return for notable services rendered, by the grandfather of the subsequent founder of Saudi Arabia. There were 12 *Amirs*, beginning with Abdullah - all descended from Ali al-Rashid. Each one in turn was known as "Ibn Rashid."<sup>28</sup> Their rule (1835-1921) was marked by family feuds, revolutions, and assassinations. The first three *Amirs* of Ha'il were vassals of

---

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. II, p. 1021 (hereafter *EB*<sub>2</sub>).

their benefactors, the Wahhabi-Saudi rulers of Najd. But the fourth and greatest *Amir*, Mohammed ibn Abdullah al-Rashid (1869-97), conquered the Sa'udis (then weakened by family feuds) and eventually drove them from their capital, Riyadh (1891). His realm included the Jawf-Sakaka oases and Wadi Sirhan, with their strategic caravan routes, as well as Jabal Shammar and the oasis-dotted Al Qasim. *Amir* Mohammed acknowledged Turkish suzerainty.<sup>29</sup>

The Rashidi *emirate* of Hail (1836-1921) was considered as a regional power that emerged to the north of Riyadh. It rose to eminence during the second half of the nineteenth century. It coexisted with the second Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* (1834-1891) when its hegemony in central Arabia was gradually declining. The Rashidis derived its legitimacy and power from one of Arabia's largest tribal confederations, the Shammar.<sup>30</sup> The Rashidis were the Shammar tribal nobility, ruling as *Amirs* over the mixed population of Hail, which included Shammar tribesmen, Banu Tamim sedentary farmers and merchants, and non-tribal groups of craftsmen, artisans and slaves. Shammar nomads frequented Hail for trade and regarded the oasis as falling within their tribal territory. The presence of the Rashidis in the oasis was an extension of the tribe's claim over it.<sup>31</sup> Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Hail had served as a base from which the Rashidis had expanded into north Arabia and southern Najd. While the Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* expanded under the banner of religious legitimisation, the Rashidis spread their influence over other oases and tribal confederations with the support of their own tribe.<sup>32</sup>

The conquests of the Rashidi *emirate* were led by the concept of spreading Shammar hegemony over others. Military force for this expansion was supplied by the Shammar tribesmen. In the process of expansion or conquest, the weaker tribal confederations were subjugated and brought them

---

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

as vassals. In the case of the Rashidis, the *emirate* and confederation were initially one polity. The Rashidis did not have to convert the Shammar to their cause, but acted in conjunction with them to spread the tribe's hegemony. The Rashidi *Amirs* were themselves drawn from the tribe and were tied into it through marital alliances. In contrast, the Saudi leadership in Riyadh lacked tribal depth, which obliged it to depend on the alliance with Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and his followers. The Shammar acted for the Rashidi leadership without any hesitation.<sup>33</sup> This may be attributed to tribal solidarity, defeat and forced evacuation of the Shammar section to Mesopotamia by the Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* at the end of the eighteenth century, seeking the Rashidi leadership that would guarantee their security and autonomy vis-a-vis both local and foreign rivals. It is to be noted that the Shammar were attacked by the Ottoman-Egyptian forces in 1818 who mistakenly considered Shammar territory as a part of the Saudi realm. In backing the Rashidis the Shammar were able to strengthen their defence against any sort of attack or encroachments on their territory. However, with firm footing, the Rashidis were able to extend their domain from the borders of Aleppo and Damascus to Basra, Oman and Asir.<sup>34</sup> The Qasim region and the Sa'udi-Wahhabi capital Riyadh, were incorporated into this domain. Representatives and governors were appointed in the conquered areas.

For pursuing the policy of expansion, the Rashidis had to rely on four groups: a) sedentary and nomadic Shammar tribal force, b) other non-tribal confederations who were motivated for booty, c) the *Amir's* slaves and body-guard who formed the solid core of the military force, and d) the conscription from the towns and oases of Jabal Shammar, who acted as a reliable military force.<sup>35</sup> In addition, the subsidy system was in operation. The *Amirs* of Hail collected tribute from weakened groups to be redistributed among others, as

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> A.Musil, *Northern Nejd* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1928), p. 248.

<sup>35</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

regards for loyalty and participation in the leadership's military campaigns. The subsidy system thus provided for loyalty in return for military gains.<sup>36</sup>

Subsidies from the centre to the periphery created economic integration between the Hail leadership and its constituency. The Rashidi *Amir* could extend his authority over the tribal confederations in the desert and it created secure conditions for travel in between Arabia's trading markets, thus benefiting the merchants and artisans of the sedentary communities. The loyalty of the oasis population was highly dependent on this factor. The Hail population withdrew its support only when the Rashidi leadership of the first two decades of the twentieth century became incapable of extending protection outside the walls of the oasis.<sup>37</sup>

After 1897 the Rashidi dynasty declined, and Ibn Sa'ud was able to reconquer Riyadh in 1902. The latter Rashidis received Turkish aid against the Sa'udis before and during First World War. In the final stages of the Rashidi-Saudi duel, Nuri al-Sha'lan of the Ruwala Bedouin helped Ibn Sa'ud by fighting the Rashidis in the Syrian Desert in the Jawf-Sakaka and Wadi Sirhan areas.<sup>38</sup>

After establishing themselves as the rulers of Najd towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Rashidis lost their control over Riyadh when Ibn Sa'ud, the son of the exiled Saudi ruler in Kuwait, returned to his native town in 1902. Ibn Sa'ud killed the Rashidi governor of Riyadh and declared himself the new ruler. Between 1902 and 1921 the Rashidis and Sa'udis competed for control of central Arabia. This competition weakened the Rashidi *emirate* and led to its dismemberment.<sup>39</sup> Mohammed Ibn Talal, last of the Rashidi *Amirs*, surrendered in November 1921. He ended his days in Riyadh (1954), having

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *EB*<sub>2</sub>, p. 1021.

<sup>39</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 29.



been a guest and having become the father-in-law of his conqueror Ibn Sa'ud. His capitulation resulted in the assimilation of the Rashidis of Jabal Shammar into Saudi Arabia.<sup>40</sup>

The decline of the Rashidi *emirate* may be attributed to several factors. Rivalry between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in Arabia upset the balance between local Arabian power centres. The Rashidi *Amirs* continued to be allied with the Ottomans even after several tribal confederations and local *Amirs* sided with Britain. After the Ottoman defeat in the First World War, the local Rashidi allies felt the rising pressure of the Saudis, who had secured a firm alliance with Britain.<sup>41</sup> This factor alone could not fully explain the end of Rashidi power in 1921. The internal rivalry between the various Rashidi branches caused the instability of Rashidi leadership. It was not possible on the part of the weakened leadership to maintain the loyalty of the various tribal confederations, who shifted their allegiance to a more powerful centre - that of the Saudis. The *emirate* lost control over its tribal periphery and being weakened failed to reclaim them.<sup>42</sup>

Over the question of leadership both the Saudi and *Sharifian emirates* were different from that of the Rashidis. The Ashraf ruled on the basis of their specific holy descent, considered in Hejaz to be above other tribal groups, while the Sa'udis had no clear association with the tribal groups of Najd. Both the *Ashraf* and the Sa'udis were able to play the role of mediators between various sections of society (nomads and sedentary, tribal and non-tribal) a role that the Rashidis could not accomplish given their association with the Shammar tribal confederation. Rashidi rule rested primarily on the hegemony of a single tribe. The expansion of this *emirate* was perceived in Arabia as an expansion of Shammar domination over other tribal groups and sedentary communities. In contrast, the expansion of the Saudi and *Sharifian*

---

<sup>40</sup> *EB*<sub>2</sub>, p. 1021.

<sup>41</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

*emirates* could not be associated with the domination of a single tribal confederation. In the case of the Saudis, expansion took place under the pretext of a religious mission, produced and supported by the *hadar* communities of southern Najd.

### **Rise of Wahhabism and the Sa'udi-Wahhabi Alliance**

It is noted that the modern history of the Arabian Peninsula began in the mid eighteenth century with the rise of Wahhabism or Unitarian generally referred to as Arabian reformation and the subsequent alliance between Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1787)<sup>43</sup> and Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765).<sup>44</sup> The former was the founder of the Wahhabi or Unitarian movement; the latter was the son of the founder of the Saudi dynasty and the ruler of a small district surrounding the town of Dari'ya in central Arabia. The movement originated on the Arab fringe of the Ottoman Empire to threaten the maintenance of the *Sultan's* rule in the Fertile Crescent, and to play an important part in the development of modern Islamic thought. Like Islam itself, the Wahhabi movement originated and developed among the Arab townsmen rather than the nomads.<sup>45</sup>

While discussing the character of the Wahhabi movement, Sulaiman b. Sahim, certainly the first Arab scholar and a native of Riyadh observed from close quarters the beginning of the movement stated that the movement was to change the face of the entire Peninsula. Born in 1703 at al Uyaina, a small desert settlement in central Najd to a sedentary family namely Banu Tamim of

---

<sup>43</sup> Although some authors differ on these dates and accept 1792 as the year of his death, the majority accept 1703 to 1787 as 'Abdul Wahhab's lifetime. For a comprehensive treatment of 'Abd al-Wahhab cf., G.S. Rentz, *'Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703/4-1792) and the Beginnings of the Unitarian Empire in Arabia'* (unpublished Ph.D dissertation at the University of California, 1948).

<sup>44</sup> 'Muhammad-bin-Sa'ud belonged to a family known as the Al Maqram, of the Mishalikh section of the Wald 'Ali division of the Anaizah tribe; and from the name of his father was derived the alternate family name of Al Sa'ud, which has been transmitted to his descendants'.

<sup>45</sup> P. M. Holt, *op.cit.*, p. 149.

well known Hanbali jurists, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, the founder of the Unitarian or Muwahhidun movement got his early education at home.<sup>46</sup> Receiving from his father instructions in religious subjects and the Arabic language, the youth memorized the Quran before he was ten and not long after he made his first pilgrimage to Mecca and first visit to Medina.<sup>47</sup> Being educated first in Najd, he spent his time in Mecca and Medina to further his studies. Having completed his formal education at Medina in or about 1724 under Sulayman al-Kurdi and Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi, he travelled extensively for about 12 years in Arabia and Persia, in the course of which he continued his higher studies in the holy cities and at Basra, Baghdad, Hamadan and Damascus.<sup>48</sup> As a youth he thus followed the usual practice of Muslim students in travelling widely to study at different *madrastas*. He revisited Hejaz in or about 1735 and stayed at Mecca for a considerable time before returning to Najd.<sup>49</sup> *Shaikh* Muhammad b. Abdul Wahhab was, early in the youth, imbued with a crusading zeal to reform the degenerate Arabian society and to purify it from the idolatrous beliefs and superstitious practices. He was a Hanbali, a follower of the most rigorous of the four Sunni Muslim law schools. In addition, he had been deeply influenced by the teaching of Taqi al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328), the great theologian and jurist of the fourteenth century.<sup>50</sup> A Man of erudition having firm determination and

---

<sup>46</sup> M. A. Bari, "The Early Wahhabi s: Some contemporary Assessments", *Rajshahi University Studies*. Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 39.

<sup>47</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *The Arabian Peninsula Society and Politics* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972), p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, "A Diplomat's Report on Wahhabi sm of Arabia", *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, March, Karachi, 1968, No. 1, p. 34.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> He was born in Harran and flourished in Mamluk Damascus in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. As a theologian and jurist he had endeavoured to recall his contemporaries to the practices of primitive Islam, and had opposed the innovations connected with Sufi mysticism. He bowed to no authority other than the Quran, tradition and the practice of the community and lifted his voice high against innovation, saint-worship, vows and pilgrimage to shrines. His austere interpretation of Islam won him few followers, but in Damascus and elsewhere Hanbali students cherished his ideas. Not until the eighteenth century, however, and in a society lacking the organization and rigidity of the Mamluk and Ottoman states, did a disciple

extra-ordinary personal courage Ibn Abdul Wahhab first settled down at Huraimala where his aged father was at that time the *qadi*. Here he composed his main work, *Kitab al-tawhid* and ruthlessly condemned the popular beliefs in the efficacy of charms and offerings and in the powers of dead saints to effect or hasten the *gratification* of normal human desires.<sup>51</sup> The events bear witness that Abdul Wahhab urged Moslems to return to the simple and pure ways of the early period of Islam. He attacked innovation and condemned luxury and the worship of saints. In total and sweeping denunciations, the vehemence of which pained his father and permanently *estranged* his brother, of all latter innovations, he *roundly* attacked the 'worldly-minded *'ulama'* and the rulers of the land for their complicity in corrupting 'the true faith of the prophet.'<sup>52</sup>

He was soon expelled from Huraimala but was warmly welcomed as a honoured guest by Uthman b. Hamd b. Muammar, the chief of the neighbouring town al Uyaina.<sup>53</sup> Having confidence of the ultimate success of the reformation, the *Shaikh* started a vigorous campaign to propagate his ideas and wrote letters explaining the aims and objectives of it and sent them to all important towns of central Arabia, al Uyaina and its neighbourhood with an urge for erasing all sorts of un Islamic practices like demolition of tombs etc.<sup>54</sup> Ibn Sahim was no concerned. He felt it a sacred duty to make a stand against the "heresy" of "the wayward ignorant innovator." He addressed, in the early forties of the eighteenth century, some time before the eventful meeting between *Shaikh* Muhammad b. Abdul Wahhab and the Dariyan chief Muhammad b. Saud, and an open letter to "all the *ulama* and lovers of the *shariah* to whom it may reach". In it he brought fourteen charges against the

---

of Ibn Taymiyya find an opportunity to put those idea into practice. A follower of Ibn Hanbal, his principles were latter adopted by the Wahhabi s of Najd. cf., P. M. Holt, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>51</sup> M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 40.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

*Shaikh* and urged for his killing. He alleged among other things that the *Shaikh* (a) had no respect for the *imams*, (b) preached a personal *tawhid*, for which he called his followers "unitarians" and denounced others as "infidels", (c) demolished the tombs of the companions of the Prophet and condemned offerings to any but Allah as an act of blasphemy, (d) regarded the difference of the *imams* as a curse, (e) considered Ibn al-Arbi and Ibn al-Farid *Kafir*, and (f) stopped mentioning the name of the *Sultan* in the Friday sermons. These grave allegations set in motion a chain reaction among Arabian scholars of the eastern districts and were perhaps directly responsible for the *Shaikh's* expulsion from al- 'Uyaina.<sup>55</sup>

It is to be noted that his philosophy of reforms gave emphasis on monotheism, the denunciation of all forms of mediation between the Creator and the creations who are believers, compulsory payment of *zakat* (poor tax) and the obligation to respond to the call for *jihad* (holy war) against those who did not follow the basic principles of Islam pursued by the prophet. For the cause of purifying Islam he expressed his opinion to apply strictly all sorts of rituals of the *Shari'ah* for which he needed support of some political authority.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the cults of saints, paying visit to the holy men's tombs and sacrifice for object to holy men were *bid'a* or illegal as per his opinion. While travelling through Hejaz, Iraq and Syria, he found all these having been practiced by the oases dwellers, the nomads of Arabia as well as Muslims of the then period. At the same time, he encouraged the people to perform congregational prayers. He advised the people to abstain from smoking tobacco and to pay *zakat* regularly. He also put emphasis on stopping all sorts of un-Islamic practices and to pursue the doctrine of oneness of Allah, *tawhid*.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Among the Arabian scholars were (a) Muhammad b. Abdur Rahman b. Afaliq al-Ahsa'i al-Hanbali, (b) Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abd al-Latif al-Ahsai al-Shafi'i, (c) Abd Allah b. Isa al-Muwais. cf., M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 41.

<sup>56</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Thus he called for a return to pristine Islam as practiced by Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and urged upon the people to become 'true Muslims' by completely and unreservedly accepting the first principle of Islam: "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" Secondly, he emphasised the need for purging the Muslim society of all un-Islamic customs and sinful innovations. In other words, his was a religious revivalist movement, which laid the utmost emphasis on the pure monotheism of Islam. Hence he called himself and his followers monotheists or *Muwahhidun*.<sup>58</sup>

As a result of this point of view, he condemned all deviations from the doctrines of the Qur'an and the Prophet's traditions (*Sunnah*) as polytheism (*shirk*) and sinful innovation (*bid'ah*). His uncompromising attitude even led him to condemn the science of theology (*kalam*) and Greek logic (*mantiq*) as un-Islamic. Besides the Qur'an and Sunnah, he accepted the traditions of the *salaf salihin* or the virtuous ancestors, whereby he meant the first three generations of Muslims. Indeed, the adoption of the epithet "Salafiyah" by his present-day followers has been inspired by this concept.<sup>59</sup>

His puritan movement was based on these primary considerations, which were, in fact, in the best tradition of the *Hanbali* school of law as elaborated by *Imam* Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, to which Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab himself belonged. It is interesting to note that the *Muwahhidun* have never shown disrespect to any *madhhab* or school of law, though like Shah *Waliyulla* they condemned blind imitation of the *imams*. Rather, they emphatically claim themselves to be *Hanbali* and follow the *Hanbali* doctrines in so far as they are found to be in accord with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, "Shah *Wali* Allah's Conception of Ijtihad", *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. VII, Part III, July, 1959, pp. 168-69.

<sup>59</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, March, 1968, p. 35.

<sup>60</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Karachi, Vol. VII, Part III, July, 1959, pp. 169 and 171.

The circumstances under which the movement originated and developed point to a number of factors which played an important role in moulding the reformist ideas of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab. In the first place, he was pained to see his Arab compatriots well-nigh relapsing into the 'Days of Ignorance'. The author of *Rawdat at-Afkar* devotes a long section in which he lists the superstitious beliefs and practices current in Arabia at the time. Besides paying excessive veneration to tombs and shrines, reverence was shown to sacred trees and stones and gifts of food were placed on graves. These superstitious beliefs and practices, which were survivals of pre-Islamic paganism, had gradually led the masses away from the true doctrines and made them unmindful of the religious duties prescribed by Islam.<sup>61</sup>

Secondly, about the time when Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab was a student at Medina, a number of influential teachers over there seem to have created a fresh enthusiasm among their disciples for reviving pristine Islam, which turned the gaze of their students to the radical Puritanism of *Imam* Ibn Taymiyah. Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab was deeply influenced by the puritanical ideas of Ibn Taymiyya as demonstrated by his work after he returned to his native lands.<sup>62</sup> He started Puritanical movement in seventeenth-forties in his lands calling the attention of the co-religionists to the doctrine of *tawhid* or pure monotheism of Islam and urging them to purge the society of un-Islamic customs. In course of time these ideas created the Islamic revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Arabia and outside.<sup>63</sup>

These factors must have added strength to Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab's feeling of dissatisfaction with the secularistic administration of the Ottoman Turks as well as with the social, political and economic decadence of the Arabian Peninsula, and moved him to embark upon a course of radical reform.

---

<sup>61</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 1087 (hereafter *El*<sub>4</sub>).

<sup>62</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, March, 1968, pp. 35-36.

<sup>63</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal* (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1965), pp. XXXVI ff.

Considering the bad effects of the rapid growth of Wahhabism, *Sharif* Masud b. Sa'd, the then *Amir* of Mecca informed the *Sultan* in Constantinople to sanction instruction to take action for its submission or to purge Islam of the *Shaikh's* programme. *Sharif* Mas'ud was apparently disturbed at the rapid growth of a potentially troublesome activist movement almost on his eastern borders, and he eagerly accepted the advice of Constantinople for extermination of the movement without delay.<sup>64</sup> Thus he faced opposition from different corners including the Porte. As a result, the *Shaikh* was declared a heretic and his followers were banned from entering the holy cities.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile events were rapidly taking place in Najd itself. Sulaiman b. Muhammad b. Ghurair al-Humaidi, the powerful Banu Khalid chief of Hasa suddenly evinced more than ordinary interest in the reformist activities at al-Uyaina. His persistent demands and open threats compelled Ibn Muammar to withdraw support from the reformists and expelled the *Shaikh* from the town.

Thus it is seen that though at the very outset, the *Amir* of Uyanna, Uthman Ibn Muammar, endorsed the reforms proposed by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, but latter changed his mind. He rather exported him from the oases under pressure from the Banu Khalid chiefs of Hasa. This may be attributed to the reformer's severe punishment of those who were reluctant to perform congregational prayers, his personal involvement in enforcing a rigid interpretation of the *Sharia* and his stoning in public of a local woman accused of fornication which antagonized the inhabitants of Uyaina including the chief who feared the spread of his message. So they ordered Uthman Ibn Muammar to kill Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and threatened to withhold the annual subsidy of goods and money sent from the coast to the *emirates* of the interior. But without creating any controversy among the followers of the reformer, the *Amir* ordered for his expulsion. As a result of this expulsion and finding no other alternative Muhammad b. Abdul Wahhab bade farewell to the

---

<sup>64</sup> M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 42.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*



city of his birth and proceeded to the neighbouring city of Dari'ya<sup>66</sup> forty miles away from Uyaina. He was enthusiastically received by the Dariyan chief, Muhammad b. Sa'ud, who committed to give him full support and co-operation. The visionary reformer at long last found in him his ardent ally who would, at his command, "wage war against the violators of *tawhid*". Understanding between them reached the climax and the two acted in harmony. A settlement was made between them in 1744 over the question of their reciprocal interests. One source indicates:

Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud greeted Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab and said, 'this oasis is yours; do not fear your enemies. By the name of God, if all Najd was summoned to throw you out, we will never agree to expel you; Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab replied, 'you are the settlement's chief and wise man. I want you to grant me an oath that you will perform *jihad* (holy war) against the unbelievers. In return you will be *imam*, leader of the Muslim community and I will be leader in religious matters'.<sup>67</sup>

It is noted that this Sa'udi-Wahhabi alliance was cemented by the marriage of Abdul Aziz Ibn Muhammad to a daughter of Ibn Abdul Wahhab. The alliance was purely a case of marriage between religion and the sword.<sup>68</sup> This alliance was important in the context of tribal politics. It is imperative in the tribal based society in the Arabian Peninsula that various tribes paid allegiance to their respective *Shaikhs*, but in general tribal society was war-torn and fragmented. But the alliance between the Al Saud and Abdul Wahhab made great stride in furthering the cause of reformation and the statehood bringing tribal people under control.<sup>69</sup> As a result of this alliance they jointly pioneered a movement and within a short span of time created a state.

Thus on the basis of the understanding, the Saudi ruler agreed with the view of the reformer's idea of *jihad*, a war against non-Muslims and those Muslims whose religious activities were not in conformity with the reformer's

---

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>67</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>68</sup> Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., first edition, 1937, reprinted 1972), p. 740.

<sup>69</sup> P. M. Holt, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

teachings. On the contrary, the Saudi *Amir* was acknowledged as a political leader of the Muslim community without any debate. In this way the religious interpretation was kept reserved for the reformer who started his mission of teaching in a mosque, specially built for him. Persons irrespective of ages were asked to attend. Those who failed to attend his teaching sessions were rebuked either way.<sup>70</sup>

The reform movement became successful in Dariyah. This may be attributed to the fact that Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud adopted a religious message that promised an opportunity to compensate for the limitations of his rule. More specifically, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab promised him wealth, in the form of *zakat* and expansion under his religious guidance. In addition rivalry between the *Amirs* of Uyaina and Dariyah contributed to the success of a small settlement without particular political or economic significance. Uyaina enjoyed far more prestige and importance than Dariyah at that time.<sup>71</sup>

### **Expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi Power in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries and its Repercussion**

The alliance duly strengthened by mutual oaths of loyalty, soon began to prosper in terms of military success and expansion. Within a year of his arrival at Dar'iyah, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab won over to his side all the inhabitants of the place. The new sect soon became involved in war with *Shaikh* Dahham Ibn Dawwas of Riyadh which lasted for 28 years from 1747 onwards.<sup>72</sup> During this period, Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud and his son 'Abdul Aziz steadily grew in power and prestige and succeeded in extending their domain far and wide. One by one the enemies of the new dispensation were swept into oblivion. The earliest conquests brought 'Uyaina and Hasa under Wahhabi control; but Riyadh and Manfuhah maintained their stubborn

---

<sup>70</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup> Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, March, 1968, p. 38.

resistance for twenty years before succumbing to the steady pressure of the new movement. An invasion of the Sa'udi realm by the Makramid (Isma'ili) chief of Najran threatened the stability of the regime for a time; but it ended in a pact of mutual nonaggression, and the invaders withdrew. In 1765, Ibn Sa'ud breathed his last and was succeeded by his son 'Abdul Aziz, before whose superior military tactics the *Shaikh* of Riyadh proved a poor match. In 1773, *Shaikh* Dahham fled from Riyadh leaving 'Abdul Aziz in full control of the whole Najd.<sup>73</sup> From 1792 to 1795, 'Abdul Aziz pushed northwards subduing the Banu Khalid in Hasa and finally in 1797, he came into direct conflict with Ottoman administration at Baghdad on the one side and with Mecca on the other. Thus it is seen that before the eighteenth century the swelling strength of Wahhabism aroused the apprehension of the Ottoman government, and an Ottoman expeditionary force made a futile attempt to drive the Najders away from the Arabian seaboard of the Persian Gulf. By 1765, when Mohammed Ibn Sa'ud died, the whole of central and eastern Arabia, in spite of sporadic dissident movements, had fallen under more or less effective Wahhabi rule though Riyadh was held out. In 1773 al-Riyadh finally gave up its struggle against Wahhabism, which had lasted more than a quarter of a century.<sup>74</sup> The *Sahikh* decided that he should now retire from active participation in public affairs. Although he continued until his death in 1792 to be the intimate adviser of 'Abdul Aziz in religion, war, and politics, he gave most of his time to a regime of worship and to the instruction of his wide circle of students.<sup>75</sup>

With a short span of time, the historical alliance between the reformer and the ruler of Dariyah in 1744 resulted in the emergence of a religious *emirate* in central Arabia. Without Wahhabism it was not possible on the part of the Dariyan leadership to assume political significance. This was because

---

<sup>73</sup> *El*<sub>4</sub>, p. 1087.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*; Derek Hopwood (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>75</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 57.

of the fact that there was lack of tribal confederation to support any expansion beyond the settlement, and unavailability or absence of surplus wealth that would have ensured the ruler to organize a fighting force to expand beyond his controlled settlements. Lack of sufficient manpower of the settlement was also responsible for the same. It was only Wahhabism that impregnated the Saudi leadership with a new force, which proved to be crucial for the consolidation and expansion of Saudi rule.<sup>76</sup> More specifically Wahhabism promised the Saudi leadership clear benefits in the form of political and religious authority and material rewards, without which the conquest of Arabia or the unification of the Arabian Peninsula would not have been possible in subsequent time. The resultant consolidation enabled the Saudi leadership to rise to prominence in the region underreview.<sup>77</sup>

A good number of factors were responsible for the expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi realm. Recruitment of the fighting force was considered essential for the cause of expansion of the Sa'udi-Wahhabi realm or hegemony beyond Dariyah. This fighting force was responsible for carrying the message of reformist zeal and Saudi political hegemony elsewhere. The settled population of the oases of Najd responded first to the call of joining the fighting force.

It is to be noted that some of them accepted Wahhabism out of conviction and other supported it out of fear. It is evident that the Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* was based from the very inception on the allegiance of the sedentary communities of Najd. Those who willingly submitted to the reform programme accepted the allegiance of its religio-political leadership and paid homage to the reform zeal. While those who opposed had to face resistance and lost their livelihood.<sup>78</sup> The same method was pursued for the expansion of the reformation zeal to the people of tribal confederation. Once being the

---

<sup>76</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 19

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

staunch supporter, the people became important fighting force and provided man power for the spread of Wahhabism and Saudi political leadership. Share of booty encouraged the followers for general participation. The promise of material rewards encouraged the tribal confederations to take part actively in the expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi realm in the area understudy.<sup>79</sup>

At the same time, the *ulama* of Najd also played a very vital role in this regard. The Al Saud utilized them to achieve the goal of motivating the people - tribal and sedentary. The Najdi population exhibited an attraction to its teachings that were in live with the orientation of some of its religious scholars. Before the rise of Wahhabi movement, the Najdi *ulama* travelled to Syria and Egypt to train the people with their intellectual mentors.<sup>80</sup> After receiving education these *ulama* returned to Najd and developed into ritual specialists, whose main concern was *fiqh*, Islamic jurisprudence a tradition which continues among the Saudi *ulama* of today, although for different reasons. The specialisation of the Najdi *ulama* in *fiqh* reflects the concerns of the inhabitants of the Najdi towns and villages, which centered on pragmatic issues relating to marriage, divorce, inheritance, religious endowments, Islamic rituals and the Islamic legal codes. Najdi settlements had already aspired towards finding solutions for their practical problems and showed a religious awareness that predated the call of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab.<sup>81</sup> While the reformer was still concerned with these practical issues, he distinguished himself from other Najdi *ulama* of the time by developing his ideas on *tawhid*. Religious awareness in the Najdi settlements should not be overlooked as a factor facilitating the adoption of Wahhabism and the success of Saudi expansion.

The regular payment of *zakat* to the Sa'udi-Wahhabi leadership was not only a token of political submission but also of religious duty. While this

---

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*,

religious duty might not have been felt particularly strong among the tribal confederations, it was definitely apparent among the oasis population of southern Najd whose allegiance to the Saudi leadership had rested on more solid ground.<sup>82</sup>

It is to be noted that success of the movement rested with local factors. Wahhabism achieved the ultimate religious symbiosis between the nomads and the sedentary population by combining an uncompromising Unitarian and puritanical Islam with an obsession with ritual specialisation and *fiqh*, thus responding to the needs of both the tribal confederations of the desert and the population of the oases of central Arabia.<sup>83</sup>

Under the military leadership of Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud's son Abdul Aziz (1765-1803), the Saudi leadership expanded into Riyadh, Kharj and Qasim by 1792. Towns in central Najd received Wahhabi judges as representatives of the new religio-political order. Under the guise of spreading the Wahhabi message, the Saudi leadership subjugated most of the *Amirs* in Najd. Those *Amirs* were allowed to remain in their settlements as long as they paid *zakat* to the Saudi leader, a token of their submission to his authority. During Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud's reign till 1765 the rise of a united Najd began under the political, military and religious force of the Sa'udi-Wahhabi theocracy.<sup>84</sup>

In this way, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab and his associates, Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud and his son 'Abdul Aziz, laid the foundations for Wahhabism as a religious and political force in Arabia, extending its mandate over the whole of Najd and beginning the progress towards the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. 'Abdul Aziz outlived the *shaikh* by eleven years, and his son

---

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

<sup>84</sup> It should be noted here that the designation "Wahhabi" was used pejoratively by Westerners when referring to the followers of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. His followers actually called themselves *Muwahhidun*, or Unitarians.

Sa'ud reined from 1803 to 1814. Both of them kept the early momentum going, carrying the doctrines of Wahhabism further afield to the four points of the compass.<sup>85</sup>

In the course of expansion, 'Abdul Aziz annexed al-Qatif and the inland oasis of al-Hasa, perhaps half of whose inhabitants were Shi'ites. For a time the island of Bahrain and its rulers, the House of Khalifah, became subject to al-Dir'iyah. The presence of many Hanbalis along the southeastern coast of the Gulf (what is now called the Trucial Coast) facilitated the acceptance of Wahhabism there. Near the end of the eighteenth century the first Wahhabi te governor went to the oasis of al-Buraimi, the gateway to inner Oman, at the request of the residents.<sup>86</sup>

A single ruler of consequence in eastern Arabia who doggedly opposed the Wahhabite advance was the *Sultan* of Muscat, and Ibadi but not the head of the Ibadi community, his regime having become secular. To stave off the Wahhabites, the *Sultan* often paid them tribute; he also sought and at times received the help of allies - the British, the *Sharif* of Mecca, and the Persians.<sup>87</sup>

In the mountains of 'Asir, south of the Hejaz, Wahhabism enjoyed the staunch support of able leaders. From this base the movement spilled over into the lowland of Tihamah along the Red Sea, reaching as far south as ports in the Yemen. In the highlands of the Yemen the Zaidis preserved their independence. Wahhabites made quick descents on Hadhramaut on the far side of the Empty Quarter (*Rub al Khali*), where they are remembered as 'the men in the camel's - hair cloaks', but they did not succeed in attaching the region to their state.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

After the completion of the campaigns in central Arabia, Saudi forces moved eastward into Hasa and succeeded in terminating the rule of Banu Khalid. A substantial proportion of the population of Hasa consisted of Shites, representing in the eyes of the Wahhabis an extreme case of *ahl al bida* (innovators). The subjugation of Qatif in 1780 opened the road to the coast of the Persian Gulf and Oman. Qatar acknowledged the authority of the Sa'udisin 1797. Bahrain followed suit and paid *zakat* to Dariyah.<sup>89</sup>

The expansion of the Saudi power continued under the leadership of Abdul Aziz. Hostilities ensued between the Wahhabies and the *Sharifs* over the question of preaching. But this expansion had some repercussion especially when the Saudi forces expanded their authority in the west and more particularly into the Hejaz. It then came in conflict with another religious authority of the area, that of the *Sharif* of Mecca. The *Sharifs* organized strong resistance to face the challenge of Saudi expansion. But in spite of that the Saudi temporary hegemony was established over Taif in 1802 under the leadership of Sa'ud Ibn Abdul Aziz (1803-14). Mecca followed suit in 1803 while Medina in 1804 and in a couple of years they extended their sway up to Jeddah.<sup>90</sup> By 1812 the Wahhabis controlled most of the Peninsula and exerted influence as far north as the vicinity of Aleppo. In this way, having combined in itself the worldly and religious power the Saudi domain, which had originally been no more than a petty *Sheikhdom*, expanded until its raiding parties covered the whole of Arabia, and its doctrines were imposed on everyone it conquered.<sup>91</sup>

The surrender of political power led *Sharif* Ghalib of Mecca to become a mere representative of the Saudis. The result of the occupation was not good. The Wahhabi *ulama* ordered the destruction of the doomed tombs of

---

<sup>89</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*; *El*<sub>4</sub>, p. 1087.

<sup>91</sup> David Howarth, "The Recapture of Riyadh in 1901", *The Islamic Review*, June, 1965, p. 5.



the Prophet and the caliphs in Medina in accordance with Wahhabi doctrine which forbade the construction of movements on graves. According to Wahhabi teaching, graves should remain unmarked to discourage latter visits and veneration by Muslims.<sup>92</sup>

The successful expansion in Hejaz led the Sa'udisto march towards the South and occupied Asir. The local leaders of Asir adopted Wahhabism without any hesitation. But their march towards Yemen was strongly resisted by the Yemenites. In addition the unknown geograpy of this mountainous country prevented its incorporation into the Sa'udi-Wahhabi domain or realm.<sup>93</sup>

The unsuccessful attempt in Yemen led the Sa'udisto look elsewhere i.e. in north-east. Being sufficiently strong, they invaded Iraq and the fertile regions of this area known as Mesopotamia came under Saudi control. This expansion threatened the Ottoman authority in their vital parts of the empire. In continuation of their expansion, the holy city of Karbala was raided and plundered in 1801. The Sa'udis continued their raids in the cities of Mesopotamia between 1801 to 1812.<sup>94</sup> But the result of their raids was not satisfactory. They failed to establish strong Sa'udi-Wahhabi presence in the area. This may be attributed to the fact that the area was far away from their power-base in Arabia. But the Wahhabi preoccupations in Mesopotamia revolved around gaining booty from these rich provinces.<sup>95</sup>

So was the case with Syria. A similar pattern was pursued in Syria. Saudi forces raided cities and pilgrimage caravans without being able to establish a permanent base. Expansion by raid reached its limits in the north as it did in Yemen. The sacking of Shia cities in Iraq angered its communities and resulted in the assassination of the Saudi leader Abdul Aziz in 1803 by a Shia in the mosque of Dariyah in revenge for the plundering of Karbala.<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

The Saudi expansion may be attributed to a good number of factors. This are-

- a) Disunity and rivalry among local oasis *Amirs* in Najd meant that the Sa'udi could gradually defeat them one by one.
- b) Internal disputes among members of the oases ruling groups weakened their resistance and enabled the invaders to use dissidents for their purposes.
- c) The migration of some Arabian Peninsular tribes to more fertile regions in Iraq and Syria aided the conquest. It is to be noted that under Sa'udi-Wahhabi pressure, several tribal confederations fled to Mesopotamia.
- d) Finally, the peaceful adoption of Wahhabism by the sedentary population of Najd provided grass roots support for the expansion even before it took place.<sup>97</sup>

The expansion of the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* resulted in the creation of a political realm with fluctuating boundaries. The descendants of the Al Saud, legitimised by the Wahhabi leadership, provided a permanent political leadership in accordance with the oath of 1744. However, there were no mechanisms other than raids to ensure the durability of either the polity or its boundaries, and tribal confederations retained their ability to challenge Sa'udi-Wahhabi authority. Withdrawing the payment of *Zakat* and organising counter-attacks on groups and territories within the Sa'udi-Wahhabi sphere of influence were recurrent challenges, although there were rudimentary attempts at formalising political, economic, religious relations within the *emirate*.<sup>98</sup> These were generally insufficient to hold the constituency together, there was a vague recognition of belonging to a Muslim community, but this did not preclude attachment to more specific tribal and regional identities.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus it is to be mentioned here that as a result of this development the internal balance that prevailed in the Arabian Peninsula since the Ottoman occupation was rudely disturbed when, in the eighteenth century, the Al Sa'ud under the impulse of the invigorating Wahhabi reformation subdued the whole of central and eastern Arabia, carried their depredations to Iraq and Syria, and finally occupied the holy cities of the Hejaz. No less perturbing was the aggressive nature of the Wahhabi teachings and the intolerant way in which people were made to conform to them. The reaction was immediate and massive. The Wahhabis were denounced all round as heretics and the *Sultan* was urged to take immediate action against them.<sup>100</sup>

In principle, the Wahhabis challenged the authority of the Ottoman *Sultanate* as the protector of Islamic orthodoxy; and this ideological challenge was soon followed by a physical threat to Ottoman suzerainty in the Hejaz, and the Ottoman rule in the Fertile Crescent. Against the established system of authority, represented by the hierarchy of the Ottoman *ulama* it set up its own authoritarianism, founded on a rigorous adherence to the Quran and the *Sunna*. It was a resentment of the fundamental values of Islam, and its effect was revolutionary.<sup>101</sup>

It is to be noted that the movement which had developed in remote Najd was with the passage of time, beginning to appear as a threat to the outposts of Ottoman power. Hence, retaliation was imperative. The Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Buyuk Sulaiman Pasha provided forces to check the advance of the Wahhabis. Some of the tribes were also associated with them. But the expedition was not successful. As a result, Wahhabi raids on the Syrian and Iraqi frontiers followed, while an offensive launched by the *Amir* Ghalib from the Hejaz was heavily defeated in 1798.<sup>102</sup> A second expedition against the Wahhabis organized by the Pasha of Baghdad was not also

---

<sup>100</sup> M. A. Bari, *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970, p. 36.

<sup>101</sup> P. M. Holt. *op.cit.*, p. 151.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

successful and eventually a settlement was made with the Baghdad and Mecca in 1800, when Saud went on pilgrimage.

But the period of quiescence ended abruptly in 1802 when the Saudis led a great raid into Iraq. The city of Karbala was sacked. This created reaction among the Muslim majority. By this time, hostilities between the Saudi state and Mecca broke out again, and at the time of the pilgrimage in 1803 Saudi and the Wahhabi army entered the holy city. The *Amir* Ghalib fled to Jeddah. The acquisition of Mecca was the last achievement of the reign of Abdul Aziz I.

The Sa'udi-Wahhabi devastating atrocities and especially the capture of Mecca and Medina was taken as a matter of provocation by the Sublime Porte. When the Wahhabis plundered Medina in 1810, opening of the Prophet's tomb and shelling and distributing its relics and jewels, the Porte, being aware of these misdoings and atrocities by Al Saud, was finally forced to take action. When the Wahhabis interrupted the annual *Hajj* (Moslem Pilgrimage) to Mecca and Medina it precipitated a wave of revulsion throughout the Muslim World.<sup>103</sup>

The Ottoman *Sultan* as the real power of the area could not ignore for long this challenge to his authority. As Caliph and as server of the two holy cities he was responsible for the safety of the pilgrims to the holiest shrines of Islam. It has already been stated earlier that the Wahhabi occupation of the Hejaz followed by the interruption of the pilgrimage brought severe protests from all parts of the Islamic world. The Ottoman *Sultan* did not fail to realize the gravity of the situation. Action of the Ottoman *Sultan* was imperative. So feeble was the Ottoman government that it could not deploy sufficient forces to attack the Wahhabis nor could it compel the pashas of Syria and Baghdad to carry out the imperial orders to destroy the Wahhabis.

---

<sup>103</sup> David G. Edens, "The Anatomy of Saudi Revolution", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 5, 1974, p. 51.

The then Ottoman *Sultan* Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) urged Muhammad Ali, the rapidly rising Viceroy of Egypt, to drive the Wahhabis out of the holy cities. Taking this task as an opportunity to increase his power, Muhammad Ali invaded central Arabia in 1811. In the first encounter in the Hejaz the Wahhabites, despite their inferior equipment, routed the invaders. New levies from Egypt enabled Tusun to take Medina and Mecca, but the Wahhabite ruler, Sa'ud, kept his main forces intact until his death in 1814.

The death of Sa'ud deprived the Wahhabite state of the leader who might have preserved it. His son and successor, 'Abd Allah, lacked Sa'ud's skill as a commander. Muhammad 'Ali himself had come to Arabia to direct operations from 1813 to 1815. When he returned to Egypt, he put his son Ibrahim Pasha in his place. Slowly and methodically Ibrahim moved his siege artillery and ammunition train eastwards. 'Abd Allah, instead of harassing the enemy in open country, shut himself up in al-Dir'iyah. The Wahhabite capital was strongly fortified, but Ibrahim was persistent, and after a siege of about six months, he forced 'Abd Allah to surrender in September 1818, bringing to an end the first Wahhabite state, nearly three-quarters of a century after its founding.<sup>104</sup>

Thus it is evident that several attempts were made by the Ottoman Turks in the nineteenth century to extend influences and direct rule in the Arabian Peninsula. This may be evident from Ottoman-Egyptian invasion of Arabia against the Sa'udi-Wahhabi hegemony in 1818, the Ottoman occupation of Hasa and Asir in 1871 and recognition of a number of submissive rulers in the area under study. On the basis of this policy several local *Amirs* in the interior were recognized as ruling regent on behalf of the *Sultan*, and occasionally to them subsidies and gifts were sent to cement alliance and ensure obedience. The Ottomans expected local rulers to restrain their followers from attacking pilgrimage caravans and Ottoman

---

<sup>104</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *op.cit.*, p. 61.

garrison stationed in more vital regions, for example in Hejaz and Hasa.<sup>105</sup> Having no formal Ottoman presence, Najdi towns and oases were ruled by their own *Amirs*. At the same time, the tribal confederations were able to maintain their independence and authority.<sup>106</sup>

Thus by 1818, Ibrahim Pasha, Muhammad Ali's son and field commander, took Dariya from the Wahhabis, razing it to the ground. The military campaign came to an end with the capture of Riyadh. With the destruction of this unifying force, Arabia lapsed into its traditional fragmentations.<sup>107</sup> Through 1824, the Ottoman Empire maintained a few garrisons in Najd as a gesture of their dominance. But chances came to regain their lost prestige after 1820 and the Al Saud staged a come back in Najdian politics. It is to be noted that a good number of members of the House of Sa'ud had fallen during the siege of Ibrahim Pasha and others had been carried off to Cairo.<sup>108</sup> The future looked bleak for the reform movement, but the Wahhabite faith was so ingrained in the people of Najd and the House of Sa'ud that it had not lost its capacity for producing talented rulers. In this chaotic time the line of succession was not fixed, but a cousin of the great Sa'ud, Turki Ibn 'Abd Allah, soon came to the forefront. Driven out of the partially rebuilt town of al-Dir'iyah by the occupying forces, Turki in 1824 established himself in al-Riyadh, which has since remained the capital of the state. Muhammad 'Ali's troops withdrew from Najd to the Hejaz.<sup>109</sup>

The character of Turki's rule is revealed by a speech he made to his provincial governors after he had heard complaints against one or more of them. He severely condemned the sin of oppressing the subjects of the state and warned that the penalty would be deposition from office and exile. He told

---

<sup>105</sup> Madawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> David G. Edens, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 5, 1974, pp. 51-52.

<sup>108</sup> Derek Hopwood (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

the governors that they would commit mistake if they thought that they had conquered lands with their swords; the power of Islam had brought these lands under the sovereignty of the state. An aspirant to the rule arranged the assassination of Turki in 1834, but Turki's oldest son Faisal succeeded him at once and followed in his father's footsteps. By the mid - 1830s Wahhabi rule had been re-established in central and eastern Arabia. In 1838, Muhammad Ali again tried to impose his effective rule in central Arabia, but owing to British pressure he was forced to withdraw.<sup>110</sup> Thus in 1840 Muhammad Ali of Egypt withdrew from Arabia after nearly three decades of largely fruitless ventures there. By 1841, Egyptian troops retreated into Hejaz, leaving the central part of Najd in the hands of local rulers. A second unsuccessful attempt to penetrate the interior followed the more definitude of Ottoman occupation of Hasa in 1871. Once again, Najd was able to maintain its autonomous existence. Local politics in this central part of Arabia came to play a major role in shaping the modern history of the region. Taking this opportunity, two members of the House of Saud began in succession to rebuild the Wahhabite state, but in 1843 the second of them gave way to Faisal Ibn Turki, who escaped from captivity in Egypt and came home to inaugurate his second reign. The re-establishment of Saudi rule with its new capital at Riyadh was no more than a partial recovery.<sup>111</sup>

It is to be noted that the first Anglo-Wahhabi relations was linked with the rise of the Wahhabi power in the Arabian Peninsula and the increased outbreaks of piracy in the Persian Gulf in the early nineteenth century. The Bedouins of the coastal *shaikhdoms* began to prey on British shipping in the Gulf. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, owing to these outbreaks of piracy, Britain found it necessary to take stern measures to

---

<sup>110</sup> For an account of this expedition, J. B. Kelly, "Mehmet Ali's Expedition to the Persian Gulf, 1837-1840", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 1, No.4, Part. 1, pp. 350-381 and Vol. 2, No. 1, Part. 2, pp. 31-65 (1965). After the razing of Dar'iyah the Wahhabi s moved their capital to Riyadh.

<sup>111</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1925*, Vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 280.

establish order on the eastern coast of the Gulf. British policy in the Persian Gulf throughout the nineteenth century was governed by two principles: the maintenance of the maritime peace in order to promote trade, and the exclusion of other powers from the area for the sake of the security of India. It was this first object which led the British to suppress piracy.<sup>112</sup>

To materialize this objective the British came forward to establish new dimension in political relations with the *Shaikhs* of the Arabian littoral. In 1835, the Maritime Truce was signed between the *Shaikhs* of the Pirate Coast and the British. The significance of this agreement lay in that its signatories agreed to British arbitration in any dispute arising between them. In 1853, the Treaty of Peace in Perpetuity was signed. This treaty was to end hostilities at sea for 'evermore'. By the latter half of the nineteenth century the old Pirate Coast came to be known as the 'Trucial Coast'.<sup>113</sup>

During the long reign of Faisal Ibn Turki, known as Faisal the Great (r.1834-1838, 1843-1865), the British had several contacts with the Al Saud. It is to be noted that in 1843, Faisal returned from Cairo where he had been held captive by Muhammad 'Ali since 1838. He promptly set about reconquering his family's domains. In the course of expansion, he first sought to occupy Buraimi, an important oasis. The chiefs of Buraini sought protection from Britain. But they were informed that since the Egyptians no longer posed a threat, the British position was not to be extended. Britain had no intention of interfering in the politics of Arabia 'further than was necessary to maintain peace in the Gulf'.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Gary Troller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), pp. 14-15.

<sup>113</sup> R. Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf Region, 1858-1907, A study in British Imperial Policy* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 18. For the full text of the treaty, C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties' Engagements and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, 5th edition, Vol. XI (Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1933), pp. 242-253.

<sup>114</sup> J. B. Kelly, *Eastern Arabian Frontiers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 68.



Faisal Ibn Turki, during his reign tried to extend the Sa'udi-Wahhabi power at various times in the different areas of the Arabian littoral or the Trucial *Shaikhdoms* including northern Oman. Even he tried to enlist the support of the powerful *Sharif* of Mecca, Muhammad bin Aun, in an attempt to extend his power along the Trucial coast.<sup>115</sup> But the British government did not recognize the extension of Wahhabi - Saudi authority anywhere of the Trucial *Shaikhdoms*. The British rather considered him as a subject of the Porte and naturally urged him to pay tribute to the *Sharif* of Mecca.<sup>116</sup>

Evaluating the course of events relating to his endeavours and British reluctance to support him, the great Saudi chief realized that his ambitions along the Arabian littoral were limited by the British. He therefore tried to elicit British support. The British of course declined. They had no interests in central Arabia, and in view of recent history could not but consider Wahhabism as a disruptive force. The British showed their reluctance to get involved in the maelstrom of central Arabian politics with its attendant features of discord and shifting allegiances. Obviously British naval power in the Gulf would have been of little value in controlling Arab relations in the interior. Failing to gain British support, Faisal tried to achieve his ends by asserting his position as an Ottoman dependent. At this stage Faisal was confronted by the *Sharif* of Mecca as his chief rival in Arabia. But their clashes were fewer and, even as a means to an end, it would be difficult to imagine Ibn Sa'ud calling on the *Sharif* as did his great ancestor. In 1865, exploiting dissension in Oman, the Wahhabi s once again began to harass the area. In the same year they even plundered the coastal town of Sur<sup>117</sup> and at the end of the year a Wahhabi force attacked a town on the Batina coast of Oman. Taking all these events in consideration, Colonel Lewis Pelly, the Political Resident for the Persian Gulf area, who paid a visit earlier to Faisal's court, protested and

---

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

demanded compensation for the loss caused by the Wahhabis. This situation latter on persuaded Abdullah, the emissary of Faisal's son, to come to an agreement with Colonel Pelly which contained an undertaking of non-aggression against the Trucial *Shaikhdoms* and its adjacent areas.<sup>118</sup>

The period from Faisal's death in 1865 to the exile of Ibn Sa'ud and his father in 1891 is significant primarily for fratricide and dynastic rivalry which, taken together with the Turkish capture of Hasa in 1871, helped the Rashidi dynasty of Jabal Shammar, the district lying to the north of Najd, to achieve dominance in hitherto Saudi territory. The head of the House of Rashid, Muhammad Ibn Rashid, one of Arabia's greatest rulers, entered into an alliance with the Turks.<sup>119</sup> From the late 1860s until the turn of the century, Wahhabis were in eclipse while the Rashidi star was ascendant in central Arabia. During these years the British had very few contacts with the Saudis.

It is needless to go deeply in the Saudi internecine strife during this period, but it is to be noted that Faisal's legitimate heir, 'Abdullah, was challenged by his younger brother, Saud. In 1873 the rivalry between the two brothers ended with the death of Saud caused by smallpox. However, chaos prevailed and Abdur Rahman Ibn Sa'ud was raised to the power. While the Sa'udis were fighting among themselves over the question of succession<sup>120</sup> the Turks decided to assert their power in eastern Arabia. Prior to 1871 the *Sultans* of Turkey had never exercised any effective jurisdiction in central Arabia. It has been argued that the appointment of Midhat Pasha to the post of *Wali* of Baghdad in 1868 'signified the adoption of an active Arabian policy by the Porte'.<sup>121</sup> The evidences have that in the late nineteenth century the

---

<sup>118</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>119</sup> For a brief history of the Al-Rashid see, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, Vol. II, pp. 407-09.

<sup>120</sup> For an account of Wahhabi history from 1865-1892, H. St. J. B. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), chap. 8.

<sup>121</sup> R. Kumar, *op.cit.*, p. 13. Kelly states that this policy could have been precipitated by the *Tanzimat*, the Porte's crumbling fortunes in the Balkans, and the opening of the

Porte began to pursue a policy of consolidation and expansion in the Arabic-speaking parts of the Empire. At that time, the ongoing family quarrel in the House of Saud which broke out in 1882 also paved the way for the house of al-Rashid from the Jabal Shammar, to seize Riyadh and annex the dominions of Al Saud to their own about the year 1885.<sup>122</sup>

After a short reign in Riyadh from 1889 to 1891, 'Abdur Rahman was defeated by Ibn Rashid's forces and driven into exile in Kuwait. He was accompanied by his family, including Ibn Sa'ud who was eleven or twelve years of age at that time. The Porte supplied him with a pension. For the next ten years the Al Saud family had to spend their time in exile while 'the Najd of the Wahhabis.... [became] an insignificant province of an alien dynasty.'<sup>123</sup> Ibn Sa'ud was deeply concerned with the thoughts of his home territory, Najd, the land of his ancestors. He anticipated that he would some day be back and regain control of that part of Arabia.

It is to be noted that in 1896 Mubarak came to power in Kuwait. The following year a further change in Arabian politics took place when Muhammad Ibn Rashid died. He was succeeded by the less gifted 'Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid. After Mubarak came to an agreement with England in 1899 regarding the non-alienation of territory the Porte incited the Rashidis to attack the Al Saud.<sup>124</sup> When in 1900 'Abdur Rahman led an incursion into Najd – with Mubarak's sanction - he found that owing to Muhammad Ibn Rashid's death, old loyalties had begun to dissolve, and discontent was widespread in central Arabia. In 1901 Mubarak, fortified by his alliance with England and supported by the Al Saud, led an expedition against the Al

---

Suez Canal. The latter offered 'an easy avenue of access to the whole of Arabia, making it possible to bring Turkish naval and military power to bear upon the Peninsula's eastern and western flanks'. See his *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1798-1880* (Oxford: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 718.

<sup>122</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>123</sup> H.St. J. B. Philby, *op.cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>124</sup> The Al Rashid, no doubt, realised that they needed a harbour for any true consolidation and that Kuwait was the logical harbour for Jabal Shammar.

Rashid to forestall the risk of an attack on his own territory. He was thoroughly defeated at Sarif, near Buraida, in February 1901.<sup>125</sup>

Owing to Mubarak's crushing defeat in 1901 his territorial ambitions were confined. The great *Shaikh*, however, did continue to support, and probably attempted to further his own ends through the Saudi exiles. They were undoubtedly encouraged by Mubarak to regain their patrimony. It was naturally in Mubarak's interest to undermine the Rashidis, who were in league with the Turks. The Al Saud were supplied with arms by Mubarak.

While the disintegration of the first Saudi realm was partially due to the intervention of the Egyptians acting on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, the second realm collapsed for two reasons. First, the fragile Saudi leadership of the second half of the nineteenth century was further weakened by internal strife among members of the Saudi family. Second, the increasing power of a rival central Arabian *emirate* to the north of the Saudi base was able to undermine Saudi hegemony during the crucial period when the Sa'udis were struggling amongst themselves for political leadership.<sup>126</sup>

With the flight of Abdur Rahman, the Saudi capital, Riyadh, fell under the authority of the Rashidis, the remaining members of the Al Saud were taken as hostages to the Rashidi capital, Hail.<sup>127</sup>

Riyadh remained under the authority of the Hail *Amirs* until 1902 when Abdur Rahman's son Abdul Aziz; known as Ibn Sa'ud, returned from his exile in Kuwait, killed the Rashidi governor and declared himself *Amir*, of Riyadh: a third and final revival of Saudi rule began to take shape. This revival marked the beginning of the third Saudi state in the twentieth century.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby, *op.cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>126</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

### **Influence in outside Arabia**

Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia did have some possible connection with similar reform movements elsewhere in other parts of the Islamic world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But the precise nature of its connection is often difficult to determine. At the early stage of his career Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab and his disciples were active in sending books and epistles to prospective Wahhabi converts. While Mecca and Medina were occupied, the Wahhabites found it congenial for the dissemination of their doctrines. The exposition of their creed reached as far west as North Africa in the first years of the nineteenth century. But it is to be noted that about the time when Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab was a student of Medina, a number of influential teachers over there seem to have created a fresh enthusiasm among their disciples for reviving pristine Islam, which turned the gaze of their students to the radical puritanism of *Imam* Ibn Taymiyah. Shah *Wali* Allah of Delhi had also visited Hejaz in A.D. 1730 and studied the Prophet's traditions for fourteen months under Abu Taher Ibrahim al-Kurdi al-Madani, Wafd Allah al-Makki, Taj al-Din Qali al-Makki and Umar Ibn Ahmad al-Makki. He was deeply influenced by the puritanical ideas of Ibn Taymiyah as demonstrated by his work after he returned to his respective native lands. He never met with Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab nor exchanged views at any time, he started separate puritanic movement in seventeen forties in his own land calling the attention of the co-religionists to the doctrine of *tawhid* or pure monotheism of Islam and urge them to purge the society of un-Islamic customs. In course of time, these ideas created the Islamic revivalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Indian Subcontinent. Thus the so-called Wahhabites of India did borrow little from the Wahhabites of Arabia, while the other movements in India, such as the Faraidi and Ahi-i Hadith, were more closely associated with the doctrines of the Wahhabites. The Sanusism of Libya and Mahdism of the Sudan have a definite affinity with Wahhabism. Some of the modernist reformers of the Muslim World such as Muhammad 'Abduhu, Muhammad Rashid Rida, and other adherents of Salafism have acknowledged the influence of the writings of Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab and his Wahhabite colleagues for their reformist activities.

## Chapter 4

# Abdul Aziz Al-Saud's (Ibn Sa'ud) Policy of Restoration and Consolidation of the Saudi Power

### Occupation of Riyadh and After

The twentieth century saw state formation in the history of the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Ibn Sa'ud, the most potential leader of the Al Saud. It is to be recalled that the process of state or *emirate* formation or unification of the Arabian Peninsula had started in the interior of Arabia since the mid eighteenth century under the leadership of the Al Saud with the assistance of the Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab. The endeavours for state formation in the eighteenth century failed to a great extent as a result of external pressure pursued by the Ottoman Turkey.<sup>1</sup> The fragile attempt for the same of the Al Saud also came to an abrupt end at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of the challenge of the pro-Ottoman Rashidis of Hail in 1891 A.D. In comparison of the two earlier attempts of the Al Saud's state formation in the area understudy, the attempt of Ibn Sa'ud in the early phase of the twentieth century was no doubt different and distinct.<sup>2</sup> Last but not the least, Ibn Sa'ud of Arabia being an Arab leader (b. 1880) with a central Arabian background and having conservative and puritanical outlook, subsequently became the founder of a modern Kingdom with Najdi tribal support. He derived political inspiration from his ancestral history and from the religious teachings of the eighteenth century Islamic reformer, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab (1703-92).<sup>3</sup> With the passage of time, the success of this

---

<sup>1</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* .

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Abdul Jabbar Beg, "King 'Abd Al- 'Aziz al Sa'ud's Contribution to the Politics and Education of Arabia", *Muslim Education Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Cambridge, U.K., 1995, p. 55.

attempt led to the unification of the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula giving birth to a stable and durable realm incorporating Hejaz, Asir, Hasa and the central part of the Peninsula. This also resulted in the incorporation of diverse people and vast territories under the authority of the Al Saud.

It is to be noted that along with the Al Saud local rulers also had undertaken initiative to expand their authority over adjacent territories beyond their realm in the area under study since the eighteenth century. But they were not successful in their endeavours. This may be attributed to failure in the reciprocal competition, the lack of leadership potentiality, the pressure of external forces and the persuasion of sporadic attempts.<sup>4</sup> But the distinct and strategic efforts pursued by Ibn Sa'ud for the same bears the testimony of his political acumen.

It is to be noted that the death of Faisal the great in 1865 till the rise of Ibn Sa'ud in the beginning of the twentieth century, the political scene of Arabia saw Rashidian interregnum. It has already been mentioned earlier<sup>5</sup> that Riyadh came under the authority of the Rashidi *Amirs* at the end of the nineteenth century. The domain of the Rashidi *emirate* at that time included most of central Arabia including Najd. It extended from Hail in the north, to Qasim in the centre, and reached Riyadh in the south. Muhammad Ibn Rashid (1869-97) had already expelled the last Saudi ruler of Riyadh, Abdur Rahman, to Kuwait, where he lived under the patronage of Al Sabah. Muhammad's successor, Abdul Aziz Ibn Mutib Ibn Rashid (r.1897-1906), ruled this region through local chiefs and representatives. The *Amir* of Hail secured the approval of the Ottomans, who watched his increasing power with suspicion.

With the passage of time it became the motto of the Al Saud to occupy Riyadh from the hands of the Rashidis. Getting necessary preparation and evaluating an opportune time, Ibn Sa'ud launched an attack on Riyadh to

---

<sup>4</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Supra*, Chap. III, pp. 64-65.

foundation has thus been laid for the rising Saudi state, a new structure in the society of nations, forged on the anvil of adversity and inner conflict. Adversity was encountered in the changing pattern of contacts with the Turks, the British, and the adjoining states. Inner conflict stemmed from the rivalry of the powerful Hashimites and the hostility of the Rashidis of Hail and proverbial defection of the Bedouins. Through it all, the cementing zeal of the Wahhabi movement, the diplomatic skill of Ibn Sa'ud, and perhaps, the readiness of Arabia for a new order was discernible.

From 1902 to 1904, through a sequence of military campaigns, Ibn Sa'ud extended his authority all over the Najd. Ibn Sa'ud however, was now faced with a much greater task - unifying the various tribes in Arabia. Besides from marriage alliances, Abdul Aziz employed his unique personality in persuading the tribes for unification. This restoration resulted in subsequent expansion of the Saudi power to its ancestral domains toppling all rival forces, and it reached the highest goal when the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula was gradually unified by 1932. The rise and campaign of Ibn Sa'ud took place at a time when the Ottomans had lost its influence in Najd and the influential pro-Ottoman *Amir* Muhammad Ibn Rashid had passed away.

But the sudden rise of Ibn Sa'ud attracted the attention of the Ottoman Government, and they decided to face him from Hasa and the Shammar. Naturally Ibn Sa'ud had to struggle for a decade and succeeded in maintaining his existence and power from the Rashidian-Ottoman mechanism. It is to be noted that his drive for consolidation was quite successful to the extent that by the end of 1904 he had managed to break the stronghold of the Rashidis and pushed them to the area at Jabal Shammar in northern Najd. The Rashidis, desperately appealed to the Turks who sent them reinforcements. Nevertheless, Ibn Sa'ud's desert fighters kept control of the situation in Najd. Through diplomatic negotiations at one time, and guerilla warfare at another, Ibn Sa'ud forced the Ottoman Empire to recall its troops from Najd. Thus the demise of Abdul Aziz Ibn Mitab al-Rashid in 1906 and the voluntary



capture the city from the Rashidis. This enterprise was encouraged by the Al Sabah rulers of Kuwait because of the fact that they were frightened at the extension of Rashidi power over their own port.<sup>6</sup> The Rashidi alliance with the Ottoman Empire added fuel to the fears of the Al Sabah rulers. It is to be noted at this stage that the Kuwaiti rulers signed a protection treaty with Britain in 1899. The Anglo-Kuwaiti Agreement guaranteed the integrity of the Kuwaiti *emirate* and promised protection against outside attacks. The agreement also allowed Britain to extend its interests to the upper Gulf. From Kuwait Ibn Sa'ud gathered forty men in some accounts sixty men and headed towards Riyadh.<sup>7</sup> The capture of Riyadh was effected after surprising attack on the Rashidi garrison at night and killing Ibn Rashid's representative, Ajlan, on 15 January 1902.<sup>8</sup> The surprise attack and its success left Ibn Sa'ud as the master of Riyadh. The rest of the Al Saud family members came latter. After the occupation of Riyadh, his father, Abdur Rahman, who was the legal and rightful ruler of Najd, was recalled from Kuwait, and in a council formed of the *ulama* (religious leaders) and the notables, he abdicated his rights and declared Ibn Sa'ud his successor. In addition, he was declared *imam*.

The restoration of the Al Saud began with a series of remarkable successes under the leadership of Ibn Sa'ud. The rekindled Wahhabi spirit enabled him to defeat his rivals one after another. In this way during the next few years Ibn Sa'ud consolidated the outlying provinces and resisted the Turks in their support of Ibn Rashid. A Wahhabi victory at Bukairiya in 1904 was followed by Ibn Rashid's death and loss of Qasim in 1906.<sup>9</sup> This incident left Ibn Sa'ud master in the house of his ancestors with no dangerous interference from the north. This gave him undisputed control in the Najd. A

---

<sup>6</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Kishk, M., *al-Sa'udiyyun Wa al-hal al-islami* [The Sa'udis and the Islamic solution] (Massachusetts: 1981), p. 277; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> A. Vassilev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), p. 212; David Howarth, "The Recapture of Riyadh in 1901", *The Islamic Review*, June, 1965, pp. 5-7.

<sup>9</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1925*, Vol. 1, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 281.

foundation has thus been laid for the rising Saudi state, a new structure in the society of nations, forged on the anvil of adversity and inner conflict. Adversity was encountered in the changing pattern of contacts with the Turks, the British, and the adjoining states. Inner conflict stemmed from the rivalry of the powerful Hashimites and the hostility of the Rashidis of Hail and proverbial defection of the Bedouins. Through it all, the cementing zeal of the Wahhabi movement, the diplomatic skill of Ibn Sa'ud, and perhaps, the readiness of Arabia for a new order was discernible.

From 1902 to 1904, through a sequence of military campaigns, Ibn Sa'ud extended his authority all over the Najd. Ibn Sa'ud however, was now faced with a much greater task - unifying the various tribes in Arabia. Besides from marriage alliances, Abdul Aziz employed his unique personality in persuading the tribes for unification. This restoration resulted in subsequent expansion of the Saudi power to its ancestral domains toppling all rival forces, and it reached the highest goal when the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula was gradually unified by 1932. The rise and campaign of Ibn Sa'ud took place at a time when the Ottomans had lost its influence in Najd and the influential pro-Ottoman *Amir* Muhammad Ibn Rashid had passed away.

But the sudden rise of Ibn Sa'ud attracted the attention of the Ottoman Government, and they decided to face him from Hasa and the Shammar. Naturally Ibn Sa'ud had to struggle for a decade and succeeded in maintaining his existence and power from the Rashidian-Ottoman mechanism. It is to be noted that his drive for consolidation was quite successful to the extent that by the end of 1904 he had managed to break the stronghold of the Rashidis and pushed them to the area at Jabal Shammar in northern Najd. The Rashidis, desperately appealed to the Turks who sent them reinforcements. Nevertheless, Ibn Sa'ud's desert fighters kept control of the situation in Najd. Through diplomatic negotiations at one time, and guerilla warfare at another, Ibn Sa'ud forced the Ottoman Empire to recall its troops from Najd. Thus the demise of Abdul Aziz Ibn Mitab al-Rashid in 1906 and the voluntary

withdrawal of the Ottomans from the central Arabian strongholds paved the way for playing role to the cause of rapid and durable rise of Ibn Sa'ud. But in 1909-10, he had to face sudden challenges from the Ottomans and Rashidis of Hail. So he had to take cautious steps to overcome the complicated situation. He realized that in order to act in defiance of the Porte, he had to employ another power as a counterbalance to the Ottomans.<sup>10</sup> Following Mubarak's footsteps who obtained an independent status of Kuwait in 1899 with British protection and recognition, Ibn Sa'ud sought to assert himself as the independent ruler of Najd, by attaining British recognition of his status and protection from possible Ottoman reprisals. So he made a number of overtures to the British for enlisting the support and sympathy, but all these were overlooked by the latter. The nature of his dealings with the British will be dealt with latter on in this chapter.

At this stage he decided to confirm his position in the Najd by bringing the unruly Bedouins under his control. After suppressing the rebellion in the southern Najd, he turned his attention towards Hasa to occupy it from the hands of the Ottomans. He needed British help at this stage. But the British Government did not accept his plans of expansion towards eastern Arabia. This may be attributed to the fact that the British did not like to create any hindrance on the way to their imperial line of communication or to weaken their position in the ensuing international competition. They also did not like to create any sort of misunderstanding with the Ottomans at this stage of international adverse situation when alliance and friendship were essential. In spite of that he made a number of overtures for years together till 1913 to the British for the same.

It is to be recalled that after being established firmly in Riyadh, Ibn Sa'ud started a series of campaigns in southern and eastern Najd. The small towns of Arid, Washam, Sudayr and Kharj fell into his hands, Rashidi troops

---

<sup>10</sup> Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London: Frank Cass, 1976) pp. 20-22.

retreated into Qasim, now a buffer zone between their northern capital and the newly established Saudi domain in southern Najd. With the occupation of Riyadh and expansion in southern Najd, Qasim thereafter became the battleground between the Sa'udis and Rashidis in between 1902 and 1906.<sup>11</sup> In the struggle between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Sa'ud, the former was backed by the Ottomans morally and physically. The Ottomans sent troops and ammunitions to strengthen the power of Ibn Rashid so that he could face Ibn Sa'ud very effectively. This role of the Ottomans induced Ibn Sa'ud to secure an alliance with the Al Sabah rulers of Kuwait and also the approval of the British who regarded Ottoman support for Ibn Rashid as threatening and undermining to the cause of their own interests in Kuwait, the vulnerable vantage area of the Gulf.<sup>12</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud was determined to expand his realm in Qasim while Ibn Rashid was to protect it. Eventually under such circumstances, a battle took place in 1906 between them which is known in history as the battle of Rawdat al Muhanna. During the course of the battle the ruler of Hail, Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid lost his life and Ibn Sa'ud's success allowed him to incorporate Qasim in his realm. After the incorporation of Qasim Ibn Sa'ud was encouraged to expand his control beyond it. Thus by 1906 the major towns of Qasim, Unayzah and Buraydah came under his control.<sup>13</sup> The new Rashidi ruler *Amir* Saud Ibn Abdul al Aziz Ibn Rashid retreated to his capital and what remained of Turkish troops returned to Medina and Basra. The Ottomans confirmed Ibn Sa'ud as *de facto* ruler of Qasim and southern Najd. Ibn Sa'ud was first appointed *qaimmaqam* of Qasim and latter *Wali* of Najd. It seems that the Ottomans had to accept the partition of Najd between the Sa'udis and the Rashidis.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive study of Ibn Saud's strategy, See Jacob Goldberg's unpublished Ph.D dissertation, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Saudi State 1902-1918*, Harvard University, 1978. Chapter- III; cited in *Ibid*.

<sup>12</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

On the other hand, early in the summer of 1910 the first confrontation took place between the *Sharif* of Mecca, Husain Ibn 'Ali, and Ibn Sa'ud. The enmity and rivalry between the two was not to end until the latter took the Hejaz sixteen years later. Husain succeeded to his post in 1908 and held great influence in the Moslem world as custodian of Mecca and Medina. He was appointed by imperial *firman* and as a member of the Quraish tribe and the family of Hashim he was generally believed to be a lineal descendant of Muhammad. Since his accession to the *Sharifate*, Husain, an ambitious man as his subsequent career eloquently reflects, had sought to restore the influence of his office which had dwindled under his predecessor.<sup>15</sup> Having spent fifteen years in Constantinople with his family as an 'honoured guest' of Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876-1909), Husain had been well-schooled in the devious traits required for survival in the corruption and decadence which characterized the twilight period of the Ottoman Empire. Although no friend of the Turks he did have a Turkish veneer.<sup>16</sup> Husain's ambition, coupled with the influence of the Turkish officials in the Hejaz which had been increasing since the late nineteenth century,<sup>17</sup> naturally antagonized Ibn Sa'ud.

In the autumn of 1911 relations between Ibn Sa'ud and Husain deteriorated further. The Acting Consul in Jeddah reported that all communication between Najd and the Hejaz had stopped. Apparently Ibn Sa'ud, in consolidating his power, was levying taxes on the 'Ataiba tribe which was reported as being 'the mainstay and backbone of the *Sharif's* authority in the country...'<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> G. de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca* (London: George Harrap & Co., 1951), p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-262. See also C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century* (Luzac: 1931). There was a Turkish Vali in the Hedjaz and, in addition to Turkish barracks in the main cities, there was a considerable garrison in Medina.

### Ibn Sa'ud's policy towards the British and the Ottomans

It is to be mentioned here that while he was busy in restoring himself and his dynasty in the Peninsula Ibn Sa'ud had to pursue at this stage a very calculated and diplomatic policy. With his capture of Riyadh in 1902 and the re-establishment of Al-Sa'ud in Najd, Ibn Sa'ud began to implement his strategy aimed at obtaining independence from the Ottomans through the support and protection of Great Britain. Britain was, at that time, the only power with vital interests and effective strength in the Persian Gulf. Drawing a lesson from past Ottoman retaliations at manifestations of Saudi independence, which had culminated in the destruction of the first Saudi State in 1818.<sup>19</sup> Ibn Sa'ud pursued a much more cautious approach than his predecessors. He realized that his goals - expansion in order to restore all the previous dominions of the House of Sa'ud-entailed an inevitable confrontation with the Ottomans. So he understood that in order to act in defiance of the Porte, he had to employ another power as a counterbalance to the Ottomans.<sup>20</sup> In pursuing this strategy, Ibn Sa'ud was an astute student of his political mentor, the Kuwaiti ruler Mubarak, at whose court Ibn Sa'ud had his first exposure to international politics during the 1893-1901 period of Saudi exile.<sup>21</sup> After several abortive attempts, in 1899 Mubarak finally succeeded in carving an independent status for Kuwait, when obtaining formal British protection and recognition of Kuwait's autonomy under vague Ottoman suzerainty.<sup>22</sup> Following in Mubarak's footsteps, Ibn Sa'ud sought to assert himself as the independent ruler of Najd, by attaining British recognition of his status and protection from possible Ottoman reprisals.

---

<sup>19</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia* Vol. I (Calcutta: Gamet Publishing House, new edition, 1986), pp. 1088-89; cited in Jacob Goldberg, "Philby as a source for Early Twentieth Century Saudi History", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, April, 1985, No. 2, p. 225 (hereafter *MES*).

<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive study of Ibn Saud's strategy, see Jacob Goldbergs unpublished Ph.D dissertation, "The Foreign Policy of the Third Saudi State 1902-1918" (Harvard University, 1978), Chapter III.

<sup>21</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, pp. 1014-1016.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. J. B. Kelly, 'Salisbury, Curzon and the Kuwaiti Agreement of 1899', in K. Bourne and D.C. Watt (ed.), *Studies in International History* (London: 1967); cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 225.

Indicative of the importance Ibn Sa'ud attached to the British component of his strategy is the letter he addressed to the chief British representative in the Persian Gulf just four months after his recovery of Riyadh.

'I have no wish to look anyone but yourself because of the favours and protection you extend to all those who placed themselves under your eyes. May the eyes of the British Government be fixed upon us... I did not see fit to go to other than your Government to consider me as one of their prote'ge's.'<sup>23</sup>

But the British Government did not pay heed to it and even answer Ibn Sa'ud's letter. The Saudi Chief was a central Arabian ruler, clearly within the sphere of Ottoman sovereignty, while British interests were confined merely to the Persian Gulf Coasts for maintaining and protecting their imperial life line. Hence, Ibn Sa'ud could not be treated with the same considerations that had led to the establishment of British protection over Kuwait.<sup>24</sup>

But Ibn Sa'ud did not fail to realize the gravity of the situation. So he did not give up his endeavours to draw the attention of the British. In the following ten years he made no less than nine overtures to the British Government aimed at establishing relations and obtaining protection. During 1904 and 1905, however, his overtures were of a distinctly different nature. Having brought the area of Qasim under his control in April 1904. Ibn Sa'ud became the master of central and southern Najd. As such, he assumed the title of '*Amir* of Najd', hitherto held by Ibn Rashid.<sup>25</sup> The Ottomans were naturally alarmed at this development because they regarded it as disruption of the balance of forces between the two local rivals in Najd, a balance upon which their policy rested. The Porte perceived Ibn Sa'ud's newly established

---

<sup>23</sup> Abdur Rahman (Ibn Sa'ud's father) to Kembell, 14 May, 1902, Public Record Office, *Foreign Office Files* F.O., 406/16, p. 102; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 225.

<sup>24</sup> Government of India (G.1) to Kembell, 23 June, 1902, *Ibid.*; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 225.

<sup>25</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., 406/18, pp. 31-32.

predominant position in Najd as a threat to Ottoman interests, and more particularly as a potential danger if he allied himself with the British. Constantinople was clearly concerned lest the precedent of the British protectorate over Kuwait repeat itself in central Arabia. The Porte decided, therefore, to despatch a large force into Najd in order to support Ibn Rashid, suppress Ibn Sa'ud and rectify the situation by 'driving Ibn Sa'ud's Wahhabis out of the Ottoman territory of Qasim.'<sup>26</sup>

This attitude of the Porte alarmed Ibn Sa'ud to a great extent. Being confronted with the Ottoman military force, Ibn Sa'ud tried once again to elicit British support. Despite London's previous rejections, he assumed that the ominous sight of a sizable Ottoman military expedition would induce the reluctant British to revise their indifferent attitude. Accordingly on 2 May 1904, he addressed a letter to the British Resident in the Gulf, Percy Cox, protesting against 'Ottoman invasion', and requesting the urgent protection of Great Britain for him and his country.<sup>27</sup> But London once again ignored the Saudi plea. Left with no other choice, the Sa'udis fought the Ottomans, and in the decisive battle at Qasr Ibn Uqayl in late September 1904 the Ottoman force was utterly defeated.<sup>28</sup> The Porte decided immediately to despatch a second and larger expedition into Najd, and in late December 1904, 7000 Ottoman troops concentrated on the Iraqi-Najd border.<sup>29</sup>

Being frightened at this development, Ibn Sa'ud tried to draw the attention of the British. Faced with an Ottoman expedition of such large proportions, Ibn Sa'ud approached the British once more, this time through Mubarak hoping thereby to overcome British reluctance to deal with him directly. During January 1905, the Kuwaiti ruler repeatedly impressed upon

---

<sup>26</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., 406/18, pp. 26, 27, 35 & 59; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 226.

<sup>27</sup> Ibn Sa'ud to Cox, 2 May, 1904, Public Record Office, F.O., 406/18, p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, p. 1148.

<sup>29</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., 406/20, pp. 74-75; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 226.



S.F.Knowx, the British political Agent in Kuwait, the expediency and the urgency extending British protection to Ibn Sa'ud. Mubarak warned that if British support failed to materialize, Ibn Sa'ud would have no other alternative but to accept Ottoman terms which were bound to be detrimental to British interests in the area. But London ruled out any British assistance to Ibn Sa'ud, and the latter, indeed refrained from a military confrontation with the Ottomans and accepted their terms for a settlement.<sup>30</sup> This sort of settlement, of course, gave him opportunity to make more contact with the British, the then only big power in the area.

In 1906, Ibn Sa'ud introduced a new dimension to his overtures to the British. Whereas his previous approaches were essentially of a defensive nature, this one was clearly related to Saudi offensive designs. In February, a Saudi emissary approached the British Political Agent in Bahrain with the following proposal: Ibn Sa'ud felt himself strong enough to drive the Ottomans out of the province of Hasa (the Gulf Coastal Strip stretching from Kuwait to Qatar). He was concerned, however, that the Porte might retaliate by a military expedition from the sea which he could not repulse. His expulsion of the Ottomans from Hasa could, therefore, be a lasting success only if the British Government undertook to protect his littoral from an Ottoman sea invasion. But the British were, of course, reluctant to enter into any such schemes and did not even respond to Ibn Sa'ud's overture. This, however, did not discourage Ibn Sa'ud from repeating the same overture in October 1906, only to be rebuffed again by British indifference to his requests for support.<sup>31</sup> It is to be noted here that at the time of his rising the situation of the world was gradually deteriorating. The Big powers were looking for allies with the apprehension of great catastrophe. This development might have influenced Ibn Sa'ud to formulate his policy and strategy.

---

<sup>30</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., 406/20, pp. 69-70.

<sup>31</sup> Prideaux (Political Agent, Bahrain) to Cox, 12 February and 17 November, 1906, Public Record Office, F.O., 406/28, p. 6 and Public Record Office, F.O., 371/345, 10143/11 respectively; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, pp. 226-227.

Ibn Sa'ud's overtures for years together demonstrate that he perceived the British as instrumental in his relations with the Ottomans in three respects. Firstly, he needed Britain's long-term recognition and protection if he were ever to secure independence from the Ottomans, hence the reference to 'protection' and 'protégés' in his overtures. Secondly, he needed immediate British support, as a last resort, whenever an Ottoman attack was imminent, feeling incapable of defending himself on his own. Thirdly, he needed a prior British guarantee of help if he were to recover the province of Hasa from the Ottomans.<sup>32</sup> It is also evident from the above that he followed the policy of appeasement to implement his design of a sovereign independent ruler in the area.

Being a calculated diplomat and far-sighted politician, Ibn Sa'ud, at the same time, did not fail to follow the policy of submission towards the Ottomans. This may be attributed to the less British interests of Ibn Sa'ud's design. Ibn Sa'ud's policy towards the Sublime Porte was thus a direct function of his failure to convince Britain to establish a protectorate over Najd and to elicit British support as a counterbalance to Ottoman power.<sup>33</sup> Unlike his predecessors who endeavoured to challenge the Sulltan and deprive him of this Islamic legitimacy, Ibn Sa'ud strove to avoid a confrontation with the full power of the Ottomans. He knew that the Porte kept a close watch on the growth of the Saudi power in Najd and viewed it with increasing disfavour. Consequently he sought to minimize the impact of his constant expansion, and pre-empt its interpretation by the Ottomans as a direct challenge to their authority in Arabia. Hence, Ibn Sa'ud consistently recognized Ottoman sovereignty over his territories and portrayed his activity in Arabia as aimed against Ibn Rashid, his local rival, and not against the Porte.

Illustrative of the importance Ibn Sa'ud attached to appeasing the Ottomans is the fact that he lost no time in approaching them after he had recaptured Riyadh in early 1902. He notified the Porte, through the *Wali* of

---

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 227.

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 229.

Basra, that his recovery of Riyadh was aimed at retrieving his ancestors' dominions from the Rashidi usurpers and not against the Ottomans. The central theme in Ibn Sa'ud's approach was his assurance and promise to rule his territory as a loyal subject of the *Sultan*.<sup>34</sup> This sort of Sa'udi recognition of the Ottoman sovereignty over Najd was also reflected in the subsequent events of the area. Following the defeat he had inflicted on the Ottoman expedition at the Qasr Ibn Uqayl battle in September 1904, Ibn Sa'ud was anxious lest the Porte take the matter seriously and view it as a direct challenge. The Ottomans could react by massing a second, much more sizable, military expedition which might have crushed the Sa'udis altogether. Alarmed at the decisiveness of his own victory, Ibn Sa'ud decided to approach the Ottomans with a view to minimizing the significance of their defeat and pre-empting any possible Ottoman reprisals. Accordingly, just days after the battle, he addressed a letter to the acting *Wali* of Basra, Fakhri Pasha, and asked that it be transmitted to Constantinople. As the apologetic letter is illustrative of Ibn Sa'ud's general policy towards the Porte, it is instructive to reproduce some of its main points:

My family has of old been known to be loyal to the State (i.e. the Porte) and especially to the Commander of the faithful (i.e. the *Sultan*). But certain intriguing officials, egged on by the tyrant Ibn Rashid, has culminated us... seeing this, all the inhabitants prevent Ibn Rashid's tyrannical murderous designs. Thus this service proceeded from our affection and loyalty to the state. I beg that our leader of loyalty may be accepted as heretofore. I am ready to perform any service to the state and guarantee on oath the security of the roads and pilgrims. I beg that my submission may be accepted.<sup>35</sup>

A month latter, he sent a direct telegram to the *Sultan*, once again professing loyalty to the Sublime Porte.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, p. 1144.

<sup>35</sup> Abdur Rahman Ibn Sa'ud to Fakhri Pasha, n.d. (no date) in Fakhri to the Grand vizir, 8 October, 1904, Public Record Office, F.O., 406/18, p. 85; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 230.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Sa'ud to the *Sultan* and to the *Wali* of Basra, 16 November, 1904, Public Record Office, F.O., 406/20, pp. 6-7; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 230.

In spite of this, the Ottomans did not accept with good grace Ibn Sa'ud's rising influence. So, they were determined to despatch a second military expedition, this time consisting of 7,000 troops as stated earlier. Seriously alarmed by this new contingency, Ibn Sa'ud rushed letters to the Grand *Sharif* in Mecca and the *Wali* of the Hejaz, asking them to forward the following message to the *Sultan*:

'I have no idea of revolting against the Ottoman Government nor to disobey its orders. I am willing to accept my reasonable terms imposed on me by the Imperial Government and to carry them out faithfully. I am sorry for having fought Ottoman troops in Najd, but as they were helping my antagonist, Ibn Rashid, I was obliged to do so in self-defence'.<sup>37</sup>

As noted above, Britain's refusal to grant the Saudi ruler protection forced him, due to his reluctance to have a showdown with the Ottoman expedition, to accept the Porte's terms for a settlement. Accordingly, once the British turned down his overture in late January 1905, he asked to meet the *Wali* of Basra in order to reach an understanding. Prior to the meeting, he once again approached the Porte, stating he was 'one of the faithful servants of the shadow of God (i.e. the *Sultan*) whose family has lavished its blood in the glorious service of the Caliphate', and declaring himself 'submissive to every order and command' of the Porte.<sup>38</sup> In February 1905, Ibn Sa'ud's father and the *Wali* of Basra met and reached an agreement. According to its terms, Ibn Sa'ud was nominated *Qa'im-Maqam* of the Qadha of southern Najd on behalf of the Ottoman Government, but the controversial Qasim area remained outside of the Saudi territory, to be ruled and garrisoned directly by the Ottomans.<sup>39</sup> Not only did Ibn Sa'ud recognize Ottoman authority, but he

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Sa'ud to the *Sultan*, 10 December, 1904, *Ibid.*, p. 73; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 231.

<sup>38</sup> Abdur Rahman Ibn Sa'ud to the *Sultan*, 28 January, 1905, Public Record Office, F.O., 406/18, pp. 81-82; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 231.

<sup>39</sup> For the agreement see Public Record Office, F.O., 406/21, pp. 89-90 & Public Record Office, F.O., 406/22, p. 47; J.G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, p. 1150. The Ottoman administration was organized in the following order; the smallest unit was *Nahiya* ruled by a *Mudir*

also assumed Ottoman titles for himself and the territories under his control. The Saudi entity became *Qadha* in the *Sanjaq* of Najd in the *Wilayet* of Basra. Ibn Sa'ud was, thus, two ranks below the *Wali*; not merely an Ottoman vassal, but a low ranking one, to be sure.

An agreement having been concluded, the Ottoman military force turned into a peaceful expedition which entered Qasim in early April 1905. The Ottoman flag was hoisted, salute fired, prayers for the *Sultan* read and administrative Ottoman posts established. Ottoman authority over Najd was all but fully re-asserted. On this occasion, Ibn Sa'ud telegraphed the Porte, offering numerous expressions of loyalty and submission, and describing himself as 'the obedient servant of our Lord, the Great Caliph'.<sup>40</sup> This sort of Ibn Sa'ud's policy towards the British on the one hand and towards the Ottomans on the other was nothing but his diplomatic endeavours to maintain his position all through without antagonizing the latter, the real authority of the area during the period of his rising to power and position.

Thus it is seen that after the capture of Riyadh in 1902 and the re-establishment of Al-Saud in Najd induced Ibn Sa'ud to pursue the policy of implementing his strategy aimed at obtaining independence from the Ottomans through the support and protection of Great Britain, the then only European power active in the Persian Gulf with vital interests and effective strength.<sup>41</sup> In this way from time to time, during the preceding dozen years before the occupation of Hasa he had tried in vain to interest the British Government in the idea of guaranteeing his position in Arabia against aggression from any quarter. A central motive of Ibn Sa'ud's overtures to the British during this period was his desire to wrest Hasa, which had been an integral part of the first and second Sa'udi States, from the Ottomans. In other

---

then-Qadha ruled by a *Qa'immaqam*; then *Sanjaq* ruled by a *Mutasarrif*, and the highest unit *Wilaya*, ruled by a *Wali*.

<sup>40</sup> Fayzi to the *Wali* of Basra, n.d. Public Record Office, F.O., 406/22, pp. 39 & 54-55; Abd al-Rahman Ibn Sa'ud to the *Sultan*, 4 April, 1905, *Ibid.*, p. 30; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1985, p. 231.

<sup>41</sup> Foreign Office, 'Memorandum on British Commitments to Bin Sa'ud', pp. 8-10; December, 1918, cited in Jacob Goldberg, "The 1913 Saudi Occupation of Hasa Reconsidered", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 22.

words, in this way for years together Ibn Sa'ud conceived of the occupation of Hasa only in the context of a prior understanding with Britain i.e., that London would protect him against a possible Ottoman counter attack from the Gulf. Ibn Sa'ud's intention to occupy Hasa emanated, undoubtedly, from his desire to restore all the provinces which had previously been integral part of his forefathers' dominions. But in spite of Saudi overtures, Britain had no stomach for involvement in the diplomatic appeasement of Turkey to the utmost extent compatible with the protection of his interests in the Gulf. Thus with the Turks in control of the Hasa province, since 1871 and Britain in virtual possession of all the other outlets on the Arabian coast from Kuwait to Masqat, Ibn Sa'ud was shut into the desert and even there, exposed to attacks from north and west by enemies enjoying the support and encouragement of the Turks.<sup>42</sup> Ibn Sa'ud wanted to bring an end of this situation and decided to occupy Hasa. In addition it may be noted that the resources of Najd had been exhausted to the utmost in the wars with Ibn Rashid and that it was essential for the Saudis, on economic grounds, to recover Hasa - one of the most productive regions of Arabia - from where they could raise a great deal of revenue.<sup>43</sup> This potentiality is attributed to the fact that Hasa had three important ports: Uqayr, Qatif and Jubayl and the taxes Ibn Sa'ud could levy on all imports and exports passing through these ports were an easy and constant source of revenue. In view of heavy commercial traffic passing through the Gulf, a very considerable income could have been derived.

This is why Ibn Sa'ud proposed a secret understanding with the British Government. First, he would appeal to the Porte for the governorship of Hasa, and should his application be approved, he would declare himself independent at an opportune moment. In case of rejection, he would invade the province unaided and drive the Ottomans out of it, provided he knew he could rely on British naval protection to deter an Ottoman counter-attack from the sea. In either case, a public appeal for British protection would be made only after rupture. In return, Ibn Sa'ud would enter into a treaty, similar to that

---

<sup>42</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia* (London: Earnest Benn Limited, first published 1955), p. 260.

<sup>43</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 23.

contracted by the coastal chiefs (Kuwait, Bahrain, the Trucial Coast and Masqat) in the 1890s, and accept a British political Agent at his court in Riyadh.<sup>44</sup> But in spite of such endeavours, the British did not pay heed to the appeal of Ibn Sa'ud prior to the reoccupation of al-Hasa.

It was not until 1911 that Ibn Sa'ud renewed his overtures to the British, this time in a meeting with Captain W.I.H. Shakespear, the recently appointed British Political Agent in Kuwait. The Political Agent had been on a tour of the Kuwait hinterland when he was invited to Ibn Sa'ud's camp. Shakespear was again favourably impressed by Ibn Sa'ud. Ibn Sa'ud explained to the Political Agent that he wanted the Turks driven out of Hasa and Qatif because these constituted part of the traditional Wahhabi domains. Moreover, these districts were also the richest provinces and Turkish control over them made it difficult for him to control the tribes between Riyadh and the sea. Ibn Sa'ud wanted the British to protect him from invasion by sea and would be pleased to accept a British Agent after the Turks had been driven out. Although Shakespear explained to the Wahhabi chief that Great Britain was not in a position to support him, the latter still requested that his views be made known to the British Government.

It is to be noted that after an extensive discussion with Captain Shakespear, Ibn Sa'ud understood why Britain could not treat him on an equal basis with all other Gulf rulers. As British interests in the area were confined to the Gulf coasts, a central Arabian ruler like Ibn Sa'ud lay beyond the sphere of these interests and Britain, therefore, would not enter into relations with him. The only way out of this seeming deadlock was for Ibn Sa'ud to occupy Hasa, consolidate himself within the British sphere of interest and *ipso facto* 'force' the British to reverse their previous reluctance to establish relations with him.<sup>45</sup> His previous perception that the conquest of Hasa required a prior understanding with Britain in order to frustrate an Ottoman attack was

---

<sup>44</sup> For the text of the agreement with Masqat and Bahrain See, J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East* (Princeton: D Van Nostrand Company Limited Inc., 1956), pp. 208-209.

<sup>45</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 232.

replaced now by the assumption that, with a Saudi conquest of Hasa as a *fait accompli*, the British by virtue of their century-old policy, would have to prevent such an attack.<sup>46</sup> He decided to occupy Hasa in 1913 assuming that the British Government would come to his aid by preventing an Ottoman expedition even without a prior Saudi-British understanding. But before making the final decision to occupy Hasa, Ibn Sa'ud had to ascertain one more fact. He was well aware of Britain's hegemony in the Persian Gulf and her interest in maintaining tranquility along its shores. And he was apprehensive lest Britain regard his conquest of Hasa as a hostile action bound to degenerate disorder in the Persian Gulf. As the desire to avert any possible rift with Britain was a constant guideline in his policies, Ibn Sa'ud wished to ascertain in advance Britain's attitude towards his move. His meeting with Shakespear in March 1913 provided him with this opportunity. Shakespear tried to dissuade the Saudi chief from occupying Hasa on the ground of a possible German reaction, but he did not make any reference whatsoever to a possible British disapproval of Saudi acts.<sup>47</sup> This reply of Shakespear encouraged Ibn Sa'ud to a great extent to move against Hasa.

But he had to wait for an opportune time. In spite of that Ibn Sa'ud thought that Hasa was not Riyadh, where the adversaries overthrown were the local Rashidis, but a stronghold of the Ottomans themselves, who would most probably have interpreted their defeat as a severe challenge to their authority and consequently would seek to retaliate. In addition, the dangers involved in the calculated risk Ibn Sa'ud was willing to take in 1913, that is, that the British would have to prevent an Ottoman attack were of much graver proportions than those he faced in 1902. Whereas in 1902 the Saudis, while in exile, had nothing to lose if their adventure proved abortive; now in 1913, having re-established their state and consolidated their position in central Arabia, there was too much to lose should the Porte decide to resort to

---

<sup>46</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 25-26.



massive retaliation and Britain refused to intervene. Ibn Sa'ud was fully aware of the destruction of the first Saudi state hardly a century ago by the Ottoman Empire in retaliation for Saudi conquests. But he was not concerned so much with an Ottoman land expedition since the Arabian desert was his best ally and the Ottoman's worst enemy. Besides, the Porte would probably be deterred from dispatching land expeditions into Arabia in view of the 1904-6 disastrous precedents. But a major naval expeditions into Arabia from the east which conceivably could be combined with a Rashidi attack from the north was something else. Hence the problem was beset with fixing the timing of Hasa's occupation and it was thought favourable when the Ottomans became weaker to retaliate for the expulsion of the Sa'udis from Hasa in the form of a major attack by Sea.

Ibn Sa'ud followed closely Ottoman difficulties in various parts of their Empire. For the whole of 1912 they were engaged in a war against the Italians in North Africa following the latter's conquest of Tripoli.<sup>48</sup> At same time they had to involve in the Balkan wars (1912-1913). During the first Balkan war that broke out in 1912, the Serbs marched on Salonika and the Bulgarians on Constantinople, endangering the Empire at its very centre. So great was the perceived danger that the Porte decided to recall many of the troops from different places of Arab land and transfer them to capital. This caused significant reduction of Ottoman troops from Hufuf, Qatif and Uqayr of the Arabian Peninsula. This situation was fully utilized by Ibn Sa'ud. After proper verification of the Ottoman weakness Ibn Sa'ud made up his mind to move against Hasa. Before he moved against Hasa, he put emphasis on the formation of the *Ikhwan*.. He got help from the *Mutawwa'a* in this regard.

---

<sup>48</sup> Cf. M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1966), pp. 287-291.

### Ibn Sa'ud and the *Mutawwa'a* of Najd

The people of Najd having religious knowledge were known in the local dialect as *mutawwa'a*.<sup>49</sup> With the passage of time the theme of the term *mutawwa'a* has been changed. At present the term *mutawwa'a* refers to a specific profession within a religious establishment. But at the beginning of the twentieth century the term carried the wider meaning. In 1900 a *mutawwa'* was a member of the *hadar* who had acquired a religious education after a period of study with a distinguished member of the *ulama*, based in the main towns of southern Najd (mainly Riyadh) and Qasim ('Unazah) after which he became a specialist in jurisprudence and matters relating to *ibada* (Islamic rituals). The term *mutawwa* embodies both obedience and compulsion. A *mutawwa* was a volunteer who enforced obedience to Islam and performance of its rituals.<sup>50</sup>

The *mutawwa'a* being a Najdi phenomenon differed from religious scholars in other parts of the Islamic world who were commonly called *ulama*.<sup>51</sup> From historical point of view it is evident that the Najdi men of religion often studied, taught and applied Hanbali *fiqh* only, and considered other branches of the religious and linguistic sciences as intellectual luxuries that were not needed in their own society.<sup>52</sup> Having expertise on the *fiqh*, they are rightly be called 'religious ritual specialists' or simply 'ritual specialists'. But the term *ulama* bears the image of religious scholars having the knowledge and expertise of religious science in addition to *fiqh*. After examining the prevailing situation it is presumed that with the exception of some of the descendants of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, known as *Al Shaikh*, and a handful of other Najdi personalities who had maintained a tradition of wide religious scholarship since the eighteenth century, the majority of Najdi men

---

<sup>49</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Al-Juhany, M. 'The History of Najd prior to the Wahhabi s: A Study of Social, Political, Economic and Religious Conditions in Najd during Three Centuries preceding the Wahhabi Reform Movement', Ph.D thesis, University of Washington, 1983, p. 252; cited in *Ibid.*

of religion were of the *mutawwa'a*. They were preoccupied with ritualistic Islam and exhibited limited expertise in theology. They practiced their expertise in conjunction with agriculture and trade.<sup>53</sup>

It is to be noted at this stage that most Saudi chroniclers of Najdi *ulama* find no distinction between the *ulama* and the *mutawwa'a*.<sup>54</sup> In their accounts they preferred to put all Najdi men of religion as *ulama*. But it is not accurate to call the early twentieth - century Najdi *fiqh* specialists *ulama*. Because of the fact that Najd did have no important centre for religious learning comparable to Mecca, Cairo and Najaf. With the exception of handful of *ulama* in Riyadh and Qasim, the majority of religious specialists were in fact *Mutawwa'a*.<sup>55</sup>

The enforcement of ritualistic Islam by the Najdi *mutawwa* played a very vital role in the process of state formation. Between 1902 and 1932 the regime of 'discipline and punishment' enforced by the *Mutawwa'a* was essential for domesticating the Arabian population into accepting the political authority of Ibn Sa'ud after he captured Riyadh in 1902.<sup>56</sup>

Najdi ritual specialists needed a politico - military personality, a symbolic *imam* to endorse their cause and this they found in Ibn Sa'ud. Naturally as soon as Ibn Sa'ud entered Riyadh they declared him their *imam* with the inherent hope of developing their own ascendancy.<sup>57</sup> The symbolic title of *imam* gave him the legitimate authority. In return, the *Mutawwa'a* were assured of sympathetic political and military leadership. It is to be noted that they did not consider Ibn Sa'ud as their *Amir* or tribal *Shaikh*. They rather considered him only their *imam*, a title impregnated with the same religious symbolism that had already been granted to his ancestors. It ought to be

---

<sup>53</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit*, p. 50.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

mentioned here that the *Mutawwa'a* were not only his instructors during his years of exile in Kuwait, but also his maternal kin and latter his affines.<sup>58</sup> From the age of seven, the young Ibn Sa'ud had been associated with some religious authority of several religious figures who taught him 'the doctrine of *tawhid* and *fiqh* through a pamphlet especially prepared for him'. Initiation in these two areas seemed important for Ibn Sa'ud by the *Mutawwa'a*.<sup>59</sup>

The majority of the *Mutawwa'a* emerged from the sedentary population of the oases of Najd who had already existed there as a socio-religious group keeping in close association with the teachings of the reformer Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab since the eighteenth century.<sup>60</sup> Such religious specialists had existed in almost every town and oasis in Najd even before the reform movement had gathered momentum in the eighteenth century. A good number of mosques sprang up for discussion. In all these centres the religious scholars used to teach the principles of faith and Islamic rituals. The disciples of the religious centres with their Islamic knowledge became the mosque *imams* and preachers of religious rituals.<sup>61</sup> In addition to that the disciples having more sophisticated religious knowledge were employed as judges and they administered the *shari'a* under the patronage of local *Amirs*. In this way reciprocal relationship developed, and a holy alliance took place between Ibn Sau'd and the Najdi ritual specialists (i.e. *Mutawwa'a*). This was an important phenomenon in the subsequent history of Najd and as well as the whole of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>62</sup>

This sort of holy alliance between the politico - religious leader Ibn Sau'd and the Najdi ritual specialists drew the attention of the political

---

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Al-Zirkili, K. *Shibh al-jazira fi' and al-malik 'abd al-'aziz* (The Arabian Peninsula during the period of King 'Abd al-Aziz), 1st (edn.), Vol 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1970); cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

thinkers, and proved an important factor for understanding the origins of the Saudi polity in the twentieth century. This alliance continued for the time ahead, and it acted as a fruitful mechanism in the process of state formation to the cause of their own and Saudi interests.<sup>63</sup> The Wahhabi training predisposed them towards an idea of the state as a partnership between the symbolic *imam*, 'leader of the community', and a religious specialists, the former enforcing the religious rulings of the latter.<sup>64</sup> It is important to note that this idea of partnership was not the outcome of the *mutawwa'a*'s own intellectual activity, but had already been developed by more established men of religion, several of them descendants of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, who were of the *'ulama* type.<sup>65</sup>

Wahhabi religious specialists accepted the doctrine that power is legitimate if it is seized. It is incumbent upon all the subjects to be obedient to him whoever holds this power.<sup>66</sup> This theory indicates that it is quite natural to switch allegiance from one ruler to another. Wahhabi specialists thus proved themselves pragmatic in the sense that they were able to show and switch allegiance from one ruler to another without doctrinal difficulties.<sup>67</sup>

In the Wahhabi idea of the state Ibn Sa'ud found a conceptual framework crucial for the consolidation of his rule. He was granted legitimacy as long as he championed the cause of the religious specialists, becoming the guardian of ritualistic Islam. His legitimacy sprang from the recognition and enforcement of the *sharia*, a divine law above him and independent of his will.<sup>68</sup> As long as he allowed himself to be governed by this law and the way it was interpreted by the Riyadh *'ulama*, he was able to rule. Such concepts of

---

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Al-Azmeh, *A Islam and Modernity* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 107.

<sup>67</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>68</sup> *Azmeh, op.cit.*, p. 230.

authority and power were crucial for promoting ambitious leadership. Often the *mutawwa'a* arrived among the tribal confederations before the arrival of Ibn Sa'ud's raiding troops. Among the sedentary population, the *mutawwa'a* were already part of the community as a socio-religious group. They facilitated Saudi expansion by familiarizing the population with the above mentioned ideas.<sup>69</sup>

It is to be noted that though the *mutawwa'a* played a very vital role in motivating the people towards Wahhabi doctrine, they had little idea about the nature of Islamic theory of state. This may be attributed to the fact that they had no expertise in such theoretical matters. It is evident that *mutawwa'a* were confined to teaching of the Quran and *ibada*, in which they had a distinct specialization.<sup>70</sup> In addition, they preached the importance of obedience to *Wali al-amr*, leader of the Muslim community. This sort of obedience ought to be shown through the payment of *zakat* and responding to his call for *jihad*. The *zakat* and *jihad* were in conformity with the Wahhabi idea of the state and were considered crucial mechanism for its consolidation.<sup>71</sup>

In addition, these religious specialists being an indigenous community and having specialization in the administration of *fiqh*, fostered the others in pursuing the knowledge of all sorts of Islamic rituals including the main five. These ritual specialists thus became the nucleus of the committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Prohibition of Vice.<sup>72</sup>

The *mutawwa'a* of Najd pushed the whole communities in the art of obedience and submission. Though this submission was meant to be to the Almighty Lord, yet in practice it implied that without submission to the political authority of Ibn Sa'ud, the faith and deeds of Muslims would be threatened.

---

<sup>69</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

Najdi religious specialists were dispatched to sedentary communities and tribal confederations alike.<sup>73</sup> Although they openly practiced their preaching and peacefully invited people to return to the true path of Islam, they often had to use violence against those who refused to submit to their authority. They themselves were permitted to carry out physical punishment. They were often remembered as wandering with a long stick, which they used now and then to punish any reluctance to perform the prescribed rituals.<sup>74</sup>

From historical point of view it is presumed that most of the ritual specialists originated in the small settlements of southern Najd and Qasim. In local terminology they were *hadar*, who had not retained genealogical links with the tribal confederations.<sup>75</sup> But some ritual specialists claimed descent from well-known sedentary groups in the Arabian social hierarchy (for example Banu Tamin), while others had lost both the connection and the memory of such descent.<sup>76</sup>

Their religious specialization was combined with worldly endeavours such as trade and agriculture.<sup>77</sup> While a minority of specialists attained wealth as a result of involvement in the trade network between Najd, Iraq, the Arabian Gulf and India, the majority remained poor and provincial. In spite of their social status and values they possessed knowledge and morality.<sup>78</sup>

It is to be noted that whenever they showed excessive zeal for the application of their ideas and teachings, a higher political authority was often capable of undermining their rulings.<sup>79</sup> Their decisions could not always be enforced without the consent of the local *Amir*. This happened in case of

---

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab who was expelled from Uyainah in the eighteenth century when he came in conflict with the political leadership over the question of excessive application of the rules of *sharia*.<sup>80</sup>

Among the monadic sections of the tribal confederations, religious specialists were virtually unknown, and were often not consulted if there was an alternative value system deriving from tribal custom, tradition and law.<sup>81</sup> If a nomad wanted religious counsel, he would visit the nearest oasis. In most cases he would wait until he needed to visit the oasis for more urgent matters, for example the purchase of dates or the setting of his sheep and wool.<sup>82</sup>

It is to be mentioned that with the passage of time the authority of the *mutawwa'a* was confined to some extent. Hence they enjoyed a limited authority in Arabia on the eve of Ibn Sa'ud's return to Riyadh. They retained, however, a vivid memory of their fortunes during the first Saudi *emirate* of the eighteenth century, when they became active participants in political, financial and military issues. This was their first experience of living in the court of the *imam*.<sup>83</sup> They benefited from the *emirate's* expansion in an unprecedented manner. Political stability meant increased religious knowledge and scholarship, prosperous trade and growing state revenues, which they shared with the political head of the *emirate*. The treasury was shared between them and Saudi rulers. Their eminence in the eighteenth century is in sharp contrast with their decline in the nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup>

The *mutawwa'a* suffered a serious disaster with the Egyptian invasion of Arabia at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time a good number of religious specialists were deported and slaughtered at the hands of the Egyptian

---

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



forces led by Ibrahim Pasha. Most of the religious specialists belonged to Al *Shaikh*.<sup>85</sup> This opened the door for Egyptian occupation of Dar'iyah under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha in 1818. As a result Najdi religious knowledge was almost eradicated. After the event of occupying Dar'iyah, the monopoly of the Al-*Shaikh* was partially weakened. This may be attributed to the fact that a new religious specialists began to emerge at that time.

The weakness of the religious specialists was not early to revive. The *mutawwa'a* obviously did not want to fall victim to such a disaster again. They did not fully recover until the twentieth century from the annihilation of the nineteenth century. After the collapse of, the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate*, the *mutawwa'a* who survived from annihilation lagged behind in religious scholarship as they desperately tried to guard the legacy of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab. Some of the descendants of this class of scholars lived and died in exile, in Egypt.<sup>86</sup> The exiled Wahhabi scholars remained in Egypt where they taught the principles of the Hanbali School of Islamic Jurisprudence at the Azhar mosque, thus leaving the Najdi *mutawwa'a* with no important sources of religious authority throughout most of the nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

Having lost their material wealth, prestige and status in the nineteenth century, the *mutawwa'a* were predisposed to accept a political figure who promised not only their salvation but also a reversal of their misfortune. But this did not mean that they were far away from their genuine determination to revive the religious message of their ancestor and his reforms. It was their motto to establish rule of *sharia* in the whole of Arabia which would restore their own status and authority.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> A. Bligh, *From Prince to King: Royal Succession in the House of Saud in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), p. 38.

<sup>87</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

It is not surprising that between 1902 and 1930 the *mutawwa'a* exercised their newly acquired authority with zeal and dedication. When Ibn Sa'ud arrived in Riyadh, he invested them with prestige as he showed them respect in return for their success in extracting recognition of his rule from rebellious groups that would not willingly accept his government.<sup>89</sup> For their livelihood, some of the religious specialists had to depend on farming, trade, charitable donations and endowments for mosques, while others on the money which they demanded in return for their religious services, judgement and advice. Taking it unwise and unethical.<sup>90</sup> Ibn Sa'ud enlisted them in the service of his domain as he employed them and paid their salaries in cash and kind. He thus transformed them into full-time religious ritual specialists, loyal to him and dependent on his resources. In return Ibn Sa'ud was guaranteed the political submission of the Arabian population under the guise of submission to Allah. In addition to restore Islamic practices and rituals they were also responsible for the collection of *zakat* for the central government.<sup>91</sup> Both the regime of moral discipline and the collection of *zakat* were important mechanisms behind the consolidation of Saudi authority in Arabia.

A new holy alliance between Ibn Sa'ud and the religious specialists began with the 1902 *bay's*, the oath of allegiance. This oath was given to Ibn Sa'ud after he captured Riyadh and killed its governor, who had ruled the city on behalf of the Rashidi *Amirs* of Ha'il. After the Friday prayer, religious specialists, notables and ordinary residents of Riyadh assembled to hear the confirmation of Ibn Sa'ud as the new *imam*.<sup>92</sup> Ibn Sa'ud's father, Abdur Rahman, remained a revered figure. To show his approval of the new arrangement, 'Abdur Rahman presented his son with the sword of Sa'ud al-Kabir (an ancestor of Ibn Sa'ud), with its sharp Damascene edge, a handle

---

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Juhany, *op.cit.*, p. 252; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> C. M. Helms, *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 131.

<sup>92</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

decorated with gold, and a silver case.<sup>93</sup> The 1902 *bay'a* had a symbolic significance, similar to the pact of 1744 between the Saudi *Amir* of Dar'iyah and Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab.

Riyadh immediately became a centre of attraction for scholars from all towns in Najd. Already established Najdi ritual specialists and newly emerging ones found Riyadh a safe heaven under the auspices of Ibn Sa'ud. Most Najdi religious specialists had already had their contact with their counterparts in Riyadh through the periods of study with them or regular visits. Henceforth, religious students came to Riyadh for periods of training and instruction. They were latter dispatched to spread the call among tribal confederations and the sedentary communities.<sup>94</sup>

After the capture of Riyadh, the *mutawwa'a* of Najd were the first instrument used by Ibn Sa'ud to conquer Arabia. Under the guise of religious education, enforcing the *sharia* and guarding public morality, the *mutawwa'a* ensured the submission of most of the population that came under the authority of Ibn Sa'ud between 1902 and 1932. This included the sedentary people of the oases of Najd and the nomadic tribal confederations. The *mutawwa'a* also played a crucial role in the creation of the *ikhwan* fighting force.<sup>95</sup>

### **Formation of *Ikhwan* and its Impact**

After the capture and re-establishment of the Sa'udis at Riyadh in 1902, Ibn Sa'ud during the next few years consolidated the outlying provinces and resisted the Turks in their support of Ibn Rashid. When the Turks withdrew their forces finally from central Arabian soil, Ibn Sa'ud was left without any serious danger in the area. Free now to show his capacity for administration Ibn Sa'ud proceeded to lay the foundation of his future greatness in a scheme remarkable both for boldness and ingenuity.

---

<sup>93</sup> Zirkili, *op.cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>94</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

Before he initiated move against Hasa he put emphasis on strengthening his position in Najd by forming an orderly military group. The history of Arabia had taught him two lessons by which he was quick to profit. The first was that the centrifugal tribal organization of the mainly nomad population could welded together under a suitable stimulus, such as religious revival, for the prosecution of a common cause whether defensive or offensive but could not be held together in cold blood for purposes of peaceful development.<sup>96</sup> The second was that a single great tribe could achieve great conquests under a leader of capacity but could not administer its conquests except under the urge of a religious stimulus. The plan that he formed was nothing less than to breakdown for the purposes of administration under peace conditions by the creation of agricultural colonies wherever possible.<sup>97</sup> The Bedouins, thus, tending to settle on the land in non tribal groups based on agriculture rather than pasture, acquired a stake there in which could easily be used to advantage against their nomad brethren.<sup>98</sup> "Back to the Quran and on the land" became as it were the motto of the new *Ikhwan* movement, an ultra-puritan revival of the original Wahhabi movement, which Ibn Sa'ud accepted and financed in 1912 at the desert wells of al-Artawiya<sup>99</sup>, a minor oasis on an inland caravan route from Kuwait. At-Artawiya, a flourishing town of 10,000 inhabitants, rapidly became the prototype of a good number of colonies which sprang up in the various parts of Najd during the next few years. Agriculture displaced pastoral activities as the binding force of the new organization, while the *Shar'ia* or religious law took the place of the customary law of Bedouin society. Each colony constituted a contingent of the new Wahhabi standing army.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, p. 181.

<sup>99</sup> These permanent colonies of *Ikhwan*, which Ibn Sa'ud planted in order to hold together his expanding dominions, may be compared with the permanent military cantonments of the early Arab Caliphate, such as Kufah, Basra, Fustat and Qayrawan. In fact they appear to have been called by the same name of *amsar* (Plural *misr*.)

<sup>100</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 12, p. 36.

The genius of Ibn Sa'ud thus lay in his use of religious fundamentalism as a state-building and state expanding instrument.<sup>101</sup> In his attempt to strengthen Najd's military position and to stabilize his rule, Ibn Sa'ud decided to settle groups of wandering tribes in certain sites already designated for the purpose. Once settled, these groups abandoned their Bedouin ideals and life style; they dedicated themselves to the fundamental Islam, according to the Wahhabi persuasion. They cultivated the land, and when necessary, stood by as an army at Ibn Sa'ud's disposal. According to the common description, Ibn Sa'ud thus achieved a three fold victory. First, he neutralized the Bedouins' inclined to obey central authority and had undermined its stability. Secondly, he managed to harness the Bedouins' military prowess and courage to his own and Najd's needs, and thirdly, he spread and entrenched the religious-ideological infrastructure of the Wahhabi regime in Najd. These tribal groups were known as *Ikhwan* (literally brethren) and the colonies they settled were called *hujar* (sing: ) to symbolize the *Ikhwan's* journey to true Islam, similar to the Prophet's journey in the year 622. A special team of instructors known as the *mutawwa'a* (or *mutatawi'un*) were trained and sent to teach the *Ikhwan* in the new way so that they may be prepared for undertaking any sacrifice and venture for the cause of Islam and political power in the area. The *Ikhwan* was an institution based on a return to the strict fundamentalist ideas of Wahhabism. The mosque was the centre of the community and the settlement doubled as a military cantonment being armed by Ibn Sa'ud provided that its men were always at his call.

Najd's way in the second half of the 1910s was characterized by new causes which made the *Ikhwan's* ascent possible. First, the growing tendency to fight, notably against the Hashimites in the Hejaz and the Rashidis in Jabal Shammar, which was accompanied by the Saudi attempt to extend their authority over tribes in the area. These tendencies enhanced the position of *hujar* inhabitants as a fighting power, who in spite of small numbers were very

---

<sup>101</sup> J. C. Hurewitz *Middle East politics: The Military Dimension* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1969), p. 244.

courageous and loyal. Second, the growing religious revivalism in the area, further enhanced the *Ikhwan* in the *hujar* as the main pioneers of this movement and as its roving missionaries. In late 1910s, these were the focal and most prestigious processes in the Saudi State and the *Ikhwan* derived their power from their role as the leaders and main operators of these process.<sup>102</sup> With the development of *Ikhwanism*, a step was taken to prelude the age-old dissipation of power resulting from tribal raids.

In 1913, sections of the Utayba tribe, under the leadership of their chief *Sultan* Ibn Bijad, were settled in al-Ghatghat. The pattern of Artawiyah was followed, 'Utayba tribesmen received the *mutawwa'a* who instructed them in matters relating to fasting, prayers and other Islamic rituals. They were also instructed to obey Ibn Sa'ud as the legitimate *imam* of the Muslim community and to pay him *zakat*. Each of these settlements attracted on average 1,500 people.<sup>103</sup>

In this way by 1926 almost 150,000 tribesmen were settled. By 1930, it was hard to find a tribal confederation that did not have tribal sections associated with settlements. While some tribal sections voluntarily accepted settlement because of hardships caused by a combination of climatic factors and the economic pressures associated with the First World War, others were forced to settle after being defeated by the forces of Ibn Sa'ud. The *Ikhwan* accepted the authority of Ibn Sa'ud as *imam* of the Muslim community who was responsible for negotiations with foreign powers and the call for *jihad*. They also accepted the authority of the Riyadh *'ulama* as guardians and interpreters of the divine law.<sup>104</sup> However, both Ibn Sa'ud and the *'ulama* of Riyadh were remote. The *mutawwa'a* lived among the *Ikhwan* in the settlement and had closer direct contact with them. Not only did the

---

<sup>102</sup> Joseph Kostiner, 'On Instruments and their Designers: The *Ikhwan* of Najd and the Emergence of the Saudi State', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July 1985, p. 307.

<sup>103</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>104</sup> Helms, p. 131.

*mutawwa'a* instruct in matter relating to religion, they also distributed various material benefits from Ibn Sa'ud. As agricultural work in the settlements was neither productive nor successful, the allegiance of the *Ikhwan* depended on a continuous flow of subsidies from Ibn Sa'ud's treasury. The *mutawwa'a* distributed regular and annual gifts among the *Ikhwan* and their families.<sup>105</sup> Together with a share of the booty gained after raids and military conquests, these subsidies strengthened the allegiance of the *Ikhwan* to Ibn Sa'ud.

While the *mutawwa'a* exerted mental coercion among those whom they were meant to educate in Islamic rituals, the *Ikhwan* practiced physical coercion against people in Arabia. In Hasa, Ha'il and Hejaz, they exercised their powers without restraint.<sup>106</sup> The *Ikhwan* carried out public prosecutions and looted and plundered the towns and their inhabitants. They became known in Arabia as *jand al-tawhid*, the soldiers who enforced the doctrine of the oneness of Allah.<sup>107</sup> They distinguished themselves by their dress and manners. They wore short white shirts and white headgear, reflecting their puritan and austere interpretation of Islam. They refused to greet both non-Muslims and Muslims whose Islam was regarded as corrupt, such as for example the Shi'a and Hejazis. Their uncompromising attitude and ability to inflict severe punishment created an atmosphere of fear and apprehension among people.<sup>108</sup>

Both the *mutawwa'a* and the *Ikhwan* operated a system of terror to evade as long as they had the full support of Ibn Sa'ud and the *'ulama* of Riyadh. It seems that after they secured the conquest of Hejaz in 1926, their power was beginning to be resented in Riyadh. The holy alliance that began with the *mutawwa'a* and the *Ikhwan* was reversed when they staged a rebellion against Ibn Sa'ud's authority.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>106</sup> Helms, p. 132.

<sup>107</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

According to the typical portrait, however, the *Ikhwan* were bold fighters, fanatical and absolutely devoted to their country and to the spread of Wahhabi tenets. They were described as the major political body which fought Najd's wars and decided its conquests.<sup>110</sup> The first test of this army came in 1913 when Ibn Sa'ud was busy in capturing the province of Hasa, the eastern coastal region of Arabia, then under the Ottomans. The venture was taken in order to draw the attention of the British and to enlist their support in his future heroic action in the area.

### **The Saudi Occupation of Hasa and After**

Before going to oversee Ibn Sa'ud's endeavour for occupying Hasa it is cogent to throw light on the potentiality of the area. It is to be noted that in the nineteenth century Hasa was famous for its agricultural production. Being an agricultural region it drew the attention of the Najdi merchants and tribal confederations. They considered that the ports of the Persian Gulf and the oases of Hasa were vital for their existence and survival because of the meagre resources of the Najd.<sup>111</sup> The symbiosis between the nomadic and sedentary groups was clearly manifested in this region. The nomads of Najd brought their animals and animal products (horses, sheep, camels, butter) to the markets of the oases and ports where they exchanged them for agricultural products (mainly grain and dates) and a range of locally manufactured goods and imported items (including weapons). The abundant water resources of the oases of this region had led to the emergence of a specialised peasantry that included landowners, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. While some Najdi agriculturists were 'part-time' peasants, the Hasawi agriculturists were a specialist group coexisting with the tribal confederations, especially those whose territories bordered Hasa, such as Shammar, 'Ajman, Murra and Mutayr.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Joseph Kostiner, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July, 1985, p. 298.

<sup>111</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 61.

<sup>112</sup> Anscombe, F. *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 10.



This agricultural community was set apart from the rest of the population because of its religious affiliation. The majority of the peasantry consisted of Shia Muslims, a minority among a sunni majority. They had suffered repression throughout the eighteenth century at the hands of the Wahhabis, who regarded them as the epitome of *ahl al-bida*.<sup>113</sup>

In addition to the peasantry, Hasa had a number of well-known merchant families who traded between the oases of the interior, the ports of the Persian Gulf (e.g. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Uqayr and Qatif) and the outside world (mainly India and Africa). While some merchant families traced their origins to Najd, others were local Hasawis.<sup>114</sup> Foreign merchants were also noticeable in the region. Indian and British trading companies were established in Qatif in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>115</sup>

Before the rise of the Wahhabi movement, the politics of this microcosm were dominated by the confederation of Banu Khalid under the leadership of Al Humayyid.<sup>116</sup> Banu Khalid supplanted the rule of the Ottomans in Hasa as early as 1670, after which they established their own hegemony. Their control was extended to Najd, which became a territory within their sphere of influence.<sup>117</sup> The rise of the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* led to the demise of the Banu Khalid in 1795.<sup>118</sup> Hasa fell under the influence of the Sa'udi-Wahhabi forces until this *emirate* was defeated in 1818. The flow of food supplies and goods from Hasa supported the Sa'udis and their followers in the interior, especially in times of drought.<sup>119</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>114</sup> H. Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf 1745-1900* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 77-83.

<sup>115</sup> J. G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, p. 965.

<sup>116</sup> Abu Hakima, A. (ed.), *Lam' al-Shihab fi sirat al-Shaikh Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab* [The Brilliance of the Meteor in the Life of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab] (Beirut: 1967) (hereafter *Lam' al Shihab*); cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> Anscombe, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>118</sup> Abu Hakima, *Lam' al Shihab*, p. 157; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>119</sup> Anscombe, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

The Sa'udis were able to re-establish a semblance of authority in the region in 1830. In fact the occupation of Hasa was the first attempt to establish Saudi rule after the destruction of Dariyah in 1818. This second Sa'udi-Wahhabi occupation (1830-8) was, however, precarious. Hasa became the territory where the rivalry among Saudi contestants was fought out after the death of Faisal Ibn Turki in 1865. This rivalry was partially resolved with the Ottoman invasion of 1870, a move planned and orchestrated by the energetic Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha. Hasa became the *Sanjak* of the province of Basra and an Ottoman governor was stationed in Hufuf. In 1874 the Ottomans attempted to revive Banu Khalid's authority against that of the Sa'udis they appointed Barak Ibn Urayir as governor of Hasa.<sup>120</sup> By that time Banu Khalid had already lost their power, and even Ottoman support failed to restore their previous glory. It seems that Shi'a Hasawis welcomed Ottoman rule as they had suffered continuous mistreatment and repression.<sup>121</sup>

In the nineteenth century Hasa failed to produce a local power capable of developing into a regional *emirate*. After the fall of the *emirate* of Banu Khalid, Hasa opened the doors for regional and imperial competition between the Kuwaitis, Sa'udis and Rashidis and between the Ottomans and Britain respectively for its occupation. Competition for its control was motivated by its agricultural resources and the diverse trading networks of its inhabitants.<sup>122</sup>

Failure of Hasa to produce elementary forms of *emirate* formation may be attributed to that this religiously and tribally heterogeneous region acted as a buffer zone between the powerful southern Iraqi tribal confederations, their Najdi counterparts and the Najdi and coastal *emirates* of the Persian Gulf. In addition, the presence of the Ottoman and British led to the crystallisation of various power centres around the region but not among its inhabitants.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> J. G Lorimer, *op.cit.*, p. 1132.

<sup>121</sup> Anscombe, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

After the occupation of Qasim Ibn Sa'ud turned his attention towards Hasa, an important region on the way to the Persian Gulf where a good number of Shia community lived. In 1913 Ibn Sa'ud launched an attack on Hufuf where the Ottomans had stationed 1,200 Turkish troops after the province's annexation in 1870. Ibn Sa'ud nominally acknowledged the Ottoman *Sultan* but undermined his authority when he appointed a relative of his, Ibn Juluwi, as governor of the region.<sup>124</sup>

In the course of Saudi restoration the reoccupation of Hasa in 1913 was an important phenomenon in the history of the Al Saud dynasty. As a result of the Turkish preoccupation in the Balkans in 1913 and her defeat by Italy in 1911, the Ottoman garrisons at Hufuf, Qatif and Uqayr in the Arabian Peninsula had significantly decreased, and the troops had marched northwards in hurry. Being aware of this situation, Ibn Sa'ud asserted himself dramatically and made up his mind to move against Hasa taking the time congenial.<sup>125</sup> As a result of this decision, he issued a summon for a general mobilization of his forces, which moved towards Hasa in early May 1913. On the night of 4 May, they attacked the walled city of Hufuf, the provincial capital and apparently with the aid of the inhabitants of the city Ibn Sa'ud occupied Hasa after a short battle. The Ottoman garrison surrendered and was allowed to leave peacefully. The Turkish troops were taken to Bahrain in the British ship *John O'scott*. On 15 May, Uqayr and Qatif followed it suit, and by the end of the month the whole of Hasa was under Saudi control.<sup>126</sup> The Ottoman authorities in Basra, stunned by Ibn Sa'ud's *coup*, tried to repulse the invaders, but their attempts were of no avail. One Ottoman contingent tried to

---

<sup>124</sup> Harold C. Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia, Ibn Saud: An Intimate Study of a King* (London: Arthur Berker Ltd., 1934), pp. 76-77.

<sup>125</sup> For Ibn Saud's account of the battle, as told to Mubarak, the ruler of Kuwayl, see Shakespear to Cox, 20 May, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/238 No. 458/3, p. 212. Four Sa'udis were killed in the battle.

<sup>126</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 27.

retake Qatif but found that Ibn Sa'ud had already consolidated his position there. A second contingent, arriving from Basra, attempted to recover Uqayr, but after an initial success the force had to surrender to the Saudis, who allowed it to leave for Bahrain unmolested.<sup>127</sup> It should be noted that instead of inflicting a serious defeat on the Ottomans, Ibn Sa'ud preferred to minimize the provocation of his occupation of Hasa entailed for the Ottoman and avoid any further humiliation.<sup>128</sup> No further attempts were made to retake Hasa or Qatif.<sup>129</sup>

On May 18, the British Consul at Basra reported to Lowther in Constantinople that Sayyid Talib, a prominent Basra Arab, had received a letter from Ibn Sa'ud regarding Hasa. Sayyid Talib told the Consul that the letter contained expressions of loyalty to the Porte 'but complained of the mismanagement of Hasa affairs by the Turkish officials and nonpayment of the allowance previously granted him by the Government'.<sup>130</sup> Ibn Sa'ud wrote that as Hasa was composed of Arabs owing him allegiance, his re-taking of the province was a return to the traditional state of affairs. Sayyid Talib also mentioned that there was another letter to the *Wali* of Basra enclosed in this correspondence. In this letter Ibn Sa'ud affirmed his subservience to the Porte.<sup>131</sup> In these protestations of loyalty to the Porte, the Wahhabi *Amir* was probably endeavouring to prevent the Turks from taking any more punitive measures against him.

The conquest of Hasa brought the Al Saud leadership back into this Shia territory where the Ottomans had established their control in the 1870s. According to one source, an agreement was worked out between leading Shi'a *ulama* and Ibn Sa'ud in which the latter guaranteed religious freedom for

---

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

the Shia, who in return pledged loyalty to Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>132</sup> Religious freedom remained an unfulfilled promise as Wahhabi Islam defined the Shia as *rafida*, those who reject faith. This became the religious framework guiding the status of the Shia in Ibn Sa'ud's territories.<sup>133</sup>

One may discern three distinct stages in the period 1906-1913, that is, from the first manifestation of Ibn Sa'ud's interest in occupying Hasa until the conquest itself. In the first stage, until 1912, Britain's refusal to commit herself to frustrating an Ottoman attack, a commitment Ibn Sa'ud perceived as a *sine qua non* for his move, outweighed the existing Saudi desire and capability for the conquest. In the second stage, the turning point occurred when it became apparent that such a precondition could never be fulfilled, and furthermore that the Saudi major goal - securing independence through Britain - could not be obtained without prior conquest of Hasa. Once Ibn Sa'ud ascertained that Britain would not view with disfavour a Saudi occupation of Hasa, the decision was made.<sup>134</sup> In the third stage, the question of the timing of the attack was determined by Ottoman difficulties in the Balkan wars that broke out in 1912. These were perceived by Ibn Sa'ud as very likely to prevent the Ottomans from embarking on a large scale military operation in the Persian Gulf.<sup>135</sup>

Even after the conquest of Hasa, Britain considered Ibn Sa'ud an Ottoman vassal and declined to conclude a treaty that would have conferred British protection status on him.<sup>136</sup> The Anglo-Turkish Convention of July 1913

---

<sup>132</sup> Steinberg, G., 'The Shites in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (al-Ahasa)', 1913-1953', in R. Brunner and W. Ende (eds.), *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 243.

<sup>133</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>134</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Sluglett, P. and M. Sluglett. 'The Precarious Monarchy: Britain, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud and the Establishment of the Kingdom of Hejaz Najd and its Dependencies, 1925-1932', in Niblock (ed.), *State, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hejaz under Ottoman Control 1940-1908* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), p. 369.

defined the boundaries of the *Sanjak* of Najd, which included Ibn Sa'ud's new acquisition in Hasa.<sup>137</sup> Britain, therefore, neither objected to nor recognized Ibn Sa'ud's conquest of Hasa.

### **The 1914 Saudi-Ottoman Treaty**

The aftermath of the Saudi conquest of Hasa in 1913 opened a new chapter of Saudi-Ottoman relations. It has already been stated earlier in the foregoing pages<sup>138</sup> that Ibn Sa'ud tried in vain to enlist the support and sympathy of the British before he undertook expedition against Hasa. He figured that by embroiling the British in his dispute with the Porte, he would manage to relieve himself of Ottoman pressure and constrain Ottoman future actions against him. Since British protection was by no means guaranteed; he, therefore, endeavoured to cover his flank by a personal approach to the Ottomans. He stressed to the *Wali* of Basra that, though occupying Hasa, he had no intention of revolting against the Porte and he expressed his subservience and readiness to become a *Wali* on behalf of the *Sultan*.<sup>139</sup> At the same time, Ibn Sa'ud approached the British with a view to ascertain whether his calculated risk was based on sound assumption.

It is to be noted at this stage that London was initially disposed towards intervening in the Saudi-Ottoman conflict, and on several occasions offered its mediation. The British were essentially concerned with both by an Ottoman naval operation which would disrupt peace in the Gulf, and alternatively by a Saudi-Ottoman agreement which would be detrimental to British interests in Hasa. But finally, in April, 1914, they withdrew their

---

<sup>137</sup> Leatherdale, C. *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925-1939: The Imperial Oasis* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), p. 369.

<sup>138</sup> *Supra*, chap. v, pp. 72-82.

<sup>139</sup> Ibn Saud's two letters are in Public Record Office, F.O., 424/238, p. 130, and Public Record Office, F.O., 371/1820, E 28326/44; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 233.

intervention, unwilling to draw Ottoman wrath at such a critical juncture when they strove to prevent the crystallization of a German-Ottoman alliance.<sup>140</sup>

Deprived of British protection, which had been the cornerstone of his conquest of Hasa, Ibn Sa'ud felt wise and necessary to come to terms with the Ottomans and settle the dispute which had been ensued earlier. It is evident that since the Saudi conquest of the Ottoman-held province of Hasa in 1913 gave birth to a conflict between the Sa'udis and the Ottomans it needs settlement. To settle the problem amicably, the prevailing situation demanded negotiations. Thereupon in May 1914, the Ottoman representatives and Ibn Sa'ud were conducting negotiations designed to settle the conflict triggered over the question of occupying Hasa. The negotiations took place for days together and eventually a settlement was made with the result of the conclusion of the 1914 Saudi-Ottoman Treaty. Let us focus on the events that took place before signing the treaty.

It has already been stated earlier<sup>141</sup> that with the capture of Riyadh in January 1902 and the re-establishment of Al-Saud in Najd, Ibn-Saud began to implement his strategy aimed at obtaining independence from the Ottomans through the support and protection of Great Britain. A central motive in the following ten year period of Saudi overtures to the British was Ibn Sa'ud's desire to wrest Hasa, the eastern coastal region of Arabia which had been an integral part of the first and second Saudi states, from the Ottomans. For that purpose, the Saudi ruler sought to obtain, prior to his move against the Ottomans, a guarantee from the British government that following his conquest of Hasa, the British would prevent a potential Ottoman counter-attack from the sea. London, however, rejected all his overtures, reluctant to

---

<sup>140</sup> The New Political Agent at Kuwait, W. Grey, conveyed the British decision to Ibn Sa'ud on 28 April, 1914; Public Record Office, F.O., 371/ 2124, E. 24823/1990/44 cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Supra*, chap. v, pp. 66-82.

be embroiled in central Arabian politics lest it further arouse Ottoman susceptibilities, and maintaining that British interests were confined strictly to the Persian Gulf coasts. Ibn Sa'ud decided, therefore, to occupy Hasa unilaterally without a prior British undertaking. His decision was based on the assumption that with a Saudi conquest of Hasa as a *fait accompli*, the British, by virtue of their century old Gulf policies, would have to frustrate an Ottoman sea-attack which was bound to disrupt peace and order in the Gulf. Taking advantage of the Ottomans' weakness caused by their defeats in North Africa and the Balkans, Ibn-Saud occupied Hasa in mid May 1913 and ejected the Ottoman garrisons stationed there.

Immediately after his establishment in Hasa, Ibn-Saud moved to translate his military success into a political reality by pursuing two parallel lines of action. Though his calculated risk envisaged British frustration of punitive Ottoman actions against him, such British aid was by no means guaranteed. He endeavored, therefore, to cover his flank by a personal approach to the Ottomans through their representatives in Basra. Ibn-Saud informed the *Wali* of Basra that he had been forced to take measures owing to appeals of inhabitants for action against the oppression of local Ottoman official. But the overture to the Ottomans carried less value since the Saudi leader pursued the policy of approaching the British with a view to obtaining their support in the course of post occupying Hasa. He stressed that he had no intention of revolting against the Porte, and as proof expressed his readiness to become a *Wali* on behalf of the *Sultan* and guarantee to maintain order.<sup>142</sup> In another letter to Sayyid Talib in Basra, Ibn-Saud repeated his complaints of the mismanagement of Hasa affairs by the local Ottoman officials. He stated that his recovery of Hasa was merely a restoration of the

---

<sup>142</sup> Ibn-Saud to the *Wali* of Basra, as reported by the Political Agent, Bahrayn, to Cox, Political Resident Persian Gulf, 26 May, in Cox to Government of India (GI), 30 May, 1913. Public Record Office, F.O., 424/238, 130.



*status quo* which had prevailed before the Ottoman occupation in 1871<sup>143</sup> and once again expressed his loyalty and subservience to the Porte.<sup>144</sup>

In late June, a Saudi envoy arrived at the British Residency at Bahrain with a letter from Ibn-Saud to the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Sir Percy Cox. The thrust of Ibn-Saud's letter pointed to his desire to establish such relations with Great Britain as to deter the Porte from contemplating retaliation against the Saudis. As Britain's response was crucial to his future policies towards the Ottomans, he demanded to be informed 'if Britain is not willing to preserve friendship so that I may look to my own interests'.<sup>145</sup> The British authorities in the Gulf and the government of India called for a re-assessment of British policy, as Ibn-Saud was now a Coastal ruler and the Saudi issue was no more a central Arabian one but rather a Gulf problem.<sup>146</sup> But the Foreign Office refused to revise its traditional policy, explicitly stating that considerations of European policy dictated this attitude: 'establishing direct relations with Ibn-Saud would run counter to His Majesty's general policy of consolidating the power of the Porte in its Asiatic dominions'.<sup>147</sup> The Indian authorities were consequently instructed to abstain from any intervention in Saudi affairs and from any communication with the Saudi ruler.<sup>148</sup> Responding to Ibn-Saud's letter, Cox informed him in mid-July that

<sup>143</sup> The Ottomans occupied Hasa in 1871 after severe rivalries within the Saudi family over the issue of royal succession had seriously weakened the Saudi state; cf., Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, chap. 8.

<sup>144</sup> The content of the letter was divulged by Talib to the British Consul in Basra. Crow; cf., Crow to Lowther (HM Ambassador, Constantinople), 18 May, in Lowther to Public Record Office, F.O., 17 June, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/1820, E 28326/22076/44. Sayyid Talib served, *inter alia*, as the Governor of Hasa' in the previous decade. He was known as a person of a highly dubious reputation. On his career, cf., Robin Bidwell, *The Affairs of Kuwait*, Vol. 1, p. 21, and *The Affairs of Arabia*, vol. 1, p. 27.

<sup>145</sup> Ibn-Saud to Cox, 13 June, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/239, 160.

<sup>146</sup> Shakespear (Political Agent, Kuwait) to Cox, 20 May; Cox to G1, 26 May; India Office (IO) to Public Record Office, F.O., 4 June, 1913. Public Record Office, F.O., 424/238, 212, 210 and 145 respectively.

<sup>147</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., to IO, 7 June, 1913, *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>148</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., to IO, 18 June, 1913, *Ibid.*, 191.

the British government had to remain strictly neutral in the Saudi-Ottoman dispute and would not intervene in any way.

The foreign office rather put emphasis on reconciliation. Having heard nothing from Britain Ibn Sa'ud apprehended any ottoman thoughts of retaliation. Early in July, a Saudi envoy arrived at Bahrain with telegrams from Ibn-Saud destined for Constantinople. The Saudi chief reiterated his previous argument that the occupation of Hasa had been forced upon him by the local inhabitants and that he entertained the utmost loyalty to the *Sultan*.<sup>149</sup> The acceptance of Cox's letter revealed that Britain declined to come to terms with him. He, therefore, addressed a second letter to Cox in which he expressed disappointment with Britain's position and demanded 'a full explanation of the British attitude to my affairs and interests'.<sup>150</sup> In another letter to the Political Agent in Kuwait, Captain Shakespear, Ibn-Saud warned that if Britain did not regard our affairs in the true circumstances, necessity must force us to seek relief from others' (i.e. the Ottomans).<sup>151</sup>

The Indian government argued now more forcefully for a re-evaluation of British policy putting emphasis on the statement that 'Ibn-Saud entered the sphere of British interests and influence, and it was impossible to ignore him any longer' After three years of negotiations, on 29 July 1913, Britain and the Ottoman Empire signed a convention, in which London recognized Ottoman authority over 'the *sanjaq* of Najd' whose boundaries included Hasa.<sup>152</sup> The Foreign Office now assumed that once Ottoman sovereignty over Najd and

---

<sup>149</sup> Political Agent, Bahrayn to Cox, in Cox to GI, 11 July, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/239, 56.

<sup>150</sup> Ibn-Saud to Cox, 7 August, in GI to IO, 5 September, 1913, India Office Records. Departmental Papers: Political and Secret Separate Files, 1902-1913 (L/P & S/ 10) Vol. 384, 35.

<sup>151</sup> Ibn-Saud to Shakespear, 26 July, 1913, R/15/5/27, 94.

<sup>152</sup> For the text of the convention, which was never ratified, cf., G.P. Gooch and H. Temperly, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914* (London: 1926-1938). Vol. X. pt. 11, 190-194.

Hasa had been explicitly recognized in the convention, a British approach in regard to the Saudi issue would not meet a suspicious Ottoman attitude.<sup>153</sup>

This resulted in the convey of an official communication of the Foreign Office to the Ottoman representative in London, Hakki Pasha on 15 August 1913 underlying Ibn-Saud's strategy in occupying Hasa. Setting the framework for the British intervention, the communication asserted that Ibn-Saud, by his assumption of control over Hasa, had entered specifically into the sphere of British politics and commerce. Since Britain had important interests and obligations in the Gulf, such as maintenance of the maritime peace and suppression of piracy and arms traffic, it became impossible for the British government to ignore Ibn-Saud and pretend to treat Hasa as politically derelict. Such relations, however, would not affect Britain's strictly neutral attitude in the Saudi-Ottoman dispute and her desire to see a speedy reconciliation between the parties. Furthermore, Britain was ready to offer her good offices in order to bring about such a reconciliation under the prevailing situation Britain would be compelled to establish relation with the *de facto* ruler of Hasa. But it is to be noted that while Ibn Sa'ud endeavored to embroil the British in his dispute with the Ottomans in order to enhance his bargaining position, the Porte sought to keep the British out of their bilateral relations with the Saudis. Hakki, therefore, assured the British that his government was in contact with Ibn-Saud and hoped soon to reach a satisfactory settlement.<sup>154</sup>

As a result of this development the Foreign Office approved India's suggestion for 'an amicable exchange of views' with the Saudis. Thus, on 11 September 1913 Cox addressed a letter to Ibn-Saud, expressing His Majesty's Government's desire to maintain friendly relations, 'which have been sustained in the past', provided the Sa'udis undertook to respect the integrity of the Gulf principalities including Qatar.

---

<sup>153</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., to I.O., 16 August, 1913, F.O., 424/239, 138.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

Ibn Sa'ud considered it as a change in British policy and outlook. The Saudi chief was by now under strong Ottoman pressure to make his ways and accept Ottoman terms for a settlement. The Porte obviously sought to restore the *status quo ante* in Hasa and was prepared to grant Ibn-Saud partial autonomy under the *Sultan's* suzerainty on conditions mentioned below.

1. The former Ottoman garrisons in Hasa were to be reinstated.
2. *Qadis* (judges) and other judicial officers in Najd were to be nominated by the *Sultan*.
3. All foreign merchants and agents of foreign powers were to be excluded from Najd.
4. All communications from foreign powers were to be referred to the Porte.
5. Ibn-Saud was to pay annual revenue to the *Sultan*.
6. No concessions were to be given to any foreign companies for railway or car services.<sup>155</sup>

It is obvious that the Ottomans attached considerable significance to the restoration of their former position in Hasa was also stated by Hakki in London. In his meeting with Parker on 15 August, 1913 the Ottoman representative stressed his government's determination 'not to allow Ibn-Saud to continue in his present line of conduct'.<sup>156</sup> Before responding to Ottoman terms, Ibn Sa'ud awaited to hearing something from the British. At this stage, Cox's letter was all the more unexpected and highly encouraging. First, Britain had for the first time formally and officially expressed her desire to maintain, or rather enter into, friendly relations with the Saudis. The effect of this change should be evaluated not only in the short-term context but first and foremost against the background of the 1902-1913 period, when Britain had

---

<sup>155</sup> The Ottoman terms were divulged by Ibn-Saud when he met Shakespear and Trevor in December, 1913; see their report, 20 December, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/251, 112.

<sup>156</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., to I.O., 16 August, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/239, 138.

consistently refused to establish any sort of relations, to the point that Saudi letters were not even answered. Secondly, and far more important in the short-run, the letter read as if the British themselves were interested in establishing contact with Ibn-Saud. This originated because of the fact that Britain, who had been indifferent to the Sa'udis since their re-establishment in Riyadh in 1902, was about to guarantee Ibn-Saud against a possible Ottoman retaliatory action from the sea.

Thereupon in response to the *Sultan's* terms the Saudi chief insisted on complete autonomy for Najd, recognition of his right to Hasa and his freedom to appoint all local officials and control all domestic affairs.<sup>157</sup> In short, Ibn-Saud demanded a semi-independent status. The only issue he omitted in his reply was that of his relations with foreign powers, since he was not yet fully acquainted with the extent of British support. Secondly, he rushed a letter to Cox requesting an interview in late November, 1913 when he would arrive in Hasa. In the meantime he assured Cox that in the interval he would take no action 'which would be likely to run counter to the wishes of the British Government'<sup>158</sup> This assurance alluded to Ibn-Saud's unwillingness to commit himself to any arrangement with the Ottomans without first ascertaining the position of the British government.

Ibn-Saud looked forward to the meeting, regarding it as the culmination of his eleven year old struggle to secure British protection and freedom from Ottoman pressure. With the occupation of Hasa he not only restored an integral part of his House's dominions, but also forced Britain to modify her hitherto indifferent attitude towards him and establish a direct contact with the Saudis.

But the British envoys' immediate response was not positive since it needed sanction from London. Thereupon Ibn Sa'ud pointed out the Ottoman

---

<sup>157</sup> The Saudi response was divulged by Ibn-Saud to Shakespear and Trevor. see, FO 424/240 Vol.30

<sup>158</sup> Ibn-Saud to Cox, 27 September, in Gl to I.O., 26 October, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/240, 41.

six-point proposal at least two of which were very much detrimental to the British interests. He further stated that in the case of British negative attitude, he would be bound to come to a settlement with the Ottomans accepting at least those terms which deserved exclusion of all foreign merchants and conduct of foreign policy.

The forthcoming meeting with British officials provided Ibn-Saud with the opportunity to convey his intentions to the British government and simultaneously to learn of its positions. In mid-December, 1913 Ibn-Saud finally had two lengthy meetings with two British envoys — Captain Shakespear, and the Political Agent at Bahrain, Major A. Trevor.<sup>159</sup> The Saudi ruler stated that he was seeking British support to secure his position. He wanted Britain to apply her general policy of maintaining the peace along the Gulf to the specific strip of Hasa. The practical significance of such an application would amount to a guarantee that Britain would deter, or at least prevent, the Ottomans from dispatching a naval expedition against Ibn-Saud. Such a settlement would result in the exclusion of all British traders from the ports of Hasa and in the inability of the British authorities in the Gulf to communicate with the Saudis.<sup>160</sup>

They then put emphasis on maintaining British interests at any cost in the coastal areas. However, to overcome the issue Ibn Sa'ud ought to deal with the local British officials of the Gulf. At this stage Ibn-Saud tried to induce the British for having a definite decision. But the envoys asked to wait till the British authority in London decided something on the basis of their report. Ibn-Saud then agreed to give time pursuing the policy of making delay for a settlement with the Ottomans. He then expressed his desire to talk to the *Wali* of Basra. This diplomatic stand of Ibn-Saud would improve his bargaining position vis-à-vis. the Porte.<sup>161</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> For a comprehensive account of the talks see their report, 20 December, 1913, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/251, 111-114.

<sup>160</sup> Jacob Goldberg, "The 1914 Saudi-Ottoman Treaty – Myth or Reality?" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 296.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

But this stand of Ibn-Saud alarmed the British. This may be attributed to the fact that his settlement with Porte alienate Britain from any standing in the Hasa. In ease of failure in the process of settlement, the probable Ottoman naval expedition in the Gulf would hamper British interests. This apprehension induced Britain to circulate a memorandum from the Foreign Office which demanded to postpone six-point proposals and to refrain from taking any hostile action by sea against Ibn-Saud without first consulting the British and giving them opportunity for amicable settlement. The foreign office also urged to allow Britain to mediate before undertaking military operation by the Ottomans. This stand of Britain was considered favourable to the cause of Saudi interests since the Ottomans lost freedom of action against Ibn-Saud.<sup>162</sup>

Meanwhile taking into notice of the first direct Saudi communication with the British officials in December 1913, the Ottomans decided to apply more pressure on Ibn-Saud for accepting the terms for a settlement. This pressure was strengthened through mobilization and concentration of forces to some vantage positions with the aim of constituting a threat and warning to Ibn-Saud. The Ottomans also tried to have a meeting with Ibn-Saud through Mubarak, the ruler of Kuwait. But for his indifferent attitude it was not possible. The Ottomans then decided to strengthen the hands of Ibn-Rashid by supplying arms for any sort of future engagement with the Saudis. Protest was also made in London by the Ottoman representative considering the position of Najd as an Ottoman province and Ibn-Saud as an Ottoman subject. In order to re-establish the garrisons in Hasa, the Ottomans drew the attention of Britain not to encourage Ibn-Saud. At this development and especially for the mobilization of Ottoman troops, Ibn-Saud also took necessary preparation to face it boldly.<sup>163</sup>

At the same time, Ibn-Saud tried to hear something positive from the British since the time taken earlier had ended meanwhile for coming into

---

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p.298.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

settlement with the Ottomans. The Indian authorities informed Ibn-Saud that they were waiting for Ottoman response in respect of their memorandum and advised him not to take any independent action in any matter. As a result, self-confidence of Ibn-Saud grew considerably.

In response to Ottoman pressure or overtures Ibn-Saud expressed his desire to secure similar status like Kuwait i.e., autonomy with British protection under Ottoman suzerainty. He also expressed his desire to have British involvement in the process of settlement with the Porte. Thus at long last he succeeded in embroiling the British in his bilateral relations with the Porte. Instead of facing the Ottomans alone with his limited resources, he was now supported by Great Britain exerting her influence on future Ottoman reactions. But at this very juncture, the Ottomans renewed their pressure on Ibn-Saud through Mubarak.<sup>164</sup> Under such circumstances, Ibn-Saud again tried to hear something formally from Britain before making settlement with the Porte. But having nothing new with Britain and finding no way to defying the Ottomans any longer, Ibn-Saud decided to submit conditionally. But he emphasized that submission would be incumbent upon him only if the Porte withdrew its insistence on the restoration of Ottoman garrisons to Hasa.<sup>165</sup> On 16 April, 1914 Ibn-Saud left for Kuwait. Before his departure, he notified Trevor that he could wait no longer for a British reply. But he requested a meeting with the political Agent at Kuwait before his negotiations with the Ottomans started.<sup>166</sup>

Britain's failure to provide Ibn-Saud with a definite reply was rooted in changes which took place in the framework of British-Ottoman relations. While the British were expecting an Ottoman answer to their memorandum of 9 March, 1914 the Porte sought to delay a reply pending the results of their

---

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>165</sup> Ibn-Saud to Mubarak. 16 April, 1914. cf. Jacob Goldberg, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 299.

<sup>166</sup> Ibn Saud to Trevor, 18 April, 1914; Jacob Goldberg, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 299.



efforts to effect a settlement of responding British memorandum by the Porte for contemplating a military action considered widespread unrest and disturbances hampering British interests. But in the process of negotiation when British was satisfied that a settlement was going to be made through the mediation of their ally Mabarak taking it not against their interests. As a result, Ibn-Saud was allowed to proceed alone to negotiate with the Ottomans on his own. His communication with the political Agent of Kuwait Lt. Colonel W. Grey made him understand that he had no other alternative but to come to a settlement with the Porte.<sup>167</sup>

But to face Ottoman pressure, he at this stage also wanted to know the attitude of Britain. Britain assured him that if necessary she would play the role of a mediator. It is to be noted that the British representative declined to response with regard to the possible Ottoman sea attack. Eventually under the prevailing situation, he was not ready to conclude an agreement at any price. The Ottoman deputation arrived in Kuwait on 29 April, 1914. It was headed by Sayyid Talib and consisted of Baha ad-Din, Chief of Staff, Baghdad; Umar Fawzi, Chief of Staff, Basra; and Sami Pasha, *Mutasarrif* of Hasa. Accompanying the delegation were the brothers Abdul Wahhab and 'Abdul Latif Mangil, land proprietors and Ibn-Saud's agents at Basra.<sup>168</sup> The negotiations started at Shuwayaba on 2 May 1914.<sup>169</sup> with the Ottomans presenting the following demands.

1. that their garrisons be reinstated in Qatif and 'Uqayr and be reinforced by additional posts in Hasa;

---

<sup>167</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 300.

<sup>168</sup> For a comprehensive report of the meeting, see Grey to Knox. 29 April, 1914, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2124, E26063/1990/44.

<sup>169</sup> The account of the negotiations is based on the versions of Ibn-Saud as divulged to Shakespear in January, 1915; Mubarak's report to Grey; and the Ottomans' account as divulged to Crow in Basra, see Shakespear to Cox. 4 January, 1915, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2479, p. 338; Grey to Knox, 6 May, 1914, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2124, E26063/1990/44; and Crow to Mallet, 2, 8 and 16 May, 1914, *Ibid.*, and Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2123, E20672/1990/44, and Public Record Office, F.O., 424/252, & 159, respectively.

2. that all forts in Hasa be surrendered to them;
3. that all cannons and small arms be handed over to their troops; and
4. that Ibn-Saud have no connection whatever with any foreigners or foreign powers.

On the contrary in return for Saudi acceptance of these conditions, the Ottomans agreed to:

1. recognize Ibn-Saud's local autonomy;
2. allow him to collect all local taxes; and
3. give him verbal, but not written, permission to retake Qatar and Trucial Oman when he chose.

The Ottoman conditions, thus, were essentially similar to those they had demanded all along, being based on two principles: restoration of the *status quo ante* in Hasa and surrender of Saudi foreign relations.

Ibn-Saud's terms were also similar to those he had agreed upon since August 1913:

1. that *he* should retain Hasa under Ottoman suzerainty;
2. that he should pay an annual tribute; and
3. that he should be at the disposal of the Porte in the event that armed assistance was required. Claims and counter-claims created stalemate. Naturally, a deadlock ensued.

Thus, in the aftermath of the failure of the negotiations, both parties had diametrically opposite expectations from the British. While the Sa'udis waited for the British to intervene now that negotiations had reached a deadlock, the Ottomans grew more adamant in their opposition to British mediation. But London's position now was affected more than anything else by significant development in Europe, where the deteriorating situation led within a few months to the outbreak of the First World War. Such escalation was radically to change the framework of British - Ottoman relations. Striving to pre-empt a potential German - Ottoman alliance, the British government

was determined to abstain from any action which might evoke Ottoman antagonism. Foreign Office thus accepted Mallet's argument that British intervention in the Saudi - Ottoman dispute 'would be inconsistent with the principle of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire'. Secretary Grey did not wish 'to lend colour to the Porte's suspicions that Britain supports Ibn-Saud's policy of making himself independent'.<sup>170</sup>

This time Ibn-Saud considered that the Ottoman pressure for restoration of their garrison in Hasa implied something symbolic. The Ottomans also decided to accommodate the debated issues. The Ottoman also yielded to the Saudi attitude considering the prevailing situation and evaluation of the British attitude for maintaining safety and security in Eastern Arabia. Britain's failure to intervene once more left Ibn-Saud having to settle his differences with the Porte on his own. He therefore decided to accept a small Ottoman force deprived of any military significance, which would both satisfy the Porte and not conflict with Saudi interests.<sup>171</sup>

With both parties disposed to an accommodation over the issue of the Hasa garrisons, a bargaining situation evolved. Ibn-Saud's agent in Basra, 'Abdul Latif Mandil, and the Ottoman authorities<sup>172</sup> there were thus easily able to reach an agreement, which was approved by the Porte and came to be known as the Ottoman-Saudi Treaty of May 1914. The *Sultan* issued an Imperial *Firman* on 8 July, which officially and publicly nominated Ibn-Saud as the *Wali* of Najd, and the War Minister congratulated him for strengthening 'the great Ottoman Government'<sup>173</sup> A month later, the Sublime Porte

---

<sup>170</sup> Jacob Goldberg, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 305.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> Talib was most probably instrumental in the successful conclusion of the treaty, as the *Sultan's* telegram of congratulations was addressed to him and not to the *Wali*; Crow to Mallet, in Mallet to F.O., 23 June, 1914, F.O., 424/252, 102-104 & 142-143 respectively. 166. In consideration of his help, Ibn-Saud paid Talib 60,000 rupees; Knox to GI, 8 August, 1914, R/15/2/31, 178.

<sup>173</sup> Mallet to F.O., 9 July, Public Record Office, F.O., 424/253, p. 13; and Enver to Ibn-Saud, n.d., Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2124, E34347/1990/44.

conferred upon Ibn-Saud the 'August dignity of a Supreme Ministership' in consideration of his loyalty to the illustrious Government and his great attachment to the High Caliphate.<sup>174</sup>

The treaty was signed by Ibn-Saud himself and by the *Wali* of Basra, Sulayman Shafiq Ibn 'Ali Kamali, and was dated 4 Rajab 1332 — 15 May 1914. But then 'Abdul Latif Mandil, Ibn-Saud's agent there, had to deliver it to Riyadh<sup>175</sup> where Ibn-Saud signed it<sup>176</sup> on 4 Rajab which was 29 May 1914. In the treaty, Ibn-Saud recognized Ottoman sovereignty over Najd and himself as an Ottoman subject. He promised to hoist the Ottoman flag on all government buildings (article 7) and under-took to support the Porte in case the latter would have 'to fight with a foreign power' or to restore order in other *Wilayets* (Article 12). In foreign affairs, Ibn-Saud explicitly surrendered his external sovereignty. He undertook 'not to interfere with or correspond about foreign affairs and international treaties' and promised not to grant concessions to foreigners (Article 9). The compromise regarding the garrisons provided for the stationing of 'Ottoman soldiers and gendarmerie' whose number would be determined by Ibn-Saud (Article 4). In exchange, the Porte appointed Ibn-Saud the *Wali* of Najd, and the *Wilayet* was conferred upon the Saudi family on a hereditary basis (Article 12).

---

<sup>174</sup> The document is dated 24 Ramadan, 1332 (17 August, 1914); it was published by the Basra newspaper *Sa'adat ad-Dustur* on 23 August, 1914.

<sup>175</sup> In late June, Mandil arrived at Bahrayn on his way from Riyadh back to Basra. He told the British Political Agent there, Keyes, that he had been a messenger sent by the Ottomans to Ibn-Saud with the new Ottoman draft. Keyes to Knox, 4 July, 1914, R/15/2/31, 156.

<sup>176</sup> Rentz writes that as Ibn-Saud did not know Turkish, 'he would certainly not have signed something in that language' and therefore the original treaty 'must have been in Arabic'. Why then, asks Rentz, is the Arabic text provided in the United Kingdom Memorial labelled 'a translation'? Furthermore, why does the Arabic text in Amin Sa'id—who claims to have found the agreement in the secret documents of the Indian government — 'differ substantially' in style from the Arabic version in the *Memorial*? The most probable answer to Rentz's questions is that the original text, drafted by the Ottomans in Basra was in Turkish and not in Arabic. Ibn Saud was nevertheless ready to sign it only because his trusted agent, Mandil translated the text to him. cf, Jacob Goldberg, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, London, 1984, p. 307

Viewed against the background of the terms of the initial Ottoman six-point proposal, the treaty undoubtedly constituted a significant improvement as far as Saudi interests were concerned. First, not only did Ibn-Saud incorporate Hasa into the Saudi entity, but he also secured Ottoman recognition of his new status, just several months after the Porte had expressed determination to restore its direct authority over Hasa. Secondly, he managed to prevent the reinstatement of the Ottoman garrisons in Hasa, thus removing what might have become a constant threat and irritant to his freedom of action. It is clear that what largely accounted not only for the favourable terms of the treaty but also for the Ottomans' reluctance to embark on military actions was the initial British intervention in the Saudi-Ottoman dispute. It is true that London's final withdrawal forced Ibn-Saud to conclude the treaty; but by initially drawing Britain into the framework of his bilateral relations with the Porte, Ibn-Saud did manage to use British power as a counterweight to Ottoman pressure. London's interventions in August 1913 and in March-April 1914, both by offering mediation and by protesting against Ottoman policies, significantly and consequently improved Ibn-Saud's bargaining position. The final reversal in Britain's position could not change this reality, for by then the Ottomans had already become aware of both British-Saudi contacts and London's opposition to any Ottoman operation in the Gulf. For almost two months, the British authorities were left in the dark regarding the fate of the Ottoman-Saudi negotiations. Eventually they were informed of the settlement through their agents in Basra, Kawayt, Bahrain and Muscat. They also got unofficial information from Saudi and Ottoman sources. News of the treaty spread immediately as far as Cairo, where *al-Muqattam* published an article on 'the Agreement between the Turkish Government and Bin Saud'.<sup>177</sup>

Ibn-Saud himself, in subsequent meetings with British officials admitted to having concluded a formal treaty with the Porte. In a letter to

---

<sup>177</sup> *Al-Muqattam*, 13 August, 1914, p. 2. cited in *Ibid*.

Shakespear in November 1914, he explained that as Britain had refused to support him, he had been obliged to enter into an agreement with the Porte 'in order to secure immunity from Ottoman aggression'<sup>178</sup> In early January 1915, he justified once again to Shakespeare his concluding the treaty, claiming that he had accepted some of its terms after being assured that the Porte 'would not insist on their execution',<sup>179</sup> And in December 1915, he told Keyes that he had never meant to honour it.<sup>180</sup>

The last two events - occupation of Hasa and conclusion of a treaty with the Ottomans - were of great moment in Ibn Sa'ud's career and in framing the history of the area. This helped to a great extent, in extending his authority to the shores of the Persian Gulf and this brought him into contact with the British Empire, which had kept the peace on the waters of the Gulf for the past hundred years. It is to be noted at the same time that at the moment when Ibn Sa'ud seized al-Hasa from the Ottoman Turks, Great Britain was negotiating with Turkey a convention which was duly signed latter on the 29 July 1914. This convention assigned all those territories, both in the coast and in the interior of the Peninsula, which were at the moment under the control of Ibn Sa'ud's *de facto*, to the Ottoman sphere of influence. This conjunction of events placed the British Government in an awkward position.<sup>181</sup> But very soon the situation changed when Turkey entered into the war in favour of Germany. This time Ibn Sa'ud felt British support for maintaining independent existence. Reciprocal interests helped both the parties to come to a closer relation.

---

<sup>178</sup> Ibn Saud to Shakespear, 4 November, 1914, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2479, 256.

<sup>179</sup> Keyes to Mark Sykes, 10 January, 1916, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2769, E38086/4650/44.

<sup>180</sup> For a comprehensive study of the whole issue, cf., J. B. Kelly, *Eastern Arabian Frontiers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964).

<sup>181</sup> Aronold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 282.

## Chapter 5

# Ibn Sa'ud, *Sharif* Husain and the British during the Inter-war Period

### Ibn Sa'ud's Policy and Strategy towards *Sharif* Husain British Dealings with Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain

It is to be noted that the prevailing situation of British reluctance to Ibn Sa'ud's overtures changed dramatically to a great extent as soon as the First World War took place in 1914. In November of the same year when the Ottoman Empire took part in the First World War (1914-1918) in favour of Germany, the British then decided to draw the sympathy and co-operation of the Arab *Amirs* against the Ottomans to liberate the Arab territories. The British diplomatic circles especially the Arab Bureau of Cairo and Foreign Office in London put emphasis on *Sharif* Husain and sought his alliance against the Ottomans. But Ibn Sa'ud did not take this British stand with good grace though after the outbreak of the war he concluded an agreement with the former in December 1915.<sup>1</sup> In 1916, he concluded another treaty with Britain recognizing him as the sole ruler of Najd and Hasa. During the inter-war period and a few years after the war Ibn Sa'ud passed his time with great patience and did not like to antagonize the British pursuing any action against the Hashimites though dispute took place between them over some issues.

It is to be noted here that on the eve of the First World War, Ibn Sa'ud was probably the most powerful ruler in the Arabian Peninsula. Since his seizure of Riyadh in 1902, he had consolidated his authority in Najd in central Arabia and successfully defended his territory in numerous encounters with the forces of his hereditary enemy to the north, Ibn Rashid, the *Amir* of Jabal Shammar. In May 1913 Ibn Sa'ud had ousted the Turks from the valuable coastal province of Hasa, thereby gaining direct access to the Persian Gulf.

---

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Silverfarb, "The Anglo-Najd Treaty of December, 1915", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, October, 1980, pp. 167-177.

And in May 1914 he had concluded a treaty with the Ottoman government in which the latter recognized his position in Najd as well as in Hasa in exchange of a nominal Turkish suzerainty. Naturally in 1914 Ibn Sa'ud's prestige was great and his position in Arabia was strong.<sup>2</sup>

It is to be noted that the British policy towards Ibn Sa'ud from 1910 until the outbreak of war with Turkey in 1914 is characterized on the one hand by Ibn Sa'ud's growing power in Arabia and on the other hand by the divided opinion in British governmental circles as to how this power and Ibn Sa'ud's repeated requests for recognition should be dealt with.<sup>3</sup> The India Office and the Government of India were usually in accord in wishing to treat with Ibn Sa'ud lest he impinge upon their interests in the area. The Foreign Office, primarily concerned in the Middle East with the settlement of the outstanding issues between Britain and Turkey which could lead to war, viewed Ibn Sa'ud as a figure of minimal importance in the context of general Anglo-Turkish relations.<sup>4</sup>

It is to be mentioned here at this stage that in the prewar period the government of India and its officials in the Persian Gulf had wanted to respond favourably to Ibn Sa'ud's earlier overtures. They recognized that he was, formally, a Turkish vassal, and they certainly did not want to alienate the Porte or to facilitate the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The Indian authorities believed, however, that the dominant British position in the Persian Gulf would be insecure and unstable as long as Ibn Sa'ud were not integrated into the network of treaties which Britain had concluded with the rulers of the other Arab principalities on the Arabian shore of the Gulf. These agreements were made originally as a result of British efforts in the early nineteenth century to combat the piracy in the Persian Gulf. This sort of piracy was hampering British commerce with Persia and Turkish Iraq. In the latter

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Gary Troller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.



part of the century the treaty system was extended in order to curb the political and military influence of other powers in the Gulf and thereby protect the Western approaches to India. In addition, the agreements were also motivated by Britain's desire to suppress the slave trade and curb the arms traffic in this region. The British treaties with the various Arab *Shaikhdoms* of the Persian Gulf were different, but the agreements usually obligated the rulers to maintain a perpetual truce at sea, to have no negotiations or diplomatic relations with any foreign power other than the British government, not to cede, sell, or mortgage any part of their territory except to the British government, and to suppress the slave trade and prohibit the arms traffic in their territories. In return for these commitments, Britain pledged to protect and uphold their independence.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the situation was different in London. In the pre-war period the British Foreign Office, unlike the Government of India, was consistently concerned more with the Ottoman Government than with local conditions in the Persian Gulf. The Foreign Office did not want to do anything which might jeopardize the territorial integrity of Asiatic Turkey. It believed that this policy would help secure and protect the Western approaches to India and also remove a possibly serious cause of dissension among the European powers which might cause a serious political imbalance in Europe and elsewhere in Asia. Furthermore, the Foreign office feared that British support of secessionist elements in the Ottoman Empire might irretrievably damage Britain's chances of moving Turkey away from its pro-German orientation. Consequently, the Foreign Office refused to sanction any activity which might

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, For comprehensive study of the British position in the Persian Gulf region during the 19th and early 20th century, see, J. G. Lorimer, *op.cit.*, Ravinder Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf Region 1858-1907: A Study in British Imperial Policy* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1965); Briton C. Busch, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914: An Historical Sketch from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 192-273; J. B. Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis of the British Position in the Persian Gulf', *St. Anthony's Papers*, No. 4, (London: 1958), pp. 119-140; John Marlowe, *The Persian Gulf in The Twentieth Century* (London: Cresset Press, 1962), pp. 1-14 and J. B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf: 1755-1880* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1968).

give the appearance of treating Ibn Sa'ud as an independent ruler rather than as an Ottoman subject, and its view prevailed within the councils of the British Government.<sup>6</sup>

This stand of the Foreign Office in London changed to a great extent by the end of September 1914 as soon as it became clear to the British Government that the Ottoman Empire would enter the war on the side of Germany. Consequently on 2 October 1914 the British Government decided to send Captain Shakespear to Najd for the purpose of securing Ibn Sa'ud's goodwill and influencing him not to side with the Ottoman Empire in the event of hostilities. This decision represented a complete reversal of pre-war British policy which had considered Ibn Sa'ud to be in the Turkish sphere of influence and, therefore, had abstained from contact with him as much as possible.

The outbreak of the First World War contributed to a great extent in moulding and formulating the war-time policy of the British Government in the area. In order to understand the British Policy, it is necessary to view the Middle Eastern situation as it presented itself to the British at the outbreak of hostilities with Turkey on the 5 November 1914. It is to be noted at this stage that Middle East occupies a unique place in world politics and strategy. Reservation of crude oil played a vital role in this respect. This consideration contributed to a great degree in formulating British policy during the pre-war and inter-war period.

It is to be noted that throughout the major part of the nineteenth century, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was determined mainly by two considerations. Britain sought first to preserve Turkey in order to keep open the British routes to India and second to promote reforms in the Ottoman administration. The policy of championing reforms was primarily motivated by the desire to achieve the first objective: the imperial necessity of preserving Turkey. Britain feared that internal Turkish decay complemented

---

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

by external Russian pressure would hasten the demise of the 'Sick Man' thereby endangering British communications with India.<sup>7</sup> It was this great importance of India which was to determine British war time policy in the Middle East. On the commencement of military operations with Turkey, Britain's immediate military objectives were to secure the Suez Canal and Red Sea and to occupy the head of the Persian Gulf. The Persian Gulf was of paramount importance to the British because of its proximity to India and the Persian oil fields.<sup>8</sup> It thus needed the deployment of forces. Both these policies were governed by the traditional policy of maintaining British communications with the East.

Under such circumstances with the Turkish entry in the war the possibility of the proclamation of *jihad* (holy war) by the *Sultan* - Caliph greatly worried the British Government.<sup>9</sup> This actually happened and it created some problems for the British. This was because of the fact that by this time a very few Arabs were imbued with the idea of western oriented nationalism which could be used for the sake of the British interest in the area. Most of the Arabs being illiterate and politically indifferent, responded on the whole to the *Jihad* call of the *Sultan*.<sup>10</sup> The British were also apprehensive that a Turkish proclamation of *Jihad* would have a grave effect on Indian Muslims. 'British India', where the Middle East is concerned, is Moslem India, and Indian Muslims as a result of political agitation which started during the Balkan wars (1912-13), attached great importance to the Caliphate of the *Sultan* of Turkey.<sup>11</sup> It was conceivable that not only India's loyalty but also the British position in Egypt would have been threatened.

---

<sup>7</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>8</sup> E. Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1956* (London: John Hopkin's Press, 1963), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Gary Troeller, "Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain: A Comparison in importance in the Early years of the First World War", *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1971, pp. 628-629.

<sup>10</sup> M. G. Steiner, *Inside Pan-Arabia* (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1947), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Major Sir Hubert W. Young, *The Independent Arab* (London: John Murray, 1933), p. 271; For Indian Muslims' attitude toward the Balkan War see, A. A. Khan, "The

In spite of well established relationship of the British with the Persian Gulf Chiefs, the British were very much anxious about the future status of the area. The British anxiety, however, increased to a great extent when Ibn Rashid, the ruler of Jabal Shammar became an ally of the *Sultan* in the war. The British then tried to enlist the support of other Arab Chiefs especially of Ibn Sa'ud as their fighting ally whose born enemy was Ibn Rashid. But though Ibn Sa'ud entered into treaty relations with the British, he followed the convenient path of benevolent neutrality in the war. This stand of Ibn Sa'ud may be attributed to the fact that though he had deep hatred for the Turks, he could not openly and boldly defy the *jihad* call of the *Sultan*. For one thing, his rule in Najd was far from being firm; surrounded by enemies and doubtful of the allegiance of certain tribes who did not like the iron hand of the new ruler, he had to watch his step very cautiously in one direction or another. Besides, his fighting strength was not such as to allow the risky adventures. In January 1915 he had moved against Ibn Rashid with disastrous result. So, Ibn Sa'ud could not serve the interest of the British. Turning to Yemen, that backdoor to Aden, the British were unable to sever the friendly relations of the *Imam* and his subjects with the *Sultan*. The *Imam* remained faithful to Islam and the Caliph. Naturally the two Turkish divisions stationed there held out to the end.

This situation alarmed the British to a great extent. In order to rally the Arabs against the Turks they were looking for any ally who best could suit their political and well as their military purposes.

As the war broke out between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire in early November 1914, the British Government strove to enlist Ibn Sa'ud as well as other Arabian rulers to its military schemes in the region. Consequently on 3 November the Acting Political Resident in the Gulf, S.F. Major Knowx, informed the Saudi ruler of the British declaration of war against the Ottomans. Knowx expressed London's desire that Ibn Sa'ud, 'co-operate in the liberation of Basra from the Ottomans, or alternatively 'prevent any

---

Balkan war; Its Repercussions in India", *The Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. V, 1973, pp. 113-132.

Ottoman reinforcements from reaching Basra until the British arrive to seize the place, and protect British subjects and goods from plunder', In return for such Saudi military support, the British Government promised to provide Ibn Sa'ud with the three following assurances: (1) protect him from an Ottoman attack or act of hostility by sea; (2) recognize his independence in all Najd and Hasa; and (3) conclude a treaty with him.<sup>12</sup> It is evident that the military assistance which the British sought to obtain from the Sa'udis was by no means confined to the occupation of Basra. Ibn Sa'ud, of course, did not move against Basra. He realized that the outbreak of war had enhanced his bargaining position, and although he had long sought close ties with the British Government, he was now willing to commit himself without careful deliberation. Besides, it would have been difficult for Ibn Sa'ud to move a substantial force as far north as Basra, leaving his home territory unprotected, at the moment when Ibn Rashid loomed menacingly on his flank. The seizure of Basra on 22 November by the Indian Expeditionary Force altered the nature of the assistance which Britain wanted from Ibn Sa'ud. Still it was the opinion of Sir Percy Cox, the Chief Political Officer for the Indian Expeditionary Force and the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, and Brigadier-General W.S. Delamain, the General Officer Commanding, that Ibn Sa'ud should move northwards in case his support were required to suppress hostile activities from tribes in the region between Basra and Baghdad.<sup>13</sup> Percy Cox duly informed the Indian Government as per. Indeed, when Captain Shakespear was dispatched from London as a personal emissary to the Saudi Chief, Cox instructed him to endeavour and bring Ibn Sa'ud northwards to co-operate with the British forces in Mesopotamia.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Knox to Ibn Sa'ud, 3 November, 1914, Public Record Office, F.O., 271/2140 cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

<sup>13</sup> Cox to the Viceroy, 22 November, 1914, quoted in Philip Graves, *The Life of Sir Percy Cox* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1941), p. 182; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum by Cox on Shakespear's mission, February, 1915, Public Record Office, F.O., 882/8, 15/15/1; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

Ibn Sa'ud, however, rejected the British request for an active Saudi military role at the stage. He preferred to remain non-committal and avoid antagonizing the Porte, fearing a permanent alienation from the Ottomans before their defeat and final removal from Arabia became irreversible. He did not hesitate to favour the British, and his responses to Knowx, Shakespear and Cox contained abundant references to the friendship and goodwill he entertained towards Britain; but without offering any sort of practical assistance.<sup>15</sup> His position was further illustrated during his extensive negotiations with Shakespear in the first week of January 1915. Ibn Sa'ud submitted an eleven article memorandum, containing seven British and four Saudi undertakings, which was to serve as a tentative basis for the formulation of a treaty in between them. Significantly, the Saudi document did not contain any reference whatsoever, indeed it was totally unrelated to any role Ibn Sa'ud was to play in the British war effort against the Ottomans.<sup>16</sup>

Shakespear, nevertheless, pressed for the conclusion of a treaty, citing British Gulf interests and advantages as being 'of no less value than the active military support asked for initially'. The Government of India, the India Office and the Foreign Office, all concurred in Shakespear's recommendation that a treaty would be in Britain's interest despite Ibn Sa'ud's obvious refusal to assume a military role in the British war effort.<sup>17</sup> The only objection the Indian Government raised was directed at the comprehensive nature of Ibn Sa'ud's draft, which contained touchy problems, whose clarification might

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sa'ud to Knox and to Shakespear, 28 November, 1914, and to Cox, 2 January, 1915, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2479/2, pp. 305a, 292, and 341a respectively; cited in Goldberg, Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

<sup>16</sup> Shakespear's comprehensive report on his talks with Ibn Sa'ud, 4 January, 1915, Public Record Office, F.O., 371/ 2479, p. 338; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

<sup>17</sup> Public Record Office, F.O., 371/2479, pp. 275-6, 271-3, and 281; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 236.

have taken a long time. It is, therefore, decided that a preliminary treaty be concluded based on the principles of British recognition of and protection for Ibn Sa'ud in exchange of Saudi surrender of foreign relations.<sup>18</sup>

By the time Cox was to authorize Shakespear to negotiate the treaty. But unfortunately due to the treachery of Ajman tribe Shakespear lost his life earlier before the conclusion of a treaty as a result of the battle that took place between the Saudi and Rashidi forces in January 1915.<sup>19</sup> But his death affected neither British nor Saudi desire to conclude the treaty. Both Cox and Ibn Sa'ud lost no time after Shakespear's death and resumed negotiations by making correspondence which partly explained why they had to conclude only ten months later. After several exchanges of various drafts, both of the parties finally met on 26 December 1915 and signed the Anglo - Najd treaty.<sup>20</sup> Latter on the treaty was ratified by the Government of India on the 18 July 1916. It is to be noted here that the foreign office in London, before the war had opposed British contacts with Ibn Sa'ud because they constituted a threat to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. But the situation changed with the passage of time and they no longer objected to negotiations with the Najd ruler after the death of Shakespear. This stand of the British was timely because of the outbreak of war and Ottoman participation in favour of Germany.

In this instrument, the British Government took note that Najd, Hasa, Qatif and Jubayl, with their ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf, were the ancestral dominions of Ibn Sa'ud; and it recognized Ibn Sa'ud as the independent ruler of these regions and the absolute chief of their tribes. The succession was to pass to his descendants, and the individual successor was to be selected by the reigning prince, with the proviso that he should not be a

---

<sup>18</sup> GI to Cox, 21 January, 1915, Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 319; cited in Jacob Goldberg, *MES*, Vol. 21, No. 2, April, 1985, p. 319.

<sup>19</sup> For details see, Harry V. F. Winstone, *Captain Shakespear: A Portrait* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), pp. 206-208.

<sup>20</sup> For the text of the Treaty, see, J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Records: 1914-1956*, Vol. II (Princeton: D Van Nostrand Company, INC, 1956), p. 17.

person antagonising to the British Government in any respect (Art. 1) In the event of aggression by any foreign power against the territories of Ibn Sa'ud, the British Government was to aid Ibn Sa'ud at its discretion if it had not had a previous opportunity of intervening diplomatically. (Art.2) Ibn Sa'ud pledged himself not to enter into relations with any foreign power other than Great Britain (Art. 3) and not without the British Government's consent - to alienate or lease any of his territories or grant concessions to any other foreign power or its nationals (Art. II). He further pledged himself (Art. II) to follow Great Britain's advice unreservedly provided that it were not damaging to his own interests a condition which might be regarded as almost cancelling the commitment. He undertook to keep open within his territories the roads leading to the holy places and to protect pilgrims on their passage to and the holy places (Art. 5). He also undertook to refrain from all aggressions against or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, and of the *Shaikhs* of Qatar and of the Uman coast who were under the protection of and in treaty relations with the British Government (Art. 6). The two parties agreed though without indicating any time-limit to conclude a further detailed treaty (Art. 7). Presumably this was to deal, among other things, with the delimitation of Ibn Sa'ud's territories and the territories of the Gulf Chiefs, which in previous articles (Art. 1 and 6), had been left over for subsequent settlement.<sup>21</sup>

It is to be noted here that even after the conclusion of this treaty with Great Britain, Ibn Sa'ud refrained from taking a direct part in the campaign against the Turks. One reason for this was geographical, for after the British conquest of Basra in November 1914, Ibn Sa'ud unlike the *Amir* Husain of the Hejaz, was no longer in immediate contact with Turkish military forces. Another and possibly stronger, reason was that Ibn Sa'ud's two principal Arabian rivals, the *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Rashid, happened to take opposite sides - a situation which inclined Ibn Sa'ud towards *de facto* neutrality.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, Vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 282-283.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 183.



The treaty of 1915 governed Anglo-Najd relations until it was superseded by the Treaty of Jeddah in 1927. The agreement of 1915 formally integrated Ibn Sa'ud into the network of British protected *Shaikhdoms* which, after the inclusion of Qatar in November 1916, extended along the entire coast of the Arab side of the Persian Gulf. The treaty also contributed British paramountcy in the heart of central Arabia and for the first time led to a significant British involvement in the political affairs of that remote and inaccessible region. Britain derived little direct military benefit from the treaty during the war, however, because Ibn Sa'ud did not take the field against the Turks. After 1915 the Najdi ruler was weakened by tribal revolts, and he was concerned about Husain's expansionist ambitions. Consequently, Ibn Sa'ud was not inclined to dissipate his energies and resources in serious combat against other opponents, such as Ibn Rashid or the Turks, whose threat appeared less immediate. Still Britain gained significantly from the treaty, because it ensured that Ibn Sa'ud would not menace British interests along the Arab shores of the Persian Gulf or seriously interfere with the *Sharif's* revolt against the Turks in the Hejaz. In addition, Ibn Sa'ud occasionally engaged in indecisive skirmishes with Ibn Rashid, which made it difficult for the latter to aid the Turks either on the Egyptian or the Mesopotamian front. Furthermore after the war Ibn Sa'ud unlike Husain, recognized the British mandates in Iraq and in Palestine and refused to assist the Arab nationalist movements against British rule in those territories.

On the other hand Ibn Sa'ud also benefited from the treaty. He won British recognition of his position in Najd and in Hasa and an implicit pledge to uphold his rule in those territories against any challenger. In addition, after January 1917 Ibn Sa'ud received a valuable subsidy of £5,000 per month from the British Government plus considerable quantities of arms and ammunition. This subsidy which continued until March 1924, was important to Ibn Sa'ud because his total annual income from all other sources during this

period was only about £100000.<sup>23</sup> Finally it will be seen that in 1924 when Ibn Sa'ud attacked the Hejaz, Britain adopted a strictly neutral position. This stand of the British helped Ibn Sa'ud to a great extent because by this time he proved himself more powerful than Husain.

As the Anglo-Saudi Treaty marked not only a turning point in relations between the British and Ibn Sa'ud but a distinct departure from Britain's traditional policy of avoiding entanglement in central Arabia.<sup>24</sup>

British's decision to conclude a treaty with Ibn Sa'ud was governed by two considerations. Firstly, it was necessary to arrive at an agreement with the *Amir* in order to secure his allegiance for participation in the war. It was necessary to pay an 'immediate price for his friendship' and it was also seen that after the war, his friendship would be vital. Secondly, a definite treaty was necessary as Ibn Sa'ud was unprepared to give effective aid to the Indian Expeditionary Force until he had secured his long desired agreement with the British.<sup>25</sup>

This treaty differed greatly from Britain's traditional tracial treaties. In the past, British agreements with the *Shaikhs* of the Gulf littoral involved her at most in maritime disputes, with a narrow strip of land constituting a natural barrier between the coast and the inner fastness of Arabia.<sup>26</sup>

In essence the British new treaty with Ibn Sa'ud in its promises of protection against foreign powers and references to the demarcation of boundaries involved Britain in controlling Arab relations on land where her maritime supremacy counted for very little. Reluctantly but inexorably Britain was drawn into the vortex of inner Arabian politics.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee* (London: Robert Hale, 1952), p. 57.

<sup>24</sup> B.C. Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914-1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 235.

<sup>25</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.91.

It is to be noted that on the western side of the Arabian Peninsula from the religious, political, strategic and - to a lesser extent - military points of view, Husain, though devious and ambitious, was the logical choice for British support. From the religious standpoint, Husain Ibn Ali, the *Sharif* of Mecca, was in many respects one of the most important men in Islam. As a member of the Hashim family of the Quraish tribe, he was a descendant of the Prophet and custodian of the holy places. He was also appointed by the imperial *firman*. Politically, Husain again emerged as an individual who held a unique position.<sup>28</sup> He became the leader of the Arab nationalism. By his direct descent of the Prophet, his strategic position as the custodian of the holy places and the virtual ruler of Hejaz, his experiences in the urban centres of Arab revival and in Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and his close association, through his sons with the urban intelligentsia and rebel leadership, *Sharif* Husain occupied the unique position of a leader who by his personality could hyphen the ethno-religious nationalism of the Peninsular tribes with the romantic political nationalism of the town *effendies*.<sup>29</sup> As a result, his importance to the British was immense. In addition, the strategic location of his territory, early difficulties in their campaign in the different front of the Middle East and their desire to protect Arab allies of the Persian Gulf played a very vital role in moulding and formulating policies of the British towards *Sharif* Husain. The British thought that by defying the *Sultan* the first serious breach of Muslim unity would be accomplished, and the edge of *Jihad* would be blunted considerably. Furthermore, a revolt in Hejaz, if successfully carried out, would isolate the Turkish garrisons in Shammar, the Yemen and Hejaz and would be great helpful to the British military strategy in the Middle East.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.76-77.

<sup>29</sup> Hans Khon, *A History of Nationalism in the East* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), p. 267.

<sup>30</sup> M. J. Steiner, *op.cit.*, p. 55.

All these considerations induced the British to make contact with *Sharif* Husain of Mecca. This contact led to lengthy negotiations between the *Sharif* of Mecca and the British High Commissioner of Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. The result of the negotiations was reflected in a series of documents known as the Husain-McMahon Correspondence. *Sharif* Husain, confident of the British support in the eventuality of his final rupture with Turkey raised the banner of revolt against the Ottoman authority in Hejaz on 5 June, 1916.

'In return for his revolt, against the Turks' *Sharif* Husain' received promises of British aid for the establishment of Arab independence'.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Husain's demand for the proclamation of an Arab Caliphate was also recognized by the British. Once the revolt began the British tried to co-ordinate its tactics and moved with the general British strategy of war in the Middle East, and paid heavy subsidies for the persecution of the revolt. This hard-cash policy was followed up by the British as a necessary incentive to the gold-loving *Shaikhs* and *Sharifs* and as a further inducement for revolt and Anglo-Arab alliances. It was advantageous for the British to keep the Arabs in the forefront of the struggle and thereby create an impression in the minds of the people that it was a liberation struggle backed by the British rather than a ruthless British war of domination supported by the Arabs.<sup>32</sup> But it is to be noted that the appeal of *Sharif* Husain to the Muslims of the World in the name of "Islamic solidarity" to follow this example was not a well thought out piece of propaganda nor did it work for his cause. As a result, his action did not have wider perspective. Although this revolt did not turn into an uprising on a large scale, it had a profound bearing on shaping the course of politics of the Arab World.

---

<sup>31</sup> Hubert W. Young, *op.cit.*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>32</sup> Rasheeduddin Khan, "The Arab Revolt of 1916-1918", *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1, January, 1961, p. 256.

It may be mentioned that by encouraging *Sharif* Husain to raise the standard of revolt against the *Sultan-Caliph*, the British policy makers could not afford to neglect Ibn Sa'ud who stood at the head of the militant Wahhabis. Rather, the comparative political and military potentials of the two personalities created serious differences of opinions among the British policy makers. Some were of opinion that the political and military potential of Ibn Sa'ud was greatly overshadowed by the actual power of Husain. At the same time, the British did not fail to pursue Ibn Sa'ud, who stood at the head of the militant, fundamentalist Islamic reform movement, Wahhabism, was recognized by some British officials at this point as possessing potential both militarily and politically. Using the same scale of religious, political, strategic and military importance, it became apparent to many that Ibn Sa'ud ran *Sharif* Husain a very bad second at the outset of the war and for sometime to come. From religious view point, Ibn Sa'ud stood at the head of a movement which was looked upon with a mixture of fear and disdain by many Muslims. His importance in this field was, in comparison with Husain, manifestly negligible. Politically the Wahhabi leader had no influence outside the confines of central and eastern Arabia. Although combining religion and a militant following, he could not put himself at the head of an Arab movement which could to some extent co-ordinate comparatively sophisticated nationalist movements with tribal discontent.

Hence in the context of prevailing political and strategic situation in the area, British officials responsible for Arab affairs during World War I disagreed with each other in their evaluation of Husain and Ibn Sa'ud. Colonel T.E. Lawrence believed that Ibn Sa'ud was only a passing phenomenon. After Ibn Sa'ud's death, Lawrence asserted, the same old anarchy would return and there would be "wild reversion" to the "national chaos" of Arabia. Considering the overall situation, Lawrence believed it wiser to back the Hashimite *Sharifs* of Mecca because of their direct descent from the Prophet and traditional

association with the holy places of Islam. He opined that 'any way, we are committed to the *Sharifian* cause and we can't afford to upset things by encouraging Ibn Sa'ud's pretensions'.<sup>33</sup>

Another famous British Arabist, H. St. J.B. Philby, latter to become one of Ibn Sa'ud's principal advisers, pointed out that Ibn Sa'ud would never accept Hashimite leadership. Ibn Sa'ud would so alter Arabia, Philby believed, that his successors would have few difficulties in keeping it unified. Through the *Ikhwan*, Philby pointed out, tribal jealousies and wars were being checked. Raiding had almost become a thing of the past, and prosperity was increasing. Above all, Ibn Sa'ud had at his command a devoted and 'extremely fanatical' army.<sup>34</sup> This helped him to a great extent for the expansion of the Saudi Power.

During the war period, British officials, however, compromised with each other by supporting with arms and money both Ibn Sa'ud and the Hashimites, although the latter received the lion's share. But there were no accurate figures available for the various items of British subsidy given to the Arabs during 1916-20.<sup>35</sup>

But after the end of the war there occurred a new era of British diplomacy vis a vis *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud. Husain as the central figure of the revolt was impatiently looking forward to the realization of his ambitious dreams, Husain formally believed that the Lord had chosen the Hashimites not only to rule the Arab World but also to play first fiddle in the Muslim world as bearers of a revived caliphate. But it is to be recalled that under the

---

<sup>33</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby, *Arabian Days* (London: Robert Hale, 1948), pp. 158-159.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>35</sup> For details, see, Zeine N. Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Faisal's Kingdom in Syria* (Beirut: Khayat's, 1960), pp. 14-15; cf., Thomas Lyell, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia* (London: 1923), pp. 199-200; Ronald Stores, *Orientalisms* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1937), p. 153 fn; Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, n. 24, p. 273.

Ottomans, he was primarily an *Amir* of the Hejaz-the title accurately described his political status and the territorial extent of his authority. It is seen that from the beginning of his negotiations with Britain in 1915, he presented a claim for the independence not only of the Hejaz but also of all the Arab countries in Asia. This was really a wider demand. However, to fulfil his demand and ambition, Husain without consulting the British Government, caused himself to be proclaimed 'King of the Arabs' by the notables of Mecca on the 29 October, 1916, and he had himself crowned with the same style on the 4 November following. This hasty and ill timed deed caused a great deal of uproar among the other rulers of the Arab provinces. The British and the French Governments were stunned by that act of the impatient *Sharif*. Cognizant, however, of the *Sharif's* independence as the head of the revolt, they had pondered the problem for a long time until in January, 1917 they recognized him as "King of Hejaz' only. But even this kingdom, he was unable to hold, for a mighty rival in the Peninsula was forging a sword which was bound to shatter irrevocably Husain's ambitious dreams of a Pan-Arab Empire and an Arab Caliphate. Ibn Sa'ud was on the March <sup>36</sup> Thus it is seen that these pretensions of King Husain and the decidedly provocative manner in which he attempted to assert them were particularly unwise at a time when the Hejaz was menaced by the resurrection, of the militant Wahhabi power in the Najd. But it is important to note that Ibn Sa'ud did not strike home in the Hejaz until he had disposed of Ibn Rashid and had ceased to receive a British subsidy. He was preparing the ground during the intervening period by a systematic campaign of Wahhabi proselytization along the eastern borders of the Hejaz – a campaign directed from Riyadh with the potential object undermining the authority of the Hashimites and extending the influence of Al-Sa'ud.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> M. G. Steiner, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>37</sup> J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 287.

It is to be recalled that the ambitious Husain's hasty proclamation of himself as the 'King of the Arabs' on the 29 October 1916, not only stunned both the British and French but caused a great deal of uproar among other rulers of the Arab provinces. Considering his role in the Arab revolt the British and French recognized him as the king of Hejaz only in 1917. This caused between *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud a serious rivalry in which again the British diplomacy had to play its own role. The defeat of Husain by Ibn Sa'ud, the possibility of Wahhabi invasion of the holy cities haunted the British as it might have serious repercussions on the religious sentiments of the Indian Muslims.

But so long the direct armed clash between *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud could be averted through the efforts of British diplomatic agent like Philby who advised Ibn Sa'ud not to take up arms against the British war ally *Sharif* Husain. Philby prevailed upon Ibn Sa'ud so successfully that the boastful letter of *Sharif* Husain demanding Ibn Sa'ud's recognition of the former as 'the King of the Arab countries' failed to provoke him. Ibn Sa'ud, however, was patiently waiting for the end of the war and the cessation of war subsidy from the British. Meanwhile, he, however, proceeded to consolidate his power in those parts of Arabia where he could not afford to antagonize the British. Thus marked the beginning of Britain's direct involvement in the political affairs of the interior of Arabia.

As regards the Rashidis of Hail it is to be noted that Ibn Rashid failed to make any friendship with a big power like Britain. He rather kept himself away from Britain as he continued his fragile alliance with the Ottomans and naturally Hail remained within the Ottoman sphere of influence during the war. After recognising Ibn Sa'ud as *Wali* of Najd in the Ottoman – Saudi Convention of 1914, the Ottomans appointed Ibn Rashid as 'commander of the whole of Najd.' He was sent 25 German and Turkish officers with 300 soldiers in return for his loyalty.

As regards the Ottoman diplomacy it is to be noted that when Turkey entered the war at the end of October 1914, the Ottoman government made



strenuous efforts to reconcile Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid, the *Amir* of Jabal Shammar of Hail. After years of trying to control Arabia through divide and rule tactics, the Turks reversed this policy by attempting to integrate the rival chiefs into the Ottoman war effort as an ally either in the Egyptian or in the *Mesopotamian* campaign. But the enmity between the two rulers' was too deep to permit their collaboration as per Porte's desire. Besides, Ibn Sa'ud had no intention of actively supporting the Turks in the conflict, because his newly acquired ports on the Persian Gulf coast were vulnerable to British bombardment. Moreover, Ibn Sa'ud viewed the Turks as the most important threat to his independence, and an Ottoman victory would only strengthen their hold on Arabia. Indeed, before 1914 Ibn Sa'ud had made numerous efforts to open relations with Britain in an attempt to bolster his position against the Turks. Consequently, the prospect of fighting Britain on behalf of the Ottoman Empire was unappealing, and it is doubtful whether Ibn Sa'ud seriously considered it.<sup>38</sup>

In spite of Ottoman's endeavours for reconciliation, rivalry and hostilities between Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid continued in central Arabia during the war. This rivalry aggravated and intense over the clearer demarcation of their alliances. Britain did not fail to play positive role at this stage and encouraged and pushed forward Ibn Sa'ud against the pro-Ottoman ruler of Hail to launch an attack on it in 1917. But no major success was achieved, and Ibn Sa'ud took advantage of the war to request further help from Britain against Ibn Rashid. Ibn Sa'ud argued and claimed that the terrain between Qasim and Hail was barren ground, and this would inevitably make it difficult for his troops to survive. In addition he argued that Hail was well fortified and difficult to conquer with the weapons in his possession. Britain agreed to assist him with 1,000 rifles and 100,000 pounds to annex the Rashidi capital.<sup>39</sup> During the war, however, Ibn Sa'ud failed to add Hail to his realm.

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>39</sup> M. Al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), p. 216.

## Chapter 6

# A Triangular Diplomacy between Ibn Sa'ud, *Sharif* Husain and Britain during the Post-War Era

With the conclusion of the First World War, the Arabian Peninsula found itself absolutely free and independent but split up into five independent states. So, Husain's assumption of the title "King of the Arabs" or the "King of the Arab countries" was a meaningless mirage. Actually he was only the king of Hejaz. In respect of both in military strength and in popularity more powerful than Husain, was his neighbour, Ibn Sa'ud, the *Sultan* of Najd. To the south, Yahya ruled the independent Imamate of the Yemen. Just between Hejaz and the Yemen there lay the state of Asir; whose ruler, the Idrisi Muhammad, was looked upon with askance by his southern neighbour, Ibn Rashid, ruler of Shammar, who also enjoyed full independence. Such a multiplicity of states could make for anything but unity. From among these rulers, Ibn Sa'ud emerged as a man of a heroic stature who had tried to fuge the Arabs of the Peninsula into one political community. As a result, the period from the end of First World War noticed gradual increase of Ibn Sa'ud's power. With relentless endeavour he tried to extend his frontiers to the limits of the early nineteenth century Wahhabi Empire.<sup>1</sup>

In the war period while Ibn Sa'ud was watching the weakening of the Rashidi power primarily due to their internal quarrels, new enemy came into the foreground. The enemy was Husain Ibn Ali of the Hashimite family of Mecca whom the Turks had appointed *Sharif* of Mecca in 1908. The first armed clash between Husain and Ibn Sa'ud took place over the Ataiba tribes and their highlands, which the latter regarded as his undisputed domain. Ibn Sa'ud had to wait for an opportune time to teach a lesson to Husain. But the time had not yet come, for Ibn Sa'ud was surrounded with other foes, like the

---

<sup>1</sup> Gary Troller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), p. 159.

Sheikh of Kuwait. Besides he had to quell some other uprisings of his own tribes. By this time, however, Ibn Sa'ud was busy with collecting and massing arms and preparing his men for bigger things to come in near future. Husain's boastful letter to Ibn Sa'ud, demanding his recognition as "King of the Arab countries", made his blood boil. Nevertheless, he was unable to move yet. H. St. J.B. Philby was sent by the British government to Ibn Sa'ud after captain Shakespear with the advice to induce Ibn Sa'ud not to take up arms against Husain, who was a British ally. So he was patiently waiting until the war was over. After the war their struggle for dominance in the Peninsula gradually intensified. Although war between *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud was temporarily averted, the latter proceeded to consolidate his power in those parts of Arabia where he could not antagonize the British.

But the British did not remain aloof for an indefinite period as because the dispute over Khurma again drew Philby's attention back to the Hejaz. Khurma, an oasis three days' journey east of Ta' if was one of the principal routes between Riyadh and Mecca. This place carries its geo-strategic value both to *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud. On this particular issue Ibn Sa'ud and King Husain were to clash dramatically and it was to be two years before the hostilities centering on the small town and latter on Turaba to the north were to subside. The dispute between Ibn Sa'ud and King Husain over the possession of the villages of Khurma and Turaba was important for two reasons. First, it marks the first major clash between the two Arabian rulers; secondly, the British were faced for the first time with the threat of a Wahhabi invasion of Hejaz and the effect that this would have primarily on their Muslim subjects. Essentially Khurma and Turaba dispute was both a religious and political issue.<sup>2</sup> It was stated that in 1917, after a majority of the people of Khurma had been converted to Wahhabism, the chief of the oasis the *Sharif* Khalid bin Lu'ayy, who had been originally appointed to his position by Husain and owed him allegiance, ejected or made away with the recalcitrant majority

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

of his subjects and seceded to Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>3</sup> Fearing that the Wahhabi revival which was beginning to assume significant portions in Najd might successfully attract many of his followers to the Sa'udi standard. Husain endeavoured to prevent the penetration into the Hejaz of militant Wahhabi tenets and to assert his ownership of Khurma and Turaba to which Ibn Sa'ud now laid claim. But it was not a wise decision. Under the circumstances, the statesmanlike course for king Husain would have been to maintain a strictly 'correct attitude' and to rely for eventual redress upon the good offices of the British, who were the patrons and pay masters of both the disputants. Instead, King Husain embarrassed the British Government and precipitated a conflict in Arabia by marching out to occupy Khurma in June 1918.<sup>4</sup> Britain, above all, was determined to prevent a Wahhabi invasion of Hejaz. Conditioned by historical experience, the British feared that a Wahhabi seizure of the holy cities would result once again, as it had in the early nineteenth century, in depredations and interrupted pilgrimages. The repercussions of such an event would be far-reaching. In India, Britain was confronted by many of her Muslim subjects who were genuinely concerned about the future of Turkey and Islam. The Muslims of India had always deep feelings for Turkey, the seat of the caliphate. The Muslim nationalists in India joined and reinforced for a time by Ghandi's Hindu nationalists used religious issues to discredit their British rulers. At Versailles Britain asserted her special position in Arabia. Naturally the spectre of a war between her protégés centering on the holiest cities in Islam and its probable bad effect on the Allied as well as hypersensitive Indian Muslim opinion exercised the British.<sup>5</sup> Despite British anxiety, three skirmishes took place in which the Hejazis were worsted. Finally in May 1919, a battle took place at Turaba, about forty miles south-west of the disputed oasis. In this battle the Hashimite *Amir* 'Abdullah bin Husain (afterwards the

---

<sup>3</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, Vol. I, (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 287-288.

<sup>5</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

Prince of Trans Jordan) was completely defeated, leaving (it was reported) some 4,000 or 5,000 dead upon the field.

Ibn Sa'ud refrained from following up his victory, but Turaba as well as Khurma remained in his hands, and the hearts of the Hejaz thenceforth lay open to Wahhabi invasion.<sup>6</sup> Militarily, it was clear from 'Abdullah's total defeat that his comparatively professional soldiers were no match for the *Ikhwan*. Politically, the usual fears of the effect in India of a Wahhabi invasion of the holy cities haunted British Government officials. In spite of that the British accepted the *fait accompli*. It is to be noted that despite frequent clashes between Sa'udi and Hashemite forces and successive fruitful result of the former, outright war was prevented by the British threats to cut off their subsidies and to help crush whichever side attacked first.

As time passed on Ibn Sa'ud, however, found himself encircled by ever growing foes. His main enemies were, of course, the Hashimites, who grabbed all the spoils. It is to be noted that Husain was the King of the Hejaz while Abdullah became *Amir* of Trans Jordan and Faisal was entrusted in Iraq in 1921. The Rashidis, although weakened considerably by the Wahhabi thrusts and inner dissensions, still presented some menace. On the Persian Gulf, the Sheikh of Kuwait was hostile, as ever. And to the south, *Imam* Yahya grew stronger. Such being the situation, Ibn Sa'ud's great problem was how to break that encirclement. He followed the strategy of piecemeal breaking. The Rashidis, being the weakest, were the first victims of this sort of strategy.

### **The Capture of Hail 1921**

It is to be noted that the First World War came to an end in 1918. It created many problems to settle in near future. But the picture of the Arabian Peninsula was different. Struggles for maintaining and extending supremacy took place and continued in this zone of the Arab Middle East between Ibn

---

<sup>6</sup> For the above events see H. St. J. B. Philby, *The Heart of Arabia*, Vol. II (London: Constable, 1922), pp. 168-169.

Sa'ud and his rivals. With the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire from the political map of the Arabian Peninsula Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid paid especial attention for the safeguard of their own territories and formulated policies to extend one's dominion to another's region.<sup>7</sup> This policy of maintaining existence and influencing other's region brought both Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid face to face. It is to be noted that the end of the First World War left Ibn Rashid without any ally and contributed to his weakening vis-à-vis his rival, Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>8</sup> It was wise at this stage for Ibn Rashid to remain in power in Hail and its environs. But without evaluating his position at this stage, Ibn Rashid constantly tried to compensate for the losses in central Arabia between 1918 and 1920. The Rashidis opened and entered negotiation with the Hashimites in Hejaz and Al Sabah, the *Amirs* of Kuwait. The Al Sabah responded to the call of negotiation because they took the activities of Ibn Sa'ud as a threat to their interests in the area especially when it became clear to them that the British support and sympathy during the war had greatly strengthened his position. But it is evident that these negotiation resulted in the breaking of isolation of the Rashidis after the war without undertaking any joint military venture against Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>9</sup> Naturally, the Rashidis were not in a position to face the aggressive activities of the Sa'udis and were unable to prevent Ibn Sa'ud's attack on their territories in the 1920s.<sup>10</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud considered that economic pressure may be a fruitful instrument to weaken the side of the Rashidis. Before launching attack on Hail, Ibn Sa'ud, therefore, denied the Shammar tribe, the strong supporters of the Rashidis, free access to markets in Hasa, an important economic zone of Ibn Sa'ud's realm. Thereupon military skirmishes and encroachments on the oases of Jabal Shammar followed.

---

<sup>7</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 43 (hereafter *A History of Saudi Arabia*).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf., Midawi Al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991).

In addition to the military pressure made by the Saudis, internal succession disputes took place in the Rashidi capital. As a result of the continuation of external pressure and prevailing internal indiscipline, the decline and fall of the Rashidi power in central Arabia became inevitable and visible. By this time, the weakness of the Rashidi *emirate* declined to a great extent because of its alliance with the defeated Ottoman Empire. Taking the opportunity of the prevailing favourable situation and with British subsidies and ammunition, Ibn Sa'ud launched his attack on Hail and captured the Rashidi capital in 1921.<sup>11</sup> The attack started with imposition of seize on the Rashidi capital with 10,000 troops in August 1921. The seize continued for more than two months and the Rashidis surrendered to Ibn Sa'ud on 1 November of same year. On 4 November, 1921 the gates of the oases were opened and the people of Hail paid their homage to Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>12</sup>

The capture of Hail strengthened Ibn Sa'ud's position, and it paved the way for extending Ibn Sa'ud's authority to the northern parts of Najd. On the otherhand, the fall of Hail brought an end of the Rashidi *emirate* with the ultimate result of the death of the prospect of this local power developing into a major political force in twentieth-century Arabia. In addition, the occupation of Hail had far-reaching importance as it stretched Saudi frontiers further north having prospect of further direct contact with the British, the then authority of shaping Trans Jordanian politics.<sup>13</sup>

The occupation of Hail in 1891 brought the entire territory of the once mighty Rashidis under Saudi control.<sup>14</sup> But after killing Ibn Rashid, the last of the enemy leaders, Ibn Sa'ud showed political accumen by magnanimity in victory. Instead of humiliating the defeated followers of Ibn Rashid, Ibn Sa'ud married Ibn Rashid's widow, adopted his children and brought the surviving

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>14</sup> M. G. Steiner, *Inside Pan-Arabia* (Chicago: Packard and Company, 1947), p. 69.

male members of the family to Riyadh as honoured guests. The same year he took the same course with the House of 'Aid who ruled in the interior of the 'Asir where the Idrisi had not succeeded in establishing his authority, with the result that the Al-Aid challenged the Wahhabi power and were bloodily defeated. In the same year he endeavoured to extend his authority to Asir. In the spring of 1922 the Hejazis appeared to have retaken Turaba and defeated a Wahhabi force in the neighbourhood of Khayber; but the Wahhabis occupied Turaba again a few months later, and desultory hostilities continued until Ibn Sa'ud struck his blow in the autumn of 1924.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile with a view to have international recognition, Ibn Sa'ud responded to the British endeavours to delimit the borders with Iraq by concluding Okayr agreement in 1922.

### **The occupation of Asir**

Armistice between Ibn Sa'ud and Husain over the question of Khurma and Turaba led the former to turn his attention elsewhere. Taking the opportunity of suspending hostility with Husain, Ibn Sa'ud tried to expand in the southern Hejaz, namely Asir, By this time an important development took place in Middle Eastern politics.<sup>16</sup> A separate *emirate* namely Trans Jordan was created by the British and Abdullah Ibn Husain was vested with charge of ruling it. At the same time, Faisal Ibn Husain was brought from outside and was made king of Iraq. This development on British initiative antagonised Ibn Sa'ud to some extent. Troeller evaluated the situation by saying that it appeared to the Najdi ruler that he was being outflanked by his Hashimite adversaries.<sup>17</sup>

Asir had an *emirate* based in Sabiya, founded by a descendant of the nineteenth – century Sufi teacher Ahmad Ibn Idris. The Ottoman expansion in Asir aroused resentment among the Idrisis. Since the late nineteenth century, the Idrisis had opposed Ottoman rule and gathered tribal confederations with

---

<sup>15</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>16</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>17</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 152.



the aim of expelling the Ottomans from the land.<sup>18</sup> This attitude of the Idrisis attributed to an important factor behind the formation of the Idrisi *emirate* in the twentieth century (1906-34) by Muhammed Ibn Ali al – Idrisi (1876 – 1923). The Idrisi *emirate* acted as a buffer zone between the local forces who were engaged in competition for establishing supremacy in the area. Especially both the *Sharifian* family in Mecca and the *Imams* of Yemen were trying to expand their influence in the agricultural zone of Asir seeking assistance from foreign powers.<sup>19</sup>

The Idrisi state was eventually secured by Britain and Italy both of whom had reasons to oppose the Ottomans before the First World War.<sup>20</sup> Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire in 1911 following the Italian invasion of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Having secured Eritrea, Italy found in Muhammad al – Idrisi, who had opposed Ottoman suzerainty in Asir, a potential ally in the Red Sea area.<sup>21</sup>

The Idrisis maintained a precarious hold over the tribal groups of Asir, especially after the defeat of the Ottomans in the First World War. After the war, tribes loyal to the Idrisis turned to Ibn Sa'ud, thus confirming the fragile coalition between the Idrisis and their tribal hinterland. The Idrisis themselves had no tribal roots in the area; they were and remained newcomers among the heterogeneous Asiri tribes.<sup>22</sup> While the Idrisis continued their fragile rule in Asir, the local *Amir* of Abha offered his allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud after Saudi troops under the leadership of his son Faisal occupied Abha, Asir's capital. In 1922 Abha became part of Ibn Sa'ud's domain, an event that angered Husain, who regarded the region as an extension of his rule over Hejaz.<sup>23</sup> Whatever it may

---

<sup>18</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> A. Bang, *The Idrisi State in 'Asir 1906-1934: Political, Religious and Personal Prestige as State Building Factors in the Early Twentieth Century* (Bergen: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1996), p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> A. Bang, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>23</sup> A. Vassilev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), p. 262.

be the incorporation of Asir in the Saudi realm is an important phenomenon towards the unification of the Arabian Peninsula under Ibn Sa'ud.

### **The occupation of Hejaz**

Having established himself firmly Ibn Sa'ud turned his attention towards Hejaz and the Saudi occupation of Hejaz was the most sensitive issue so far taken to the policy of expansion pursued by Ibn Sa'ud. It may be presumed that the Saudi campaign in Asir was a prelude to a more aggressive military encroachment on Husain's territories in the heart of Hejaz. Two reasons encouraged Ibn Sa'ud for taking such daring initiative: first, Ibn Sa'ud's finances suffered a blow when Britain stopped its monthly subsidy of £ 5,000 in 1924.<sup>24</sup> This economic reason persuaded Ibn Sa'ud to look towards the more prosperous region of central Hejaz, where income from the pilgrimage tax and custom duties levied in Jeddah would by far exceed his limited income from Najd and Hasa. Second, on 5 March 1924, Husain revived the caliphate which had been abolished by the Turkish assembly two days earlier.<sup>25</sup> Ibn Sa'ud could not accept this development with good grace. So his attack on Hejaz was a clear indication that he did not recognise Husain as the new caliph. With his subsidies withdrawn, Ibn Sa'ud had little to lose by antagonising Britain, which so far had guaranteed the integrity and protection of *Sharifian* rule.<sup>26</sup>

In this way having established firmly in the Najd, Ibn Sa'ud reopened his offensive step against Husain in the Hejaz. By that time the Hejaz had become completely defenceless through the defection to Ibn Sa'ud of the leading Badawi tribes of the country, particularly the Harb and the 'Utayhah, whose chiefs had been alienated by the stoppage of their subsidies from king Husain, consequent upon the stoppage of King Husain's subsidies from Great

---

<sup>24</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

<sup>26</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

Britain. In addition, Husain incurred the displeasure of the Turks, the French and the Indian Muslims who had denounced him as a traitor to the cause of Islamic solidarity for his revolt against the Porte during the war. Husain's relation with Egypt also became strained over the question of the performance of the pilgrimage. But even more important thing was that during the period of nine years following the Husain-McMahon correspondence, Husain failed to conclude a formal treaty with the British.<sup>27</sup> As a result, he left himself without any external cover against Ibn Sa'ud. It is to be noted here that towards the end of the year 1921, the British Government took the initiative by despatching colonel T.E. Lawrence to Jeddah with the mission of obtaining from King Husain the ratification of the Versailles Treaty, and submitting to him drafts of bilateral agreements between the British and the Hashimites.<sup>28</sup> His negotiations with Husain himself at Jeddah and then with his son Abdullah at 'Amman proved failure.<sup>29</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that Husain could not support the British policy in Palestine and for which he refused to accept the *de-facto* position of the latter there. But afterwards in 1923 when at the victory of the Turkish nationalists convening of the conference at Laussane seemed imminent King Husain opened negotiations with the British through their representative in London, Dr. Najiy'ul Asil.<sup>30</sup> But his efforts proved abortive as a result of Ibn Sa'ud's activities in the Hejaz. Thus when King Husain had to face Ibn Sa'ud's attack in force, he found himself not only without a treaty with Great Britain but also without the privileges of membership in the League of Nations.<sup>31</sup> Ibn Sa'ud, a better diplomatist than his rival, waited to strike until Husain, by his own acts, had reduced himself to complete diplomatic isolation.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 294.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

By this time Husain also incurred the displeasure of his subjects. Fortunately for Ibn Sa'ud, Husain proved himself a very poor ruler. He who had dreamed of a vast empire was unable to put even his small kingdom of Hejaz in order. He turned the pilgrimage to Mecca into a private business, monopolizing such commodities as water and food. The roads were unsafe because of highway-robbery and Bedouin raids operated and staged from time immemorial. Arab raiders were exacting heavy tolls from the pilgrims, and millions of Muslims, particularly the Wahhabis, were charging that Mecca had become an abode of brawls and unworthy scenes. They thought that the Muslims could not see a "traitor" as the custodian of the holy cities. But Husain seemed blind to his unpopularity among the Muslims at large and even of his own subjects. He climbed ever higher on the ladder of megalomania. Finally, he took the most slippery step which spelled his doom.<sup>33</sup>

This slippery step was related with the question of the caliphate which undoubtedly set the stage for the assault on the Hejaz by Ibn Sa'ud. Actually two important events took place in March 1924 which undoubtedly encouraged Ibn Sa'ud to launch attack against the Hejaz: Firstly, the assumption of the Caliphate at Amman by Husain on the 7 March, 1924 which had been abolished earlier by the Turkish Grand National Assembly and Secondly, withdrawal of British subsidy to Ibn Sa'ud, on the 31 March of the same year. In view of Husain's latest provocation and the fact that the termination of the British subsidy meant that Ibn Sa'ud had little to lose by antagonizing the British, there was a little bit to restrain the Wahhabi leader from unleashing his zealous followers on the Hejaz.<sup>34</sup> Britain chose to remain neutral in the ensuing Najd-Hejazi war. This was because of the fact that the issue was a religious one. In addition Britain had some other difficulties. In India she was confronted by anti-British nationalist agitation in which an

---

<sup>33</sup> Steiner, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>34</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 216.

important part was played by the Indian Muslim nationalist group, the Khilafat Committee. This organization was fervently opposed to any British interference in the holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina.

At the beginning of April 1924 Ibn Sa'ud, the *Sultan of Najd*, endeavoured to have reorganized his military dispositions throughout his dominions.<sup>35</sup> Latter on, a proclamation was issued by *Sultan's* son and heir, Faisal b. 'Abdul Aziz al Sa'ud to the Islamic World and the Arab nation in which he not only rejected Husain's pretention to the Caliphate but made a bid to supplant him in the leadership of the Arab nationalist movement.<sup>36</sup>

To materialize the design it was necessary to examine the attitude of the anti-Hashimite forces active in the region. On June 4, 1924 Ibn Sa'ud's father, 'Abdur Rahman convened a congress of tribal, military, religious and *Ikhwan* leaders at Riyadh. The object of the congress was to discuss the pilgrimage and a *Ikhwan* petition for a campaign against the Hejaz to ensure safe pilgrimage to the holy cities. It is to be noted here that during the pilgrimage of the previous year a bloody riot took place between the contingent of pilgrims from Najd and the Hejazis. So a ban was imposed on the Najdis by Husain to perform the pilgrimage in 1924. The *Ikhwan* could not accept it with good grace. Naturally at the congress of the 4 June, 1924, the *Ikhwan* declared that they could no longer bear to refrain from performing their religious duty and that, if Husain offered to prevent them, they would enter Mecca by force. Ibn Sa'ud urged restraint upon his followers, arguing that 'however easy it might be for the Najdis to take Mecca and Medina by force from king Husain, it would be both unwarrantable and impolitic for them to attempt this (especially in the pilgrimage season) except as mandatories of the Islamic World, since the holy cities were a common possession of all Muslims.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 296.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296-297.

The report was duly circulated and when the Indian Khilafat committee read the report of this congress, they lost no time in sending Ibn Sa'ud that message from the Islamic world for which he was waiting.<sup>38</sup> After praising the *Sultan's* attitude at the congress, they declared: 'If Husain rejects all over proposals, we shall judge it necessary to attack him and occupy his country, in order to render possible the establishment of concord among the Arabs in the Peninsula, and in order that the Arab alliance may be solid and the power of the Islamic community strong'.<sup>39</sup>

It seems doubtful whether this letter could have reached Ibn Sa'ud before he opened his campaign on the 29 August of the same year, but undoubtedly it encouraged him in his refusal to make peace until King Husain and his family had ceased to rule a foot of territory in the Peninsula.<sup>40</sup> The Indian Khilafat Committee viewed Husain originally as a rebel against the Turkish Caliph and his assumption of the Caliphate as an act of grave provocation. In view of the Turkish abolition of the Caliphate and Husain's assumption of the title 'they looked to the hyperorthodox Wahhabi ruler Ibn Sa'ud to act as the sword of Islam in place of the sacrilegious President of the Turkish Republic'.<sup>41</sup>

This sort of the attitude of the Indian Khilafat Committee encouraged him to a great degree. With the encouragement, Ibn Sa'ud proceeded to design his campaign against Hejaz. His plan of campaign was carefully worked out on an ambitious scale. While the main contingent of the Wahhabi forces was poised (concentrated) at Khurma and Turaba for a strike at the Hejaz, other contingents were despatched to raid Iraq, Trans Jordan and to

---

<sup>38</sup> Text of the letter is in *Oriente Moderno*, IV, 10, pp. 645-646.

<sup>39</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

<sup>41</sup> For an account of the abolition of the Caliphate and Khilafat movement in India, see *Ibid.*, pp. 25-90; K. K. Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), pp. 111-115; and by the same author, *Britain and Muslim India* (London: Heinemann, 1963), Chapter 7.

cut the Hejaz Railway to stop additional supply. Supporting columns were sent to the Wadi Sirhan and to Jawf. It is probable that these northern contingents were to act as diversions designed to forestall Iraq and Trans Jordan (where the Hashimites were in power) from assisting the Hejaz.<sup>42</sup>

Under such situation, on the main front the Wahhabis crossed the border on the 29 August, 1924 and immediately threatened Ta'if-the summer retreat of the Meccan wealthy class and chief oasis of the Hejaz. Ali, Husain's eldest son, arrived at Ta'if at the head of a force of the Hejazi army. However, as he received no support from the local tribes, he was soon forced to retreat to Hadda, approximately twenty miles to the north-west. Thereupon the people of Ta'if intimidated the Hashimi garrison, raised the white flag, and opened the gates of the city on the 5 September of the same year.<sup>43</sup> The Wahhabi advance-guard rushed, in; but unfortunately it was under the command of Khalid b. Lu'ayy, the chief of Khurmah and Turaba, a massacre took place. A number of Meccan notables were the victims of the massacre. This continued till the arrival of the senior commander of the Wahhabi forces, *Sultan* Ibn Bijad Ibn Humayd in the following afternoon. Among the casualties were several British Indians. A group of twenty-seven distinguished pilgrims who happened to be still in Mecca addressed a protest to the foreign consuls at Jeddah and to the press of the Islamic World; but the consuls declared emphatically that their Governments would not intervene.<sup>44</sup> It became evident that 'Ali's army was as incompetent to defend Mecca as it had been to defend Ta'if. On the arrival of the Wahhabi reinforcements panic took place in the holy city and a general exodus of the population began.<sup>45</sup> On the 25 September, 1924 the Wahhabis advanced from Ta'if in force. On the 27 Ali's troops were driven into Mecca from Hadda with the enemy at their heels. At this moment King Husain appealed to the British Government to come to his

---

<sup>42</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, pp. 217-218.

<sup>43</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 298.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, 29th and 30th September, 1924.

aid. But the British Government refused Husain's request at the eleventh hour. It is to be recalled that the British Government tried in vain for four years to conclude Anglo-Hejazi Treaty. Though Husain appealed to the memory of his intervention on the British side in the First World War, the British Government was very much anxious about the subsequent behaviour of King Husain. Naturally the British Government declared its neutrality.<sup>46</sup> This situation embarrassed Husain to a great extent. The Hashimite position continued to deteriorate with the passage of time. As Ibn Sa'ud's followers threatened Mecca, hundreds of the city's inhabitants fled to Jeddah. Husain received little support from the Hejazi tribes while the possibility of his receiving assistance from his sons was ruled out. Britain stated that he would 'give no countenance to interference in the Hejaz by Trans Jordan and Iraq'. Reasserting her neutrality, Britain declared that she would only interfere if both sides spontaneously requested her assistance. But this did not happen because of both party's over ambitious attitude.

At that time, the attitude of the notables of Mecca and Jeddah went against the rule of Husain. Naturally on the 3 October, 1924 the notables of Mecca and Jeddah demanded Husain's abdication and the unfortunate King of the Hejaz had no other alternative but to comply with the demand. He yielded to their demand and abdicated in favour of his son Ali on 6 October 1924. Husain was sent to the port of Jeddah where the British arranged for him to sail to Aqaba. The situation may be evaluated in the way that the British took final decision to recognise the *fait accompli* of the Saudi invasion of Hejaz.<sup>47</sup> It is to be noted that Britain as a mandatory power in Trans Jordan refused to endorse Husain's settlement with his son Abdullah because of the Saudi raids. On the contrary Husain was allowed to settle temporarily in Aqaba and latter sent to Cyprus for final settlement. Ibn Sa'ud considered the abdication of Husain favourable for launching attack on Mecca. Being

---

<sup>46</sup> *The Times* 4th & 6th October, 1924.

<sup>47</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 218.



encouraged, he ordered his troops to march on to Mecca and entered the holy city on 5 December 1924. As a precondition for establishing peace between the Sa'udis and *Sharifian*, Ibn Sa'ud demanded *Sharif* Ali's leaving from Hejaz.

The Hejazi people then demanded a provisional government and the following day Husain's son 'Ali was appointed constitutional sovereign of the Hejaz.<sup>48</sup> A new ministry was formed to tackle the prevailing situation and on the 5 October of the same year this new Hejazi Government despatched an official letter to Ibn Sa'ud, as well as an open telegram via Bahrain, in which they informed the *Sultan* of Najd of the change of regime in Hejaz, and requested him to suspend the advance of his troops and to send delegates to treat for peace.<sup>49</sup> The main purpose of this correspondence was to save Mecca from the Wahhabi devastation. But the hope was not fulfilled. When the offer of negotiation turned down, Ali finding no other alternative had to evacuate Mecca on the 13 October, 1924. This evacuation immediately opened the door for the entrance into Mecca of the Wahhabi forces under the command of Khalid b. Lu'ayy. It was declared at the moment that no one would be prevented from performing the pilgrimage nor would any other residents or their property be touched. It is noteworthy that this time no massacre took place. But at the same time, it is to be noted that certain religious monuments were destroyed and certain rituals prohibited which savoured of idolatry to the puritanical mind of the conquerors.<sup>50</sup> Ibn Sa'ud at this stage declared that the sole purpose of the invasion of Hejaz was to guarantee the liberty of pilgrimage and to settle the destiny of the holy Land in a manner satisfactory to the Islamic World.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

<sup>49</sup> For texts of the Hedjazi Govt's telegram of the 5th October, 1924, and the Najdi Govt's reply of the 16th, see, *Oriente Moderno*, IV, 12, p. 758; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 759; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>51</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, pp. 220-221.

With the loss of Mecca along with the capitulation of the ports of Qunfidh, Rabigh and Lith to the Wahhabis, 'Ali was left in command of only Jeddah, Medina and the port of Yanbu'.<sup>52</sup> The last ruler of the House of Hashim, who had already abandoned his father's pretension to be absolute monarch of 'the Arab countries' for the more modest style and title of constitutional sovereign of the Hejaz, thus found his dominions confined to the above three beleaguered towns.<sup>53</sup> It is interesting to note that even in Jeddah he was not to be left in peace, for King Husain's enemies were implacably determined to visit the sins of the father upon the children. At this juncture the Indian Khilafat Committee telegraphed to Ibn Sa'ud that Husain and his sons must leave the Hejaz and that a constitution for the holy Land 'must be drawn up by whole Islamic Community and that the area 'must be placed under a democratic government'. On October 16, 1924 Ibn Sa'ud declared himself in agreement with the Khilafat Committee's views, replying to Ali's overture for peace that while the Najd had no intention of annexing or dominating the Hejaz, but would leave the new regime in the holy Land to be determined by the Islamic world there could be no peace until both Husain and his sons had left the country.<sup>54</sup> At this stage endeavours were made to establish peace. Naturally a peace delegation was sent from Jeddah to Mecca. But it also received the same answer from the Wahhabi Governor of the occupied city. Neither King Ali nor his supporters were ready for peace on these terms. As a result, for months together 'the constitutional sovereign of the Hejaz', who deserved a better fate than his father, 'the King of the Arabs', remained invested in Jeddah by the rival whom the dominion of Arabia had fallen.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, the every completeness of his military victory confronted Ibn Sa'ud with an extremely difficult political problem. It is to be recalled here that in his speech of the 4 June, 1924 at Riyadh, he had rightly predicted that

---

<sup>52</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 300.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

a war between the Najd and the Hejaz on the sacred soil of the holy Land would excite a dangerous current of feeling against the Najd in the Muslim world.<sup>56</sup> It was also evident that among the vast conservative majority of the Muslims, Wahhabism was tolerated, if at all, on sufferance; and there was an inclination, which lay very near the surface, to denounce its puritanism as heresy whenever it declared itself in violent or sensational acts, such as an invasion of the holy Land by force of arms or an iconoclastic purification of the holy places.<sup>57</sup> A century earlier the first Wahhabi Empire had expiated its impious seizure of Mecca and Medina by its overthrow at the hands of Muhammad 'Ali, who had liberated the holy cities and carried the war to a conclusion in the heart of the Najd, as the mandatory of the Ottoman *Sultan* Caliph, with the approval of the Islamic World. After the lapse of more than a century this deeply-rooted Islamic feeling still retained a force which was little affected by political calculations or personal animosities; and in 1924 it was only the politically-minded western - educated minority that was moved by resentment against Husain for having revolted against Turkey in 1916, and by the calculation that Ibn Sa'ud, as the stronger power, would be the more effective champion in Arabia of the common Islamic cause, to take satisfaction in the violent overthrow of the House of Hashim by the Wahhabis.<sup>58</sup>

It was evident from the above fact that the Muslims were divided in their opinion to support the Hashimites and Ibn Sa'ud. This division of Islamic opinion declared itself even in India,<sup>59</sup> and in other areas of the Islamic World. In Egypt, notwithstanding the recent quarrel with King Husain over the pilgrimage, the Wahhabi invasion of the Hejaz reawakened memories of the victorious campaigns of Muhammad 'Ali against the first Wahhabi invaders of the holy Land in 1811-18 and the hostility towards the Wahhabis became

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *The Times*, 20th November, 1924; cited in Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 301.

intense again as a result of the massacre at Ta'if. In Palestine, Syria, and 'Iraq, where the House of Hashim stood for Arab national aspirations and had championed those aspirations loyally, if with only partial success, the feeling against the Wahhabis was naturally stronger. The Supreme Muslim Council of Palestine telegraphed to Ibn Sa'ud with a request to suspend operations, and circularized it to a number of Muslim Governments, societies and dignitaries for support,<sup>60</sup> and a searching criticism of the Indian Khilafat Committees' policy toward King Husain. The indignation of the Shi'is, both in India and Persia, was considerably more intense than that of their Sunni co-religionists of the old school. It remained to be seen whether the modernist' minority in Islam who not only approved but had to some extent instigated the Wahhabi invasion of the Hejaz, would be strong enough to carry the day. Certain 'modernist' theologians of Egyptian and Syrian origin supported Wahhabism on religious grounds, as a revolt against superstition and a return to the simplicity and rationality of puritanic Islam; but the most influential of Ibn Sa'ud's supporters - for example, the leaders of the Indian Khilafat Committee - were publicists and politicians whose inspiration was the democratic ideal of the west, and their alliance with a prince who not only for a return to the pristine faith of Islam but for a resurrection of the primitive method of empire building in Arabia, rested on precarious foundations.<sup>61</sup> Thus it is seen that the conciliation of Islamic opinion was an urgent but by no means an easy task for the Wahhabi conqueror of Mecca. For peaceful settlement of the issue, the second congress is reported to have been held in Najd on September 25, 1924. It was decided at this congress that the Wahhabi military occupation should be extended to the whole of the Hejaz with the exception of Mecca, and there should be no peace with the Hejazi Government so long as the 'Caliphate Question' remained unsettled. At the same time, however, Ibn Sa'ud soon extended his war aims. After Husain's abdication he demanded that his whole family (Hashimites) should leave the Hejaz. Moreover, he

---

<sup>60</sup> *Oriente Moderno*, IV 12, p. 762; cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

<sup>61</sup> *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. 12, p. 667; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 302.

intended to leave the destiny of the Hejaz to be determined by the Islamic world.

To clear up some of the ambiguities attaching to various declarations made by Ibn Sa'ud as to just what his war aims were a third congress was held at Riyadh under his personal presidency, on the 29 October, 1924<sup>62</sup> consisting of more than three hundred notables-including not only twenty military commanders and numerous local representatives from the various administrative districts of the principality, but also of five Iraqis, three Syrians, and two Egyptians. Aware of the divided opinion in the Muslim world as regards Wahhabism in general and the invasion of the Hejaz in particular Ibn Sa'ud made the following declaration. After reasserting that the sole purpose of the invasion of the Hejaz was to guarantee the liberty of pilgrimage and to settle the destiny of the holy Land in a manner satisfactory to the Islamic World', he invited Muslims throughout the world to a congress at Mecca to decide the destiny of the holy city. But this sort of Ibn sa'ud's stand was not well accepted to the Muslims of the neighbouring countries.<sup>63</sup> However, basing his stand on the fact that the Indian Muslims approved his policy, Ibn sa'ud reiterated his 'ban upon the entire family of Husain'.

In order to have the possession of the city of Jeddah from the Hashimites Ibn sa'ud arrived in the Hejaz on December 6, 1924 and on January 6, 1925, the seize of Jeddah began with Wahhabi shelling.<sup>64</sup> At this stage it is to be noted that the approach of the pilgrimage season of 1925 created a problem both for Ibn sa'ud and for all Governments with Muslim subjects because Medina, Yanbu and Jeddah were in the hands of 'Ali'. The Governments hesitated to allow their nationals to expose themselves to the probable risks and certain hardships of visiting the Hejaz in time of war, when Mecca was held by one belligerent and Jeddah, its natural port, by the other.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, pp. 739-760, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>64</sup> H. St. J. B. Philby, *Arabia* (New York: Scribner, 1955), p. 312.

The Government of India also in two communiqués of the 25 April and the 11 May, 1925 declined either to prohibit the pilgrimage or to assume responsibility for any Indian Muslims who might venture upon it. But Ibn Sa'ud was anxious not to incur the odium of having made the pilgrimage impossible. It is to be noted that in order to maintain his credit in the eyes of the Islamic world, Ibn Sa'ud on the 25 February, 1925, 'published a proclamation to all Muslims far and near informing them that 'Ali bin Husain was closely blockaded in Jeddah and that he (Ibn Sa'ud) would not only welcome pilgrimage but would guarantee their security on the road to Mecca from either Rabith or Lith or Qunfudah.<sup>65</sup> In spite of Ibn Sa'ud's proclamation, the Muslims' response throughout the Islamic world was not satisfactory.

Since the previous November, however, the military operations in the Hejaz had been at a standstill. The Wahhabis, having driven the remnants of the Hejazi army behind the walls of Jeddah, Yanbu, and Medina, and having isolated these three places from one-another had not attempted to take them by assault.<sup>66</sup> On the other side, the blockade of the interior - which King 'Ali had proclaimed on the 6 January, 1925, in retaliation for the action of the Wahhabis in advancing up to the walls of Jeddah it appears to have caused little embarrassment to the Wahhabi forces, which were self-supporting, and to have inflicted hardship only upon the civilian population of the holy cities.<sup>67</sup> After the conclusion of the pilgrimage of 1925, Ibn Sa'ud at length sought a military decision. In August Medina was 'bombarded', and on the 1 September, 2 October, and 4 and 6 November attacks were delivered upon Yanbu.<sup>68</sup> The attack of Medina created some confusion and indignation throughout the Islamic world because it was reported that Prophet's tomb had been hit by bullets. However, that was overcome and on December 5 the city

---

<sup>65</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 305.

<sup>66</sup> *The Times*, 6th January, 1925; cited in *Ibid*, p. 306.

<sup>67</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>68</sup> *Oriente Moderno*, V. 12, p. 662; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 306.

of Medina surrendered. It was followed on the 21 by Yanbu. 'Ali decided to surrender. He declared his withdrawal from the Hejaz on December 18 and the following day the Wahhabis peacefully entered the city. On December 21 the formal surrender took place and on the following day with British Mediation' ali sailed for Iraq via Aden.<sup>69</sup> On December 23, Ibn Sa'ud entered Jeddah and two days latter announced officially that the Najd-Hejazi war was ended.<sup>70</sup> On January 8 1926, the notables of the Hejaz pledged allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud and proclaimed him King of the Hejaz and the *Sultan* of the Najd and its Dependencies. Within three months, he was recognised by European powers like great Britain, the USSR, France and the Netherlands who had meanwhile established their rule over a number of countries having substantial number of Muslim population.<sup>71</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud's concerted and overwhelming military campaigns in the Arabian Peninsula guaranteed the expansion of his authority over Najd, Hasa, Hejaz and Asir. This was the first time that these four regions covering the greater portion of the Arabian Peninsula came under the control and authority of a single ruler since the emergence of the Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate* in the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The military conquests were the background for the formation of the Saudi state in the early part of the twentieth century. Ibn Sa'ud's conquest took part at a time when foreign intervention by Britain reached an unprecedented level. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War and its subequent fall was an important catalyst in this intervention, allowing Britain to deal with local *Amirs* of the area rather than the old empire. It is evident that Britain played a very vital and crucial role in Ibn Sa'ud's expansion into Hail and Hejaz. The subsidies, ammunition and weapons provided by Britain upset the balance of power between Ibn Sa'ud

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 673; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>70</sup> The text of announcement is in *Oriente Moderno*, Vol. 1, p. 44; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>71</sup> Gary Troeller, *op.cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>72</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 46.

and Ibn Rashid.<sup>73</sup> In addition, Britain kept itself aloof and did not take part or interfere in the Hejaz war between Ibn Sa'ud and Husain with the apprehension that this would have created misunderstanding and antagonised its Muslim subjects throughout its domain. This resulted in the eventual fall of *Sharifian* rule in Hejaz. It seems that Britain abandoned *Sharif* Husain and failed to restrain Ibn Sa'ud after promising *Sharif* to maintain the integrity of his Hejazi kingdom.

It is to be noted in nutshell that during the war while *Sharif* Husain of Hejaz actively supported Britain against the Ottomans championing the cause of Arab nationalist movement the other influential rulers of the area kept themselves away from the war because it did not have any sort of influence in their respective domains or areas. Ibn Rashid of Hail showed his allegiance to the Ottoman *Sultan* but having no active military support; while Ibn Sa'ud in Riyadh declared his support in favour of the British without being directly involved in the war against the Ottomans.<sup>74</sup>

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War, Britain and France partitioned the Ottoman territories as per Sykes-Picot Agreement and placed them under mandate system, while the case of the Arabian Peninsula was quite different. It fell within Britain's sphere of influence but not being the colony similar to other colonies of the British Empire. It is to be noted that Britain followed the policy of maintaining close relationships with two main local rulers, Shaif Husain of Hejaz and Ibn Sa'ud of Riyadh. In spite of her offering continuous military and economic assistance British endeavours for their reconciliation failed to a great extent over the question of claims to rule the area under study after the war did not find any solutions, or did not bring any fruitful results. British policy makers were divided and Britain's conflicting policies and promises together with its

---

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*



financial support strengthened and encouraged both the rulers.<sup>75</sup> The unification of Arabia became more real because there were only two contestants in the area - one in the Hejaz and another in the Najd or in central Arabia. With the passage of time, the competition that took place between *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud over the question of extending authority and which became more realistic as a result of withdrawal of British military and economic assistance the former lost his throne to the latter in 1925. Very soon the *Sharifian* family was ousted from the political arena of the area by Ibn Sa'ud. This situation helped him to the unification of the Arabian Peninsula with the foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.<sup>76</sup>

### **International Reaction: India and Bengal**

Events in the Arabian Peninsula during the period under review - the revolt of the Arabs in the First World War, assumption of the Caliphal office by *Sharif* Husain and the war between Husain and Ibn Sa'ud over the question of hegemony in the area did not fail to draw the attention of the Indian Muslims in general and Bengali Muslims in Particular. The Muslims, of course, observed these events with fluctuating views. Being a member of the Prophet's tribe of the Quraish and holding the dominion of the two most venerated holy places - Mecca and Medina - it was quite natural on the part of *Sharif* Husain to draw the support and sympathy of the Muslims throughout the world. But he failed to a great extent in this regard due to his treachery with the Ottoman Empire, the seat of the Caliphate during the First World War. Even his understanding with the then colonial power, the British also did not bring any fruitful result for him. His assumption of the title of the King of the Arabs did not fail to evoke criticism in various quarters and also from his allies, the British. This was because of the fact that the British and the French were ready to recognize him only as the King of the Hejaz. This sort of

---

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

recognition, of course, was regarded by the Muslims of Hejaz as a most friendly action towards Muslims in general.<sup>77</sup>

The revolt of the Arabs caused a great sensation among the Muslims of Indian Subcontinent in general and the Muslims of Bengal in particular. In this view the Arab nationalists were not patriot struggling to be free but traitors to the cause of Islamic solidarity, they were making common cause with the Caliph's enemies at a time when it was their duty to assist the Caliph. The *Muhammadi* (Calcutta) extended its thanks to the leaders of All India Muslim League and Maulana 'Abdul Bari who denounced *Sharif*. This paper expressed concern that the revolt was likely to defile the holy places of Hejaz and Mesopotamia and that the rebels and their sympathisers were the enemies of Islam.<sup>78</sup> The Muslims of Calcutta in a large meeting at *Nakhuda Mosque* endorsed the view.<sup>79</sup> The action of the *Sharif* was condemned by the council of All India Muslim League at Lucknow,<sup>80</sup> Executive committee of the Punjab Muslim League.<sup>81</sup> Anjuman Hamdard-i-Islam, Madras,<sup>82</sup> Muslim meeting at Moradabad and Bareilly,<sup>83</sup> and meetings at Lucknow and Delhi.<sup>84</sup> Muslim vernacular papers almost all criticised *Sharif's* action. Sheikh Mushir Husain Kidwai of Gadia in a letter to the editor of *the Nation* condemned the *Sharif* and warned the Government to keep aloof and not to support him.<sup>85</sup> The general public opinion was described by E.E. Long (formerly editor of *Indian Daily Telegraph*) who says, "Moslems having been commanded by the

---

<sup>77</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 January, 1917.

<sup>78</sup> *The Muhammadi* (Calcutta), 7 July, 1916.

<sup>79</sup> *The Brahmo* (Calcutta), 1 July, 1916.

<sup>80</sup> India Office Library: Political and Secret Deptt. Vol. 4932/1916, Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Deptt. dt. June, 29, 1916; cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, dt. 4 July, 1916; cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 July, 1916.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 July, 1916.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 July, 1916.

<sup>85</sup> *The Nation*, 29 July, 1916.

Holy Quran not to revolt against the established authority of their co-religionists can not look down but with contempt on any efforts on the part of the Arabs to revolt against the Turks. The Moslem masses, uneducated as they are, and favourably attached to Islam as they are themselves, they will never believe that the Arabs have risen, against the Khalifah of their own accord. And if they have risen, they deserve every punishment as did those Moslems, even in early Muslim Arabia.... who rose against the Khalifa. The general Muslim public will never have any sympathy with the revolt. As far as the educated Muslims are concerned they knew the Arabs, their character and their military organisation too well to take the rebellion to be serious unless some non-Muslim powers are inclined to abuse the fanaticism of the whole Muslim world by helping the Arabs and using them as its own tool for its own purpose of creating a division among Muslims or breaking their temporal power".<sup>86</sup> But it is to be noted that some of the Muslims in India including Bengal did not fail to tender their support in favour of Husain. Mention may be made of the Khan Bahadur section of the Muslims of Bombay and Calcutta who became intensely elated at the revolt and said, "well done, well done, nothing better was ever done."<sup>87</sup>

The attitude of the Indian Muslims placed King Husain in a difficult predicament. He was quite aware that the hostility of the Indian Muslims and other Islamic countries would considerably aggravate the precariousness of his position in Arabia which was further worsened by Ibn Sa'ud. He was also aware that this hostility would be accentuated if he ventured to assume the caliphate. This would be regarded by his enemies as an act of provocation. But 'Abdullah, his son had no such hesitation and was more sanguine than his father. In January, 1924 when he saw that the Ottoman Khilafat was in a tottering condition, he started propaganda in favour of recovering the Caliphate for the Arabs and for the Quraish by proclaiming King Husain as

---

<sup>86</sup> India Office, London: *Political & Secret Memorandum*, p. 235; cited in *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *The Muhammadi*, 7 July, 1916.

*Amir al-Mumenin*.<sup>88</sup> King Husain paid a state visit to Amman where on January 14 of the same year<sup>89</sup> he declared<sup>90</sup> that he would not accept the Caliphate, either for himself or for any member of his family even if it were offered unanimously by the Islamic World. But as the Khilafat was abolished in March, 1924 by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, King Husain was solemnly proclaimed Caliph in the presence of his sons, of numerous officials of a vast crowd of Moslem and Christian delegations.<sup>91</sup> King Husain as Khalifah invited the leading religious and learned residents of Mecca and the leading members of foreign and Islamic countries residing there to form an advisory Body to the Caliphate. Responsible representatives of all Islamic nations could be accepted for membership of this Body.<sup>92</sup>

It is to be noted that though he was recognized as caliph by the Sunni and Shia Muslims of the neighbouring Arab countries with minor exception, his mechanism was vehemently opposed by the Indian and Egyptian Muslims. His pretension to the Caliphate was rather rejected vigorously and almost unanimously in India and Egypt. As a result of this development it is interesting to note the report of the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* who visited King Husain at Shuneh on the 11 March, 1924. It was reported that his 'tone throughout' the interview was melancholy and diffident, like that of a man shouldering a heavy burden from a sense of duty, and more conscious of difficulties and dangers than of glories. King Husain stated: "I have not sought or desired the Caliphate. It has been thrust upon me... My

<sup>88</sup> *The Times*, January, 1924.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 January, 1924.

<sup>90</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>91</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 March, 1924. In an interview with Wilson Cash, king Husain said, "I will explain to you the Caliphate. After Muhammad died there were four Caliphs-Abu Bakr, 'Omar, Uthman and 'Ali. Since then, there has not been a true Caliph in the world until I took the title. The old succession of true Caliphs has been restored in my person, for a Caliph must be an Arab of the Quraish tribe, a true descendant of the prophet and the guardian of the holy place". See Wilson Cash, *The Muslim World in Revolution* (London: 1925), p. 43.

<sup>92</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 April, 1924; *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 21 March, 1924 & *The Pioneer* (Lucknow), 22 March, 1924 and 6 April, 1924.

position is very critical. In Arabia there are dangers from Ibn Sa'ud and from the *Imam* Yahya. Then there is the situation created by the war. I joined the Allies at the darkest hour... Now the Allies' promises are not been kept... My peoples come to me and say; "The Allies have not kept their promises and you broke the unity of Islam by joining them'. They hold me responsible, and my situation is critical... Now on the top of all these difficulties, there comes the burden of the Caliphate. I am a man without a luck".<sup>93</sup>

Husain's pretensions to be a leader of all Arabs were not also supported by other Arab chiefs especially of Ibn Sa'ud. To the Muslims in general, Husain was a tool of the British and a traitor to Pan-Islamic solidarity. This feeling was particularly strong among Indian Muslims but was not lacking among others.<sup>94</sup> The abolition of the Khilafat and Husain's acceptance of an election to this office by Trans Jordanian and Palestinian Muslim nobles<sup>95</sup> was met with vigorous protests from the Wahhabis and from Egypt and India. This was the moment Ibn Sa'ud waited for to secure his own dominance in Arabia. As the British had cut short their subsidies to Najd, he had nothing to lose by taking arms against Husain.<sup>96</sup>

However, the assumption of Caliphal office had given Ibn Sa'ud and the Indian Muslims a handy weapon with which to impugn Husain's motives. He was accused by them of seeking only his personal ambition. The accusation was not true. Because the *Sharif* was a pious man but his acceptance of the title gave an appearance of reality to their charges. On 2 June 1924 Ibn Sa'ud's son Faisal issued a proclamation to the Islamic world and the Arab nation in which he not only rejected Husain's pretension to the Caliphate but

<sup>93</sup> *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 March, 1924.

<sup>94</sup> Ronald Stores, *Orientalisms* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1937), p. 178; He estimated that 90 percent of the Muslim world must call Husain a renegade and traitor to the Vicar of God'.

<sup>95</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>96</sup> From the accounts of Toynbee it seems clear that the British dropped Kind Husain when he assumed the Khilafat, though formerly they encouraged him to do so. Probably he considered his alliance no longer an asset because of the revelries he provoked.

made a bid to supplant him in the leadership of the Arab nationalist movement. On the 4 June of the same year a congress was opened at Riyadh. Here Ibn Sa'ud denounced Husain's hostility towards the Wahhabis, his pretension to be the leader of the Arab movement and *Amirul Muminin* and declared that he could oust King Husain as mandatory of the Islamic World since the holy cities were a common possession of all Muslims. The Indian Khilfat Committee, hostile to Husain, read this report and lost no time in praising *Sultan's* attitude and sending him the much desired message of the Islamic World. It declared, 'If Husain rejects all our proposals, we shall judge it necessary to attack him and occupy his country in order to render possible the establishment of concord among the Arabs in the Peninsula, and in order that the Arab alliance may be solid and the power of the Islamic community strong.'<sup>97</sup> On the receipt of this letter, Ibn Sa'ud, under the pretext of wanting to ensure the pilgrimage to Mecca, attacked the King of Hejaz and after less than two months' campaign, he occupied almost whole of the *Sharif's* territory except Medina and two ports. Seven months after his acceptance of the Caliphate Husain was driven by Wahhabi invasion from Hejaz and was compelled to abdicate the kingship which he had held since 1916.

The declaration of King Husain as Caliph of Islam produced two currents of opinion among the Muslims of India. One applauded the Turks for their democratic thoroughness in getting rid of the Caliphate. The other looked upon the office as essential for Islam. But majority of the Indian Muslims opposed *Sharif* Husain. Among his supporters, Moulana Abdul Bari of the Indian Khilafat Committee held the top position. He was criticised not only in India but also in Arabia for his inconsistency and fickle-mindedness.<sup>98</sup>

The battle between Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain produced an extraordinary reaction in Muslim India. The action of Ibn Sa'ud was applauded

---

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, quoted from the text of the letter in *Oriente Moderno*, IV, 10, pp. 654-656.

<sup>98</sup> M. Ali Asgar Khan, "The Assumption of Caliphal office by *Sharif* Husain – Its Reaction in India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, December, 1977.

by Central Khilafat Committee.<sup>99</sup> Their attitude, upto a point, was quite consistent with their denunciations of Husain.<sup>100</sup> But on the other hand, the puritanical Wahhabis were not very suitable allies for Indian Muslims, either westernised and modernist or conservative. In particular, the Wahhabis' aversion to certain rituals and religious monuments could easily hurt Indian Muslim sentiment.<sup>101</sup> Mohammad 'Ali hailed the victories of Ibn Sa'ud in the belief that they heralded the dawn of a new era. But his spiritual preceptor, Moulana 'Abdul Bari who had already recognised *Sharif* Husain as Caliph was suspicious of the Wahhabis. Moulana 'Abdul Bari had a detailed discussion with Mohammad 'Ali over the issue in mid-August 1924. He insisted that Ibn Sa'ud should issue a statement repudiating his action and he should either reconstruct the demolished structures or allow to do so. But Mohammad 'Ali looked upon the struggle as an opportunity to drive out British influence from Hejaz and to make it secure for a collective administration of the holy places by the Muslim World.

Ibn Sa'ud's victory created a dangerous excitement in the Islamic World. In 1924 it was only against Husain for having revolted against Turkey in 1916. Some felt sympathy for Ibn Sa'ud. The Supreme Muslim Council of Palestine requested Ibn Sa'ud to suspend operations and circularized a number of Muslim governments, societies and dignitaries for support. The Indian Khilafat Committee's policy with regard to King Husain and Khilafat was severely criticised. The indignation of the Shias both in India and Persia was more intensive than that of their Sunni co-religionists. But the most ardent supporter of Ibn Sa'ud was the Indian Khilafat Committee. The leaders of this committee believed in democratic principles and their alliance with a

---

<sup>99</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 297 & 304.

<sup>100</sup> India Office Library: Home Deptt. Proceedings (Political) Nov. 27, 1920; cited in M. Ali Asgar Khan, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, December, 1977, p. 226.

<sup>101</sup> Shawqat Ali, though supporting Ibn Sa'ud protested vehemently against Wahabi offences in this respect at the Islamic Congress at Mecca in 1926, cf., Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

prince was stood not only for a return to the primitive faith of Islam but for a resurrection of primitive method of empire building in Arabia, rested on precarious foundations.<sup>102</sup> The second Najd Congress held in Riyadh on the 25 September, 1924 declared that there should be no peace with the Hejazi Government so long as the Khilafat question remained unsettle, that King Husain should be deposed; and that his pretension to the Caliph and King of the Arabs should be annulled.<sup>103</sup> The Secretary of the Hejaz National Society cabled the Central Khilafat Committee of the abdication of King Husain and the election of 'Ali as constitutional sovereign subject to his decision to abide by the decision of the World Muslim conference with regard to world Muslim interests and rights in Hejaz. This might have been a deliberate response to these demands.<sup>104</sup> The Central Khilafat Committee on October 7, 1924 in its reply, accused Husain of breaking the unity of Islam and stated that it had no confidence in the words and deeds of Husain and his family. Hejaz, the centre of the Muslim world, could not be governed by Kings and *Sultans* but should be made a democratic and republican government abslutely free from non-Muslim control. So King Ali's appointment was unacceptable. It suggested that for the present, a provisional government of the leading Hejazi representatives be formed and the question of permanent form of Government be left to the World Muslim conference.<sup>105</sup> The Khilafat Committee was sending a delegation to Hejaz to negotiate with the Governments of Hejaz and Najd on the lines mentioned. A copy of it was sent to Ibn Sa'ud. The Government of Najd declared its agreement with these views and that it had no intention of annexing or dominating Hejaz but would leave the future of the holy land to be determined by Islamic world. Mohammad Taweel, President of the National Party of Hejaz cabled Shawkat 'Ali from Jeddah:"your telegram received. Thanks for your zeal. The

---

<sup>102</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), 9 October, 1924.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*



Wahhabis have advanced on Mecca. We, therefore, perceived the necessity of the withdrawal of Hejaz forces to Jeddah for the respect of the holy sanctuary, so as to avoid bloodshed and this was actually and completely carried out. The Wahabis entered Mecca peacefully. After discussion with the Islamic delegations, the suitability and position of the country will be decided. We wish nothing, but the satisfaction of Muslim World in respect of rendering facilities and comforts to the pilgrims for this House of the Almighty. We anxiously expecting your delegation. Pray respond to our appeal as the religious duty may call".<sup>106</sup>

Thus at the instance of the Indian Khilafat Committee the war aim of Ibn Sa'ud who wanted the expulsion of all members of Husain's family was extended. He wanted these ban on the ground that his policy was approved by the Indian Khilafat Committee. After capturing Mecca, Ibn Sa'ud requested all his co-religionists in all parts of the world to send delegates to him to decide the future of the holy lands. This gesture was a failure. Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and the Gulf Chiefs declined the invitation. The proposal was accepted by only the Indian Khilafat Committee.

The Indian delegation went to Jeddah in December 1924 but could not get beyond Jeddah owing to the hostilities which had then commenced between the Governments of Hejaz and Ibn Sa'ud. The delegation entered into a public controversy with the Hejazi Government.<sup>107</sup> and could only deliver the following aims of the Indian Khilafat Committee to the Government of Hejaz.

1. "To set up a lawful (i.e., in accordance with *Shariat* law) republican government in Hejaz which shall be independent internally and whose foreign policy shall be such as to satisfy the Muslim world and meet its views in regard to complete and absolute independence of the country - an independence free from foreign influence whether open or concealed."

---

<sup>106</sup> *The Pioneer*, 20 October, 1924.

<sup>107</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *op.cit.*, p. 87-90

2. "To call a Muslim conference for the formation of this republic, in which there shall participate delegates from admittedly independent minded Muslim societies in Muslim lands which are under domination, and representatives of Hejaz".
3. "Neither the *Sharif* nor his family to have any connection whatsoever with this assembly or any matter affecting centralisation of the Hejaz."
4. "To bring about general unity and religious brotherhood between the Arab rulers as the commands of Islam dictate, so that no room may be left for foreign greed, that the way may not be opened for strife to enter the country, that the shedding of innocent blood may be stopped and that the Arabs may appear in perfect unity before the world and with united force against the enemy".
5. "Mecca to be the seat of the conference, if circumstances permit".
6. "The *Sultan* of Najd and the *Imam* Yahaya to be entrusted with the task of assembling the delegates of the Arab Muslim rulers for the proposed conference."
7. "To fix as early as possible a date for the conference (it should be) before expiry of coming pilgrim season.
8. The invitations to the Muslim world to be issued by Ibn Sa'ud, the *Imam* Yahya and Hejaz".
9. "Until the conference has come to a final decision about Hejaz and the form of its governments, Hejaz territories to be governed temporarily by elected delegates of the people under the overlordship of Ibn Sa'ud."<sup>108</sup>

The Hejazi Government published the correspondence in a Red Book.<sup>109</sup> Public opinion in Egypt as reflected in the press took the view that the Indian delegation had interfered in the affairs of an independent government and that their claim to be neutral in the conflict between Hejaz and Najd had not been borne out by their acts. On the other hand, Maulana

<sup>108</sup> P. C. Bamford, *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements* (Delhi: K. K. Books, 1985) pp. 209-210 and Afzal Iqbal, *Life and Times of Mohammad 'Ali*, p. 329.

<sup>109</sup> It was officially published at Jeddah under the name, "Muhimmatu'l Wafd'il-Hindi fil Hedjaj" on the 10 February, 1925.

Shawkat Ali in a letter addressed to the Rector of Al-Azhar University, proposed that the forthcoming Islamic conference in Cairo should denounce 'the traitor 'Ali bin Husain', who only aimed at the satisfaction of his personal ambitions.<sup>110</sup>

The occupation of Hejaz is an important phenomenon in the course of the expansion of Saudi domain. But it stirred the minds of the Muslims throughout the World. It is to be noted that the report of the bombardment of Medina and the hitting of the Prophet's tomb by bullets created sensation in India. There were loud protests against the action of Ibn Sa'ud. As Mohammad 'Ali and his newspaper the *Hamdard* and the *Comrade* remained silent there was a step fall in their circulation. The big issue in every Muslim home was the question whether tombs and domes were permitted or forbidden by *Shariat*. "The *Ulama* of Ferangi Mahal, the religious scholars of Nadwah, the Jurist of Ferangi Mahal, the religious scholars of Nadwah, the Jurist of Deoband were all digging precedents and splitting hair. Mohammad 'Ali was dubbed as a Wahhabi, a heretic and the unabashed supporter of Ibn Sa'ud. Ferangi Mahal became the centre of opposition to Ibn Sa'ud. Posters, pamphlets, press statements, poems, satires, public meetings, black-flag demonstrations, cartoons, lampoons, the whole range of animonious literature were arranged against him'.<sup>111</sup> Moulana Abdul Bari, who opposed Ibn Sa'ud was supported in this action by the Shia landlords of Lucknow and leaders like Hasrat Mohani and Sheikh Mushir Husain Kidwai. It is to be mentioned that due to his opposition to Moulana 'Abdul Bari and support of Ibn Sa'ud, Mohammad 'Ali could not hold any public meetings at Lucknow. At last he had to compromise with Moulana 'Abdul Bari'.

The war in Hejaz ended in 1925 while the battle of the domes continued. But as soon as Ibn Sa'ud proclaimed himself King of Sa'udi Arabia, the battle of the domes came to an end along with the dream that Hejaz might become a Muslim Republic where the holy places would be administered by

---

<sup>110</sup> *The Times*, 10 February, 1925.

<sup>111</sup> Afzal Iqbal, *Life and Times and Mohammad Ali*, pp. 337-338.

the collective will of the Muslim world.<sup>112</sup> This was another stunning blow after the abolition of the Khilafat by the Turks.

The Indian Khilafat leaders failed to pursue concerted policy on the question of the conflict between Arab rulers. Rather they were splitted on the issue. Sufi and Sufi Ulemas became partisans of Husain while Sunni section backed Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>113</sup> In other words, the secular section' of the Khalifatists led by Mohammad 'Ali became opposed to the 'theological section' led by 'Abdul Bari. But the dividing lines were not clear. It is said that the difference led to a conflict over the question of principles and personal liking and disliking might have played their role.<sup>114</sup> So after the abolition of the Ottoman Khilafat, the whole question of restoring the office became mixed up with inter-Arab rivalries. Now, by its very nature, the caliphate was apt to constitute not only a theoretical and theological issue but a practical and political one as well. It was connected with political realities and, therefore, influenced to some degree by power relations. This has been the case in the years before 1924 when it was connected with anti-western and anti-British policy which appealed to Indian Muslims in the name of Muslim solidarity. After 1924, however, becoming entangled with inter-Arab conflicts, it was not Muslim solidarity which was at stake, but a variety of ramifications of Arab nationalism and dynasticism, which could hardly be of great importance to Indian Muslims. The Caliphate question naturally ceased to exist as a factor in Indian politics. It had no future in India. The issues had changed and Indian Khilafatists could not adjust themselves to the new situation. But it is to be noted at this stage that the geographical nationalism that developed after the First World War did not fail to hit the mind of the Indian Muslims and others. This resulted the growth and development of Indian nationalism though a very few Muslims remained attached to pan-Islamism which, of course, with the passage of time lost its former vigour and zeal.

---

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 340-341.

<sup>113</sup> A. C. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India (1919-1924)* (Delhi: Nijhoff, 1972), p. 158.

<sup>114</sup> Chowdhury Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore: Feros Sons Ltd., 1964), pp. 80-81.

## Chapter 7

# Fulfilment and Impact of Unification Policy

It is to be noted that after the end of the First World War Britain had to play a very vital role in regulating the relationship with Ibn Sa'ud and other Arab rulers over the question of continuation of subsidies so far paid and the delimitation of the frontiers of the expanding Saudi realm with the newly created neighbouring states namely Trans Jordan and Iraq including Kuwait. It is to be noted that as per Sykes - Picot Agreement concluded during the war Britain got the opportunity of establishing her mandate in Palestine including Trans Jordan and Iraq. So delimitation of its frontiers with Saudi realm was vital for Britain. This became more essential when Hejaz came under Ibn Sa'ud. At the same time the question of continuation or discontinuation of subsidies to the Arabian chiefs became also essential for the British policy makers.

The period since the end of the First World War to the conclusion of the 'Uqair Protocols in December 1922 bears some significance in determining the future status of the Arabian Peninsula. Under the British initiative the conclusion of the Uqair Protocols defined the disputed Kuwait - Najd and Iraq-Najd frontiers. The significance of this period may be attributed to the following factors.

- a) The gradual increase of Ibn Sa'ud's power was shown when he endeavoured to increase of the frontiers to the early nineteenth century Wahhabi dominion. For this he had to occupy the mountain districts of Asir in 1920, Hail in 1921 and Jauf in 1922. This sort of Saudi expansion and at the same time policy pursued by Britain for the enthronement of the Hashimite monarchy in Iraq and Trans Jordan led Ibn Sa'ud to clash not only with Kuwait but also with Iraq and before long with Trans Jordan.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gary Troller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia* (London: Frank Cass, 1976), p. 159.

- b) To maintain its gravity all through and to continue its influence in the Arabian Peninsula Britain was forced to continue the policy of offering financial assistance to the contending *shaikhs* for having allies to their cause which she had followed earlier during the war. But this policy of offering financial help created some heated controversy in Britain among its governmental circles.<sup>2</sup>
- c) To formulate Anglo-Saudi relations of this period the British put emphasis on drawing European style boundaries between Najd and her neighbours, Kuwait and Iraq to regulate the reciprocal relationship. But it is true that this delimitation of boundaries ignoring the existing desert realities regarding the annual tribal migrations, failed to alleviate the prevailing tension between Najd and Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud had to accede and this halted the Wahhabi marching on to others territories. Before going to regulate the relationship with Ibn Sa'ud and other Arab rulers, it is cogent to throw light on the formulation of British post-war policy in the Arabian Peninsula on the issue of continuation and offering subsidies. Ever since the end of the War Ibn Sa'ud had been pressing for an increase in his subsidy. But his appeals coincided with post-war attempts at home in Britain to reduce foreign expenditure and the growing pressure for a coordinated Middle Eastern policy. But the question of continuing subsidy to Ibn Sa'ud became involved with the larger question of British subsidies to all Arab chiefs. Hence treatment of the issue of Ibn Sa'ud's subsidy must be viewed not only against the background of British post-war policy in Arabia but also as inextricably intertwined with the question of subsidising all the Arabian chiefs.<sup>4</sup>

After the end of the First World War, Britain sought to secure her position in the Arabian Peninsula. This may be attributed to the traditional

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The Arabian Chiefs were offered British subsidies either in higher or lesser scale, see 'Memoreandum by Col. Cornwallis...', 16 December, 1920. No. 9035; L/P & S/10, 488/1920, pts/ 1, 2.

considerations regarding the area's proximity to imperial routes to the communications with India, and the British relationship with the Arab *Shaikh* on the coast of the Peninsula stretching from Kuwait to Aden. Britain's problems regarding subsidies arose in part from the difficulties of trying to reconcile her political aspirations with her economic stringency.

In spite of British financial difficulties and controversies over the question of continuing financial assistance, Britain pursued the policy of maintaining the offer of subsidies to all the Arab chiefs with the avowed aim of strengthening supremacy in the area other than the European Powers.<sup>5</sup> The geographical and religious importance of the area also motivated the British policy for maintaining its dominant position there. The situation was also congenial for Britain because of the fact that the Peninsula was free from foreign rivalries. In addition, there was the fear, which was very real at the time, that Turkish and Arab nationalists would successfully unite Islam against the Allies. A friendly Arabia would act as a counter poise to this contingency. The geographical and religious importance of the Peninsula was always in the foreground while the possibilities of opening up the interior to trade were mentioned. And finally there was the British desire to deny to any power(s) the opportunity of gaining a predominant position in the Peninsula.<sup>6</sup>

Another important factor in subsidising various *Shaikhs* was the fact that they in turn brought their influence with this money. This was especially true in Husain's case. The King of the Hejaz maintained power and the allegiance of his followers only as long as he could afford to pay for it. Allenby touched upon this fact and the post-war implications of the Arab Revolt when he warned Curzon against the discontinuation of subsidies.

As to the reasons for continuation of the Saudi subsidy, in particular, the question will first be considered from Ibn Sa'ud's point of view. The

---

<sup>5</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

Wahhabi leader was reported to be heavily in debt and repeatedly sought the British government for an increase in his subsidy.<sup>7</sup>

But a few policy makers pushed forward some rationals against the continuation of financial assistance to Ibn Sa'ud. These included – the end of the war, Ibn Sa'ud's attack on the Hejaz that would be encountered by the combination of personal jealousy of one another of the Arabian chiefs. The expiry of the duration of Ibn Sa'ud's subsidy was not stopped in June 1917 because it was overlooked. In spite of much opposition, the arguments in favour of continuing subsidies were to prevail. From the strictly central Arabian standpoint, the following facts were inescapable. With the disappearance of the Turks from the fringes of Arabia and Mesopotamia, Britain now had become definitely involved in the interior. Given the British subsidy to Fahad Bey of the Amarat and her traditional and treaty relationship with Ibn Sa'ud, she faced inevitable entanglement in central Arabian affairs. Strategically, Ibn Rashid's and Fahad Bey's territories bordered the British Mandates of Palestine and Iraq. Ibn Sa'ud shared a common border with British protected Kuwait, the Trucial *Shaikhdoms* and Oman. These chiefs controlled the territory through which caravan, pilgrim, and projected air and railway routes extended. As military operations were impossible against these *Shaikhs*, and the blockades in effectual, subsidies were 'the normal, and indefinitely the cheapest way' of controlling the tribes. Not only did these chiefs actually require financial assistance in order, in turn, to subsidise to an important *Shaikh* had a 'moral significance out of all proportions, to its cash value, but it is that which counts most'. In addition, there was the question of moral responsibility. Since the British had ousted the Turks from Arabia, replacement ought to be made by them.<sup>8</sup>

Considering the overall prevailing situation the British decided by the spring of 1921 to continue the subsidy amounting £ 5,000 per month to both

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.



*Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud in addition to a grant of £ 20,000.<sup>9</sup> Husain, however, refused to come to an agreement with the British; hence, he never received these amounts. Thus after several years of debate it was decided to continue Ibn Sa'ud's subsidy at its normal rate. The British also recognized Ibn Sa'ud as '*Sultan of Najd and its Dependencies*'.

With the passage of time the responsibility of the Middle East had been shifted to the Colonial Office. The British then sought to end their previous arrangement of divided control in Middle Eastern policy making. A Middle East Department under the Colonial Office was formed which was responsible for controlling British Policy in all Arab countries except the Hejaz which remained under the foreign office. The Colonial Secretary was to be 'held responsible to parliament not only for civil but also for military expenditure in connection with the Middle East'. Latter on for practical reasons the financial assistance in the Middle East was reduced.<sup>10</sup>

It is to be noted that after 1902, Saudi power with the recapture of Riyadh increased at the expense of the rival Rashidi tribes further north. Before the outbreak of First World War, Ibn Sa'ud had consolidated his power in the Najd, in Hasa further south, and by the Treaty of Qatif, December 26, 1915, with Britain he received a subsidy and recognition as Ruler of Najd and Hasa.

Meanwhile growing Al-Hashimi assertion of power in the Hejaz and in other parts of Arabia led to conflict and a disastrous defeat by the Sa'udis at Turaba in 1919. By 1921 and 1922, Ibn Sa'ud having defeated the Rashidi in Jabal Shammar, invaded the northern oases of Hail and Jauf and extended his frontiers to Trans Jordan and Iraq. Ibn Sa'ud had now encompassed the Kingdom of the Hejaz on three sides. In the northeast, on the Iraqi side of the boundary area, the Sa'udis disposed another threat to Iraqi and British interests.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

It is not difficult to appreciate the extreme complexity of the territorial problem to Britain, whose chief client was being defeated by resurgent Wahhabi power under Ibn Sa'ud, who himself also, was receiving British subsidy. Furthermore within the British Government, factions in the Foreign Office vied with others in the India Office in backing different Arab groups.

### **The Najdi – Kuwaiti Border Dispute**

In the course of policy making, the British put emphasis on to the settlement of border dispute between Najd and Kuwait.

It is to be noted that bad relation ensued between Ibn Sa'ud and Salim, the new *Shaikh* of Kuwait during the First World War. This may be attributed to the question of controlling the hostile Ajman tribe, and also to suppress the illicit trade of contraband goods that took place in Qasim, the centre of over land trade as indeed it had been for ages. Ibn Sa'ud held that he was powerless to stop this trade as he was too weak to exert his authority over the Qasim merchants. Ibn Sa'ud also blamed Salim for his indifference of this illicit trade. Both Salim and Ibn Sa'ud exchanged countless allegations, and relations between Kuwait and Najd deteriorated still further. Salim, who was anti-Wahhabite, allegedly made an unnecessarily ostentatious parade of his protection of the 'Ajman tribe' while Ibn Sa'ud retaliated by taxing the Awazim 'tribe, a tribe which was under the jurisdiction of Kuwait.<sup>11</sup>

The long-standing feud in between Ibn Sa'ud and *Shaikh* Salim of Kuwait aggravated with the passage of time and it continued to worsen after the end of the war with the ultimate result of the outbreak of hostilities between them in 1920. These clashes were occasioned by Salim's assertion of his jurisdiction over the area assigned to Kuwait by the Anglo-Turkish Agreement of 1913 and Ibn Sa'ud's refusal to accept this assertion. This reciprocal claims created tension and excitement between them. Ibn Sa'ud

---

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

based his claim on the extent of his forefathers' territories. The British had to involve to settle the issue of dispute on the basis of legal and political considerations.<sup>12</sup> For the same plans for arbitration were being made and Sir Percy Cox returned from Tehran to Baghdad as High Commissioner, replacing Wilson. On his way back to Baghdad Cox met Ibn Sa'ud at 'Uqair. The Wahhabi leader asserted his demands, maintaining that he was unaware of any boundaries as laid down by an Anglo – Turkish Agreement. On the one hand Cox pointed out to Ibn Sa'ud that Kuwait had to have a hinterland otherwise it would never be free from the fear of raids, on the other hand, he informed Salim that Britain could not support frontiers that she had been willing to obtain against the Ottoman Empire. Both parties agreed to accept arbitration. With the concurrence of his government Cox proceeded on to settle the dispute and to establish peace between the two. In spite of that a battle took place between the Sa'udis and Kuwaitis. With British mediation it was stopped. With the temporary cessation of Najdi - Kuwaiti friction, British attention was soon directed to Iraq where Ibn Sa'ud's *Ikhwan* threatened the undefined borders of the British mandate.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Najdi-Iraqi Dispute**

In 1921 trouble burst into rage on the frontier between Najd and Iraq as a result of the influx into Iraq of certain Shammar and other tribal elements who rejected Saudi overlordship. Ibn Sa'ud's capture of Hail had brought the *Ikhwan* to the ill-defined borders of southern Iraq. Raids and counter-raids – the traditional Bedouin pastime – were exchanged as the *Ikhwan* confronted the Iraqi Amarat, Dhafir and Mutafiq.<sup>14</sup> Friction on the frontier was, of course, worsened by the traditional enmity prevailing between the Saudi and the Hashimite families. The capture of Hail increased Saudi ambitions for

---

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

expansion, while from the private or dynastic capacity, the Iraqi monarch was very much willing to create trouble on his way.<sup>15</sup>

Another aspect added fuel to the problems. It was economic. A good number of tribes of the northern and northeastern Najd, especially the Shammar, Harb, Mutair, 'Awazim, Ajman and Dhafir, had from time immemorial migrated in autumn towards Kuwait and the Euphrates 'to obtain the necessities of life'.<sup>1</sup> The political enmity existing between Riyadh and Baghdad, coupled with local tribal troubles, interrupted these natural migratory habits. As the Iraqi state began to take shape and Saudi power increased, the political issue was accompanied by the economic one.<sup>16</sup>

To avoid clash decision was taken to convene a conference at Mohammera in May 1922. The purpose was to settle the differences between Najd and Iraq. After discussion, on 5 May, 1922 in the presence of Sir Percy Cox, the Treaty of Mohammera was signed by delegates from Najd and Iraq. Some issues were settled and differences were minimized. The treaty was to be ratified by both the parties.<sup>17</sup>

But no definite frontier was fixed owing to the nature of the Bedouin's annual migrations. With the signing of the Mohammera Treaty the imminent danger of a large scale conflagration on the Iraqi-Najd frontier abated. Eventually, Ibn Sa'ud repudiated the agreement.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of November 1922, Sir Percy Cox met Ibn Sa'ud at the port of 'Uqair. The purpose of the meeting was to solve the frontier problem between Najd and Iraqi and to fix a boundary between Najd and Kuwait. Cox was accompanied, among others, by Faisal's delegate, the Iraqi Minister of Communications and Works, Sabih Bey and Fahad Bey, chief of the Amarat,

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

the Iraqi division of the 'Anaza. Major J.C. More, the political Agent at Kuwait, represented the interests of the *Shaikh* of Kuwait. Major Dickson, the Political Agent in Bahrain was present, as was Amin Rihani. Ibn Sa'ud arrived with a bodyguard of about 300 men.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud based his claim on the Dhafir and Amarat, both now considered Iraqi tribes, on the fact that had belonged to his ancestors, thereby indicating once again that he intended to extend his power to the confines enjoyed by the early nineteenth century Wahhabi empire. He maintained that both tribes had formerly resided in Najd but had since migrated to Iraq. Cox was in somewhat difficult position. He had been friendly with Ibn Sa'ud for over a decade and was in turn greatly trusted by him, Cox was also the High Commissioner of Iraq and morally bound to protect Faisal's interests. In the end there was little alternative for Cox, he was forced to prevail upon Ibn Sa'ud to relinquish his claim to the two presently – Iraqi tribes. Ibn Sa'ud, however, fought against a clearly demarcated boundary between the two states.<sup>20</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud pressed for a tribal boundary marked by a system of wells and grazing grounds as opposed to the European expedient of an arbitrary line drawn in the desert. While the Iraqi delegate rejoined by claiming that Baghdad would accept 'nothing less than a frontier at least two hundred miles south of the Euphrates'. But claims and counter claims created stalemate. Cox then stepped in and took matters into his own hands.<sup>21</sup>

After considering all possible rationals, Cox proceeded then to draw unilaterally the borders between Iraq and Najd and Najd and Kuwait. At a general meeting of the conference, Sir Percy Cox on his own drew a boundary line from the Persian Gulf to Jabal Anaizan, close to the Trans

---

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>21</sup> HRP Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), pp. 273-274.

Jordanian frontier. This gave Iraq a large area of territory claimed by Najd. Considering Ibn Sa'ud's attitude that he would not accept it with good grace Cox obviously to pacify him, ruthlessly deprived Kuwait of nearly two-thirds of her territory and gave it to Najd. While doing so, he pushed forward the argument that the power of Ibn Sabah of Kuwait was much less in the desert than it had been when the Anglo-Turkish Agreement had been drawn up. Towards the south and west of Kuwait proper, he drew out two zones, which he declared should be neutral and known as the Kuwait Neutral Zone and the Iraq Neutral Zone. As regards the Kuwait Neutral Zone it was said that both sides would get a half share.<sup>22</sup>

Cox's boundary between Iraq and Najd has remained until this day. The drawbacks of a western – type boundary in a nomadic society were partly offset by the neutral zone. Moreover, the neutral zone between Kuwait and Najd was the only practical solution to the possibility of oil being discovered there and the inevitable dispute arising over drilling rights.<sup>23</sup> While it can be argued that a clearly defined boundary in such a nomadic area is anomalous, it can equally be argued that in view of the hostility prevailing between Iraq, Najd and Kuwait, some line had to be fixed to avoid constant claims and counter - claims. Also, with the westernization of Iraq and the Middle East in general - not excluding the potential settlement of Arabia owing to the *Ikhwan* movement - it could be said that a western - style boundary was inevitable. Evaluating the reality Britain became very much concerned about it.<sup>24</sup>

It is to be noted that the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 settled the problem of the disposal of the territories lost by Turkey in First World War minus the Arabian Peninsula. Earlier the British got the authority of mandate on Iraq and Palestine. But the inland frontiers of both the countries were undefined. The period from late 1922 until early 1924 saw two major problems

---

<sup>22</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

– One was the struggle in north-central Arabia between Anglo-Hashimite aggrandizement and Saudi expansionism. Other was the attempt by Britain to settle through a general conference the outstanding problems between Ibn Sa'ud and his Hashimite neighbours.<sup>25</sup>

In north – central Arabia dispute took place over the question of the Wadi Sirhan. This long depression was an important avenue for caravan trade between Najd and Syria and hence it carries economic value to Ibn Sa'ud. On the other hand, it was strategically important to the British. Hence Britain put emphasis on having it for maintaining its imperial necessity. In addition, Ibn Sa'ud did not want to be surrounded in the north and west by the Hashimites. So this reciprocal necessity created some problems.<sup>26</sup> The second major event of this period was the British conducted conference of Kuwait which endeavoured to settle the Saudi - *Sharifian* problems. But the enmity and intransigence of both the parties created some problems on the way of its success.

With the defeat of Ibn Rashid at the hands of Ibn Sa'ud in 1921 the Jabal Shammar ceased to be a buffer zone between Najd and the Hashimite domains in the north. Not only did Ibn Sa'ud came into direct contact with Faisal but in early 1922 by annexing Jauf in northernmost Arabia the Wahhabi leader arrived at the door-step of Abdullah's undelimited southern frontier. The inevitable friction between the two rulers once again put Britain and her High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, in an awkward position. The British tried their level best for holding a meeting to solve the prevailing problems.<sup>27</sup> As soon as Hejaz came under Ibn Sa'ud's control Britain became very much concerned about the maintenance of the integrity of the territories of the Arab Middle East that fell under its control as mandate, namely Iraq and Trans Jordan. In both the places the Wahhabis under the

---

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 189.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

leadership of Ibn Sa'ud represented a real threat to the newly established monarchies. The British government sought to regulate the borders between Ibn Sa'ud and his northern neighbours with the signing of the Bahra and Hadda Agreements in November 1925. These two agreements defined the frontiers between Ibn Sa'ud and his Hashimite rivals. Moreover, they restricted the movement of nomadic tribes in the north. According to the Bahra Agreement between Ibn Sa'ud and Iraq: 'Tribes subjects to one of the two governments (Iraq and Najd) may not cross the frontier into the territory of the other government except after obtaining a permit from their own government and after the concurrence of the other government'.<sup>28</sup> A committee was formed as per this agreement to examine the claims of the nomadic tribes of both the countries.

The boundary of Saudi state with Trans Jordan was also controversial. In addition to having Ma'an and Aqaba the newly created state of Trans Jordan has its geographical attachment with Iraq. But Ibn Sa'ud demanded both the towns as a part and parcel of Hejaz with a view to creating geographical connection of his state with Syria. For this he demanded to cede a part of Trans Jordan towards the frontiers of Iraq. Britain as the controlling power of two Hashemite Kingdoms did not accept the demanded areas in addition to the opposition of *Amir* Abdullah of Trans Jordan. To settle the issue the Hadda Agreement was signed on 2 November 1925 between Sir Gilbert Clayton and Ibn Sa'ud. This treaty confirmed Trans Jordan's claim over the disputed land though minor changes had taken place while delimiting the boundary. No decision was taken with regard to Ma'an and Aqaba.<sup>29</sup>

A similar article regarding the movement of the tribes was included in the Hadda Agreement. These restrictions of the movement of tribes between the territories of Ibn Suad, Trans Jordan and Iraq resulted in a serious

---

<sup>28</sup> Leatherdale, C. *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925-1939: The Imperial Oasis*, (London: Frank Cass), 1983, p. 375.

<sup>29</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, pp. 47-49.



challenge to Ibn Sa'ud's authority by the *ikhwan* tribal force. It is to be noted that this was the first formal attempt to impose restrictions on and control of tribal movement in a region where international conventions and definition of borders by 'states' had so far alien concepts. In 1925, the northern nomadic population whose subsistence was highly dependent on movement and migration suffered a second blow when Ibn Sa'ud abolished the traditional *dira* (tribal territories) and announced that they were from then to be considered state land.<sup>30</sup>

Having secured his position in the upper Hejaz, Ibn Sa'ud turned his attention towards Asir when he signed the Treaty of Mecca with Hasan Ibn Ali al-Idrisi in October 1926. Al-Idrisi acknowledged his status under the 'suzerainty of His Majesty the King of Hejaz, *Sultan* of Nejd and its dependencies', and agreed not to 'enter into political negotiations with any Government or grant any economic concession to any person except with the sanction of His Majesty'. Ibn Sa'ud agreed that the 'internal administration of Asir and the supervision of its tribal affairs were dealt with by the Idrisis'.<sup>31</sup> This treaty allowed the semi-autonomous *emirate* of 'Asir to coexist with Ibn Sa'ud's dominions for a short while, but this status came to an end in 1930.

After the conquest of Hejaz, Britain was the main foreign power regulating the relationship between the newly emerging dominions of Ibn Sa'ud and its mandated territories in the north. It was precisely after this conquest that the British government realized that its first treaty with Ibn Sa'ud, signed in 1915, was 'patently inappropriate to the circumstances of 1926'.<sup>32</sup> The Treaty of Jeddah, signed in May 1927, recognized 'the complete and absolute independence of the dominions of his Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies, and stipulated that Ibn Sa'ud should undertake 'that the performance of the pilgrimage will be facilitated to British subjects and British protected persons of the Moslem faith'.

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Leatherdale, *op.cit.*, p.379.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

No mention was made of Britain's "special interest" in Palestine or Iraq (It will be recalled that recognition of special interest in these areas had been demanded a few years earlier from Husain). And Ibn Sa'ud pledged "to maintain friendly and peaceful relations" with Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Oman Coast – all of which were under the protection of Great Britain.<sup>33</sup> The Treaty of Jeddah set a precedent, and within a few years Ibn Sa'ud was recognized by and had similar treaties with Italy, France, Russia, Turkey, Iran and other states which had Muslim subjects. Ibn Sa'ud also acceded to Britain special interests and especially in Bahrain and the Persian Gulf areas. Both the parties agreed to control slave trade. Ibn Sa'ud temporarily accepted the occupation of Ma'an and Aqaba by Trans Jordan in a document attached with the treaty but was able to compel Britain to accept the opinion of his claim regarding the final and future status of both the towns.

According to Leatherdale, Ibn Sa'ud made sure that the treaty referred to the legality of his secular and historical rights, ensuring his right to choose his successor. Britain, however, did not include 'most - favoured - nation treatment, nor did it provide for a commercial treaty with Ibn Sa'ud's dominions'.<sup>34</sup> Britain's treaty with Ibn Sa'ud, acknowledging his full and absolute independence, was almost unique in that it was not aimed at a state, such as Egypt or Iraq, but at a man.<sup>35</sup> Britain limited the validity of the treaty to the reign of Ibn Sa'ud.

However, Britain's intimate relationship with Ibn Sa'ud remained ambiguous. Upto 1929, the British government, 'while taking need of the exploits of Ibn Sa'ud' and the need to adapt relations with him, still had not come round to viewing him as a critical factor in Britain's position in the Arab World. Ibn Sa'ud was still seven or eight years from achieving that kind of

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381; S N Fisher, *The Middle East A History* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, reprinted in 1966, second edition, 1971), p. 552.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

prominence'.<sup>36</sup> When Ibn Sa'ud declared his realm the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, this Kingdom, like other Gulf states, was not a colony. They existed vaguely within the British Empire in special treaty relations with Britain. Although 'ambiguous', this special relationship with Britain remained absolute for years together ahead.<sup>37</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud's special relationship with Britain was going to be formalized after the occupation of Hejaz and it developed within a few successive years. At the end of the First World War, meeting in Cairo on 23 March, 1918, the British put emphasis on a post war policy of maintaining a balance of power in Arabia. This should be done through the continuation of independent rule of Ibn Rashid in Arabia. But after the end of the war, Cox's suggestion, supported by Cairo, was rejected. It is to be noted that the Rashidi *Amir's* influence extended to the western borders of Iraq while his domains lay across pilgrim and caravan routes.<sup>38</sup> In view of this strategic importance, the Foreign Office favoured subsidising him to insure themselves against the possibility that Ibn Rashid might use his position to the detriment of British interests. It hampered to some extent Anglo-Saudi relations. But the entire situation was changed as a result of internal feuds that beset the Rashidi's. As a result of this feud Saud Ibn Rashid was assassinated and responsibility of the *Amirate* was taken by a thirteen year old boy, Abdul Aziz Ibn Mitab. One of his uncles was appointed regent. This self-destruction of the Rashidis resulted the strengthening of Saudi position in central Arabia. Soon after the assassination, Ibn Sa'ud sought to consolidate his power by concluding an agreement between himself and the leaders of Hail. This Saudi-Rashidi agreement declared that: (1) Hail's foreign relations were to be conducted only through Riyadh, (2) the Shammar were to be entirely under Saudi control

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> Sluglett, P. and M. Sluglett, "The Precarious Monarchy: Britain, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud and the Establishment of the Kingdom of Hejaz Najd and its Dependencies, 1925-1932", in T. Niblock (ed.), *State, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hejaz under Ottoman Control 1940-1908*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984, p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

and all disputes were to be submitted directly to Ibn Sa'ud and, (3) the *Amirate* was to remain independent in internal affairs but with ultimate control resting in Saudi hands. By this time Ibn Sa'ud had extended his sway in different directions.<sup>39</sup>

Although by Ibn Sa'ud's reckoning, two-thirds of Hail's inhabitants accepted the Saudi-Rashidi agreement, fighting soon broke out between the *Ikhwān* and certain sections of the Shammar who objected to his rule. This hostilities culminated in the capitulation of Hail the following year. On November 4 1921 Ibn Sa'ud occupied Hail 'by negotiation and without bloodshed'.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Rashidi family was arrested and taken to Najd to live in honourable captivity.<sup>2</sup> Unlike many of the other Bedouin leaders, Ibn Sa'ud usually treated the adversaries he vanquished with benevolence. As a result they became devoted to him and other tribes were impressed by both his strength and magnanimity.<sup>40</sup> It has been evaluated that the conquest of Hail did have far-reaching consequences. It brought Ibn Sa'ud into the theatre of Trans Jordanian politics and probably into the Franco-Syrian vista also.

After the capture of Hejaz in 1926, Ibn Sa'ud could expand no further in the north and east because this would have antagonized Britain, the mandate power in Trans Jordan and Iraq and the protector of Gulf rulers from Kuwait to Muscat. There remained a small opportunity on the Saudi-Yemeni border. In 1930 Ibn Sa'ud annexed 'Asir and announced that its Idrisi ruler was permitted to remain only as a nominal head of the province. The formal annexation of 'Asir after its capital, Abha, had been part of Ibn Sa'ud's realm for almost eight years was the final territorial acquisition.<sup>41</sup> The annexation of 'Asir did not result in major clashes with local or foreign powers, for example, Britain or Italy whose influence in the Red Sea was being consolidated in the

---

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>41</sup> Leatherdale, *op.cit.*, p. 138.

1930s. However, it brought Ibn Sa'ud and *Imam* Yahya of Yemen close to a serious military confrontation later on.

Military expansion reached its limit in the north, east and south-west. The Saudi realm bordered territories where Britain had already guaranteed the integrity of two newly created Hashimite Kingdoms, that of King 'Abdullah in Trans Jordan and King Faisal in Iraq. While continued efforts were being made to effect a meeting between Ibn Sa'ud and his Hashimite adversaries to solve their border problems, Anglo-Saudi relations were exacerbated by the British decision to discontinue Ibn Sa'ud's subsidy. In early spring 1923, London decided to make a single payment of £ 50,000 to Ibn Sa'ud for the year 1922-3. After 31 March, 1923, his subsidy was discontinued. On the other side of the Peninsula, Husain was to be given £ 50,000 'if and when he signs a satisfactory Treaty'. Ibn Sa'ud's subsidy was to be paid in two equal instalments of £ 25,000 at six month intervals. With diplomatic endeavours giving little satisfaction, the British in London were thinking once again in terms of buying peace in Arabia.<sup>42</sup>

Ibn Sa'ud, who had recently asked Cox for a loan, was informed by the High Commissioner that not only was a loan impossible but his subsidy was to be discontinued. However, Cox did veto the suggestion that any conditions be attached to the second payment. Shortly after the message concerning to Ibn Sa'ud, another *Ikhwan* attack took place in the disputed area between Trans Jordan and Najd.

### **Subdual of opposition: The question of *Mutawwa'a* and the *Ikhwan***

It is to be noted that the religious scholars played a very vital role in motivating the tribal people to come to order. Ibn Sa'ud thereupon pursued the policy of utilizing the Najd *ulama* commonly called *Mutawwa'a* for the same. Ibn Sa'ud fully depended on the *mutawwa'a* for maintaining and

---

<sup>42</sup> Gary Troller, *op.cit.*, p. 193.

extending his influence in a manner similar to that experienced by the rest of the Arabian population. He even feared themselves with the apprehension that they might switch their allegiance to other<sup>43</sup> or that they might withdraw their support. Such withdrawal had historical precedents.

It may be remembered that one of the scholars of the *mutawwa'a* or *ulama*, Abdullah Ibn 'Abdul Latif Al *Shaikh* took the internal strife among the Sa'udi brothers in the 1870s seriously and his decision during this time demonstrated the case with which he switched allegiance from one brother to another.<sup>44</sup> At that time, he granted the oath of allegiance to whoever happened to conquer Riyadh. This continued to haunt Ibn Sa'ud in the 1920s. In addition, it is not wise to confirm that the Riyadh *'ulama* especially the descendants of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab were inclined to grant the oath of allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud on the basis of his descent or his ancestors' material alliances with Al *Shaikh*. In 1891, 'Abdullah Ibn Abdul Latif swore allegiance to a Rashidi, Muhammad Ibn Rashid, the new master of Najd who had resolved the power struggle among the Saudi ruling group and expelled the last Saudi ruler, 'Abdur Rahman to Kuwait.<sup>45</sup> This time the scholar was acting in accordance with the principle that a 'tyrannical, *Sultan* was better than perpetual strife'.<sup>46</sup> The scholar was taken to Ha'il for two years where he taught several local Ha'il students,<sup>47</sup> after which he returned to Riyadh. Moreover, when Ibn Sa'ud appeared on the outskirts of Riyadh in 1900 during his first failed attempt to recapture the town, 'Abdullah Ibn 'Abdul Latif sided

---

<sup>43</sup> Al-Zirkili, K. *Shibh al-Jazira fi' and al-Malik 'Abd al-'Aziz* (The Arabian Peninsula during the period of King 'Abd al-Aziz), 1st (edn), vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1970), p. 197; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Crawford, M., "Civil War, Foreign Intervention, and the Quest for Political Legitimacy: A Nineteenth-century Saudi *Qadi's* Dilemma", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 14, 1982, pp. 227-248.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Al-Bassam A., *'Ulama najd khilal sital qurun* [Najdi *'ulama* during six centuries] (Mecca: al-Nahda al-Haditha, 1918), pp. 349 and 537; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 63.

with the Rashidis and helped defend the town against him.<sup>48</sup> It was only in 1902 when it became clear to him that Ibn Sa'ud had actually captured Riyadh and killed the Rashidi governor that he was prepared to offer Ibn Sa'ud the oath of allegiance. Inference may be drawn from the above incident that the religious leaders used to take the benefit of their values in the society and to maintain it all through in favour of the power centres.

After the 1902 oath of allegiance, Najdis began to refer to Ibn Sa'ud as *imam*. His expanding domain was referred to in local parlance as an *emirate*. Both the sedentary population and the tribal confederations had already been familiar with the notions of *imamate* and *emirate*. While the *imamate* was related to religious discourse, the *emirate* was tied to a perception of power specific to the context of Arabia. After the capture of Ha'il, Ibn Sa'ud became the regional power in central Arabia. He emerged as the undisputed ruler of a large territory. Hasa, Qasim and northern Najd succumbed to his leadership to the detriment of local power centres. Ibn Sa'ud adopted the title *imam* to distinguish his realm from the tribal *emirates* of Arabia and minor local oasis *Amirs*.

During the summer of 1921, Ibn Sa'ud declared himself '*Sultan* over the whole of Najd and its dependencies'.<sup>49</sup> Religious specialists sanctioned the new title. '*Sultan*' seemed acceptable to both the Najdi population and its men of religion since it was based on a familiar concept well developed in religious discourse. As such it was not perceived as a deviation from the *imamate*. However the title of *Sultan* remained a formality, an irrelevance to the majority of those who became Ibn Sa'ud's subjects. Ibn Sa'ud was still perceived by the sedentary population and the tribal confederations as the regional ruler of Najd who managed to eliminate a number of power centres and impose his own hegemony over vast territories, a scenario too familiar to

---

<sup>48</sup> A. Bligh, *From Prince to King: Royal Succession in the House of Saud in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), p. 45.

<sup>49</sup> J. Kostiner, "Transforming Dualities: Tribe and State Formation in Saudi Arabia", in P. Khoury and J. Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 18-35.

them. By November 1921, southern Najd, Jabal Shammar and Hasa had become part of his realm. Their local leaders had already been eliminated.<sup>50</sup>

The title of '*Sultan*' was meant for external consumption, to impress external powers, mainly Britain, with his achievements. Ibn Sa'ud adopted the title of *Sultan* immediately after Faisal, the son of King Husain of Hejaz, became King of Iraq. While Arabia had known several *Amirs*, in 1921 there was undoubtedly only one *Sultan* in central Arabia. In their Arabian Affairs Correspondence, British officers could dispatch letters pointing to the *Sultan* of Najd, from now on an easily identifiable figure above other local Najdi power centres. As far as Britain was concerned, there remained in Arabia Ibn Sa'ud, the *Sultan* of Najd and *Sharif* Husain, the King of Hejaz. In August 1921, Britain confirmed Ibn Sa'ud's title.<sup>51</sup>

When Ibn Sa'ud captured Hejaz from its *Sharifian* rulers by 1925, the religious specialists confirmed him as King of Hejaz and *Sultan* of Najd. Hejazis were familiar with the idea of kingship, since *Sharif* Husain had adopted the title in 1916. Already familiar with both the Hejazi Shafi'i and Ottoman Hanafi Schools, Hejazi '*ulama* had no problem with the concept of kingship. After the capture of Mecca, Ibn Sa'ud came into immediate contact with such '*ulama*. He summoned the Hejazi notables and asked them to 'designate a time when the most senior and most distinguished '*ulama*, notables, merchants and people of opinion could be present to discuss their government under his supervision.<sup>52</sup>

The title 'King in Hejaz and *Sultan* in Najd' implied a duality, reflecting Ibn Sa'ud's reluctance to put the loyalty of the Najdi '*ulama*, who were perhaps not ready for such a political innovation, to the ultimate test in 1926.

---

<sup>50</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>52</sup> Hamza, F., *Qalb al-jazira al-'Arabiyya* [The heart of the Arabian Peninsula] al-Harbi, D. 1999 *nisa' shairat min najd* [Famous women from Najd] (Riyadh: al-Dara, 1936), p. 98; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 64.



Najdi *ulama* aspired to have an *imam* - turned - into - *Sultan* championing their cause. They found such a person in Ibn Sa'ud. The *imamate* was a concept well developed in Hanbali theology. The *Sultanate* was a concept which was closely linked to the *imamate* in their own religious texts. In 1926 the transfer from *imamate* to kingship, however would have been premature. It took a further round of events to predispose the Najdi '*ulama* to accept the idea of a king in their own territory.<sup>53</sup>

In 1926 Ibn Sa'ud was confirmed as king of Hejaz and *Sultan* of Najd by the religious specialists of Hejaz. While the Najdi *ulama* were reluctant to accept the title of kingship. They took time to accept the idea. It was the motto of the Najdi *ulama* to purify Islamic practices from all sorts of innovations. After the occupation of Hejaz, the Najdi '*ulama* were happy to see their pupils, the *mutawwa'a*, actively involved in 'Islamising' the Hejazi population.

With the capture of Hejaz, Najdi '*ulama* involved in debating without any delay over the question whether the telegraph and other technological innovations could be adopted in their area without jeopardizing Islamic principles which had already been introduced in Hejaz. At the same time, the *ikhwan* and their mentors, the *mutawwa'a*, were busy 'purifying' the landscape from traces of what they regarded a religious innovations. This included the destruction of shrines built on the tombs of the Prophet, his relatives and companions. In addition, the programme included the 'Islamisation of public space in Hejaz, for example the enforcement of the ban on smoking in public.<sup>54</sup>

Considering the moment an appropriate one Ibn Sa'ud decided to declare himself King of Najd, while the Riyadh '*ulama* were busy debating the legitimacy of a technology which was as yet unknown to them but well established in Hejaz. Ibn Sa'ud, however, felt the early warning signals of an imminent and serious rebellion.

---

<sup>53</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> Wahba, H. *Arabian Days* (London: Arthur Barker Ltd.), 1964, p. 22.

Some of them had their own choice. Al-Duwaysh did have firm determination to become *Amir* of Medina, while Ibn Bijad looked towards Ta'if for the same.<sup>56</sup> But the attitude of Ibn Sa'ud put emphasis on concentrating power centrally i.e., in his own hands, the tribal chiefs exerted pressure on him to share it. The leaders of the *ikhwan* rebellion continued to regard themselves as legitimate partners in the newly created realm, rather than 'instruments' for its expansion, to be used and dismantled after the mission had been accomplished.<sup>57</sup> Al-Duwaysh's ambitions were well understood by the *Amir* of Kuwait, who unlike al-Zirkili, was not concerned with al-Duwaysh's 'bedouin' and 'savage' nature. *Amir* Ahmad of Kuwait described al-Duwaysh:

Al-Duwaish is a great politician..... there is no question of din [religion] behind this rebellion; what Duwaish is playing for is the downfall of the house of Saud and the rise of himself, al-Duwaish, in Bin Saud's place. With success his horizon has become widened and now he hopes to become master of Najd, and in the process does not care if the Hejaz returns to the Shareefian family or Hail to Bin Rashid.<sup>58</sup>

Sources on the *ikhwan* rebellion 1927-30 are available and well documented. It needs to examine the nature of the holy alliance between Ibn Sa'ud, the *mutawwa'a* and the *ikhwan* and its subsequent reverse. As soon as the occupation of Hejaz took place, the *ikhwan* leaders held a 'conference' in 'Artawiyyah, at which they did criticise Ibn Sa'ud on several grounds. These were mainly –

- a) his relations with Britain;
- b) the nature of kingship;
- c) the Islamic legitimacy of the taxes introduced by Ibn Sa'ud and also his personal conduct i.e., his serial marriages with daughters of tribal *Shaikhs* and slaves and his luxurious lifestyle;

---

<sup>56</sup> Al-Zirkili, K. *Shibh al-jazira*, p. 108; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>57</sup> J. Kostiner, "Transforming Dualities: Tribe and State Formation in Saudi Arabia", in P. Khoury and J. Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991); cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139; cited in *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Contention also took place over the question of the status of the Hasa Shi'a community and the necessity of 'Islamising' them, and the annual arrival of the Syrian and Egyptian pilgrims with certain practices considered outside Islam, for example, their use of music and singing (*Mahmil*) Ibn Sa'ud was also criticised for limiting the prospect of *jihad* against a whole range of groups, such as tribes in Iraq, Jordan and Kuwait.<sup>59</sup> This complaint was directly related to the Hadda and Bahra Agreements with Britain, which regulated tribal movement between Ibn Sa'ud's domain, Trans Jordan and Iraq.

To face the situation and respond to the criticism of the *ikhwan*, Ibn Sa'ud called a conference of the Riyadh *ulama* in 1927 and delegated them the authority to take resolution properly. It is evident that Ibn Sa'ud without being consulted with the '*ulama* did not want to resolve these issues. The '*ulama* gave their opinion on each item of criticism. They accepted the *ikhwan's* criticism of Islamic practices in Hejaz. They recommended that tombs on graves should be destroyed. They also recommended that the Shi'a of Hasa, under Ibn Sa'ud's authority since 1913, should become 'true Muslims' and abandon their innovations. They demanded that Syrian and Egyptian pilgrims should stop their 'un-Islamic practices', a reference to using music and chanting during the pilgrimage season, and recommended that Iraqi Shi'a tribes should be prevented from grazing their animals in Muslim land, a reference to Ibn Sa'ud's territories.<sup>60</sup>

On the issue of *jihad*, the '*ulama* kept it under the sole prerogative of Ibn Sa'ud, the *imam* of the Muslim community. He was also empowered to impose taxes as long as they were Islamic. The '*ulama* believed that he would not act against any Islamic practice. The '*ulama's* opinion was crucial for Ibn Sa'ud. Henceforth he was allowed to act against the rebellious *ikhwan* having full support of the Riyadh '*ulama*. The 1927 '*ulama* conference was considered

<sup>59</sup> Shamiyyah, J., *al-Sa'ud: madihun Wa Hadiruhun* [Al Sa'ud: their past and present] (London: 1986), p. 195; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>60</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, *op.cit.*, p. 67.

a critical moment for the ongoing relationship between Ibn Sa'ud and the Najdi men of religion.<sup>61</sup>

But the *ikhwan* rejected and stood against the opinions of the Riyadh '*ulama* and continued to challenge Ibn Sa'ud's authority. In 1928, when it seemed that the *ikhwan* rebellion was getting beyond his control, Ibn Sa'ud sent letters to all parts of Najd announcing his abdication. Immediately Riyadh became a 'Pilgrimage' centre for his most loyal supporters who included the tribal chiefs, '*ulama* and other Najdi notables. Emphatic speech was made by Ibn Sa'ud in a meeting with several hundred attendants. The speech contained the chivalry of his conquest of Hejaz and other decision making policies. He invoked the famous well-developed Wahhabi concept of submission to the leader of the Muslim community. Finally he asked the '*ulama* and the notables present to choose another ruler from among his own family to replace him if they were not satisfied with his style of government.<sup>62</sup>

But the religious specialists did not accept his replacement. They rather renewed the oath of allegiance to Ibn Sa'ud, who was eventually given religious authorization to terminate what could have developed into a crucial setback to his rule.

The Riyadh meeting of 1928 confirmed the status of the Riyadh '*ulama* that had already begun to take shape in 1927. From now on, they were confined to giving their opinions regarding matters of Islamic ritual and technological innovation. The '*ulama* accepted this limited role in the newly created realm, as it was a continuation of their ancient specialization in matters relating to *ibada*. It rather confirmed the ancient division of labour between the political *imam* and his men of religion. This division had developed with the first alliance between Al Sa'ud and Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab in 1744. In 1928 the Riyadh '*ulama* were not ready to challenge or

---

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Al-Zirkili, K. *Shibh al-jazira*, p. 112; cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 68.

attempt to change this arrangement. By 1928 they had accomplished the rather difficult task of recruiting a large number of *mutawwa'a* emissaries who were dispatched to domesticate the rest of the population of Arabia for Ibn Sa'ud. After that their role was to become state apologists to be called upon when need arose and to guard public morality in the realm. This ensured the acceptance of subordination of religion to politics. The religious specialists also understood that their eminence was dependent on restraining their former students, the *mutawwa'a*.<sup>63</sup>

With the approval of the *'ulama*, Ibn Sa'ud was able to pacify the *ikhwan* and terminate their rebellion. This pacification became more urgent as the *ikhwan* leaders drew up plans to divide Ibn Sa'ud's realm among themselves. Vassiliev reports that al-Duwaysh, Ibn Bijad and Ibn Hithlayn aspired towards becoming rulers in Najd, Hejaz and Hasa respectively.<sup>64</sup> The *ikhwan* played a very vital role towards expansion of the Saudi realm, but they created some trouble on the way of its consolidation.

### **Collapse of the *Ikhwan* Rebellion**

To face and subdue the *ikhwan* rebellion Ibn Sa'ud by March 1929 assembled a fighting force consisting mainly of men taken from Najdi oases. With this fighting force he started a campaign against the *ikhwan* rebels. The first battle took place at Sibila followed by several military attacks on their *hujar*, mainly in 'Artawiyyah and al-Ghatghat.<sup>65</sup> Britain decided to help Ibn Sa'ud to restrain the *ikhwan* and deployed its Royal Air Force. It played a very vital role towards the pacification of the *ikhwan*, the majority of whom fled over the Kuwaiti frontier. The efforts of Ibn Sa'ud and the British Royal Air Force

---

<sup>63</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>64</sup> A. Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), p. 277.

<sup>65</sup> J. Kostiner, "Transforming Dualities: Tribe and State Formation in Saudi Arabia", in P. Khoury and J. Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), p.136, cited in Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 69.

created a panic and the panic - stricken people started rushing in terror. At this moment, the British feared that they would seek refuge with Kuwaiti tribes and eventually merge with them.<sup>66</sup> This apprehension came from the fact that British thought that there was *ikhwan* sympathizers among the Kuwaiti tribes, some of whom shared common descent with their Sa'udi counterparts. However, it was not until January 1930 that the *ikhwan* leaders surrendered to the British in Kuwait. Britain was reluctant to hand them over without conditions, 'fearing either *summary* execution of large numbers, possibly including women and children, or alternatively, a free pardon, enabling them to raid again in the future'.<sup>67</sup> Britain eventually agreed to return the *ikhwan* leaders to Riyadh after Ibn Sa'ud promised to spare their lives and pledged that there would be no further raids into Kuwait and Iraq.<sup>68</sup> The *Ikhwan* rebels were handed over to Ibn Sa'ud, who put them in prison first in Hasa and latter in Riyadh. The most prominent of the *ikhwan* rebels, Faisal al-Duwaysh, died a year latter. The defeat of the *ikhwan* marked the end of a turbulent era in Sa'udi history. The *ikhwan* proved to be an efficient fighting force for the expansion of Ibn Sa'ud's realm, but turned out to be problematic in the consolidation of his authority. But it is true that the alliance between Ibn Sa'ud, the *mutawwa'a* and the *ikhwan* did not breakdown till the occupation and unification of the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>69</sup>

As regards the failure of *ikhwan* rebellion it is generally presumed that they had made a serious mistake of not recognizing the political realities of the prevailing new situation. The picture of the situation is that by this time the Sa'udi realm bordered such territories where Britain had already guaranteed the integrity of two newly created Hashemite Kingdoms, that of King 'Abdullah in Trans Jordan and King Faisal in Iraq. Driven by political ambition and

---

<sup>66</sup> Leatherdale, *op.cit.*, p.119.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>69</sup> Midawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia, op.cit.*, p. 70.

religious zeal, the *ikhwan* continued to raid tribal groups and towns in the north in areas where Ibn Sa'ud had no authority or claim recognized by Britain. Ibn Sa'ud and Britain co-operated in dismantling the *ikhwan* force after they had fulfilled the rather difficult task of expanding Ibn Sa'ud's realm within the boundaries that were possible. The holy alliance between Ibn Sa'ud, the *mutawwa'a* and the *ikhwan* came to an end because there was no scope of expansion beyond the already occupied area of Ibn Sa'ud. The Riyadh *'ulama* also sanctioned and justified the suppression of the *ikhwan* rebellion.<sup>70</sup>

The *ikhwan* rebellion was not only a religious protest against Ibn Sa'ud, but was also a tribal rebellion that exposed the dissatisfaction of some tribal groups with his increasing powers. The *ikhwan* rebels refused to remain the instruments of Ibn Sa'ud's expansion and expected real participation as governors and local chiefs in the conquered territories. Ibn Sa'ud refused to share with them the political rewards their conquests had brought. More importantly, the *ikhwan* rebellion demonstrated that the emerging state was from the very beginning a non-tribal entity whose expansion and consolidation could only progress at the expense of the tribal element.<sup>71</sup>

Having pacified the *ikhwan* and restrained the *mutawwa'a* with the approval of the small circle of senior Riyadh *'ulama* and the valuable assistance of Britain, Ibn Sa'ud declared his realm (so far called the Kingdom of Hejaz and of Najd and its Dependencies) *al-Mamlaka al 'Arabiyya al-Sa'udiyya* (the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) on 22 September 1932. The new name emphasized the merging of the two main regions, Hejaz and Najd, and more importantly, 'commemorated Ibn Sa'ud's part in creating a unified state under his authority'.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Leatherdale, *op.cit.*, p. 148.

### Assesment of Ibn Sa'ud's Endeavours

Statecraft perspective, or leadership skills and techniques are the most important factors behind the creation and durability of political systems in Saudi realm.<sup>73</sup> It is to be noted that the political union of Arabia that took place in the early twentieth century after the Prophet is attributed to the influence of common religion. More specifically it is to be noted that the secret of political union in Arabia was the propagation of a common religious faith, which alone could overcome the disruptive influence of the nomadic tribal life imposed by the physical environment. Under the economic and social condition of nomadism, where the margin of subsistence was often a minus quantity, every tribe's hand was against every other's; and the *Badu* and the Oasis dwellers were economically interdependent, the unifying effect of this interdependence was narrow in its range. The largest natural political unit in Arabia was the single Oasis or group for the exchange of commodities with its inhabitants. The crux of empire-building in Arabia was to bring two or more Oasis-units, with their respective tribal spheres of influence, into political union; and this could only be done through some unifying force, like theocracy, which was strong enough to overcome tribal antipathies and affinities. Keeping this reality in mind Ibn Sa'ud had to utilize the religious leaders of the area.

Towards the unification of the Arabian Peninsula interaction between tribes and outside communities took place. Interaction between tribes within the Arabian Peninsula is considered under internal setting. While communications and formulation of policies with societies outside the region are considered external.

To examine the nature of internal setting it is to be noted that before the unification the Arabian Peninsula was fragmented politically as well as

---

<sup>73</sup> Saud M. Al-Otaibi, "The Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East Reconsidered: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia", *Journal of King Saud University*, Vol. 10, Admin Sci. (2), AH., 1418/1998, p. 69.



geographically. At the local level, the Arabian Peninsula was divided between several tribal groups. A tribe constituted an autonomous political entity which resided in a specific geographical area called *dira*. Within the *dira*, the tribe had its own political, economic, and social rules. Politically, the tribe was ruled by a *Shaikh* who performed internal as well as external roles. Internally, the *Shaikh* played the role of a mediator and conciliator between disputing tribal members. The *Shaikh* did not make decisions alone but rather consult other members of the tribe about matters that concerned the tribe. On the inter-tribal level, the *Shaikh* represented his tribal views and demands and made decisions and treaties on behalf of his tribe.<sup>74</sup>

Economically, the tribe was a self-sufficient unit and depended on the natural resources such as wells and village found within its *dira* limits. Any encroachment into *dira* limits without prior permission from the tribe could lead to war. Socially, tribal members interacted mostly among themselves and had distrust to the outside world. Tribal members treated each other equally and wealth was distributed equally among them. An assault on any tribal members from rival tribes meant an assault on the whole tribe and required collective response. Consequently, a quarrel or conflict could escalate into a large scale war.<sup>75</sup> On the national level a limited number of major tribal leaders who dominated tribal confederations were able to exercise power. Among these leaders were the Al-Rashid and Al-Hashemite.

In short, the internal, social and political settings in the Arabian Peninsula were resistant to any attempt aimed at unifying the fragmented tribes under one political leadership. In addition, in such settings "allegiance had to be imposed and maintained and, perhaps most significantly, could be lost. Tribes or sections could leave alliances or confederations if they lost faith in or because dissatisfied with a particular ruler".

---

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

As regards the external setting it is to be mentioned that the Arabian Peninsula was an area for competition between the Ottoman empire and Britain. Both powers tried to enlist the support of Arabian leaders to serve their interest. Ottoman interest in the area stemmed from their desire to keep control of the two Islamic holy places (Mecca and Medina) which legitimized their image as the protector of the Islamic world. In addition, their interest in the Peninsula was related to their engagement in First World War and their desire to find military support bases in the Arabian Peninsula. On the other hand the British interest in the area was based on their goal of terminating the Ottoman empire and securing trade routes to and from India.

The competition between the two rival powers led to a race aimed at winning the support of the leaders of the three dynasties that existed in the Arabian Peninsula, namely the Al-Saud, the Al-Hashemite and the Al-Rashid. Consequently, all three dynasties received foreign support from either the Ottoman Empire or Britain and sometimes from both. So, the Ottoman provided the Al-Rashid dynasty in the north of the Peninsula with ammunition and financial assistance equal to 200 pounds per month since 1891, while Britain's financial assistance to the Al-Hashemite dynasty in the western part of the Peninsula reached 125,000 pounds per month. Since the Al-Saud dynasty was growing in strength, both Ottoman empire and Britain attempted to enlist its support. Hence the Ottoman Empire signed a treaty with Ibn Sa'ud in 1914 which recognized him as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Najd. To counter this treaty, Britain established a relationship with Abdul Aziz Ibn Sa'ud and provided him with a subsidy of 5,000 pounds per month and 3,000 rifles. After the First World War ended, Britain continued to provide support for all three dynasties. The Al-Hashemite dynasty received the lion share of the assistance. A mixture of three stratagies – charisma, control and coercion helped Ibn Sa'ud to a great extent towards the establishment and survival of the Al-Saud monarchy in the area under study.

Ibn Saud was a charismatic leader. To evaluate his charisma it is to be reckoned that the political and social fragmentation in the Arabian Peninsula was the biggest threat to the survivability of the Al-Saud monarchy. This in turn left Ibn Sa'ud with two options. The first was to fight the tribes that threatened his authority. The second was to attempt to find a way to unify these fragmented tribes and bring them under his control. The second option was more acceptable to Ibn Sa'ud because he did not have the military capabilities to destroy rival tribes. His followers numbered 50 men at that time and he did not have the financial resources to attract tribal leaders.

He, therefore, adopted the charismatic strategy of uniting the tribes and bringing them under his control. Charismatic strategy "helps the leader gain the obedience of his subjects on the basis of the population's devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of the individual who personifies the regime or to the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him".

Ibn Sa'ud's charismatic appeal was based on his military achievement and heroism. To reinforce his charismatic image, Ibn Sa'ud adopted Islam as a state ideology because he thought that only Islam could bring the fragmented tribes under one political unit since the tribes had a natural readiness to accept Islamic principles. To help tribes learn about Islam, Ibn Sa'ud built a series of settlements, each called a *hajar*. The name has a religious connotation. It implies "an individual's obligation to migrate from the corrupted to the purifying existence. The *hajar* not only helped in teaching the tribes Islam but also helped to weaken the tribal dual attachments to tribe and *dira* and strengthened the bond between its residents. They also accept Ibn Sa'ud as the supreme leader over all tribes and strengthened his military capabilities. His charismatic stand resulted in strengthening his leadership potentiality and military capabilities in addition to bringing loyalty of the tribal people who joined him. In short, Ibn Sa'ud's charismatic appeal as both a military hero and enforcer of religious doctrine won him two things. First, it

strengthened his leadership and military capabilities. Second, it helped him in gaining the commitment and loyalty of the tribes that joined him.

To maintain his position all through he also pursued coercion strategy to face external and internal threats to his rule and authority with the avowed aim of extending and prolonging it. The external threat stemmed from the Al-Rashid dynasty in the northern part of the Peninsula and the Al-Hashemite dynasty in the western part of it. Coercion strategy helped in to defeat his rival powers when he deployed the *Ikhwan* against them.

After eliminating the external threats to his authority, Ibn Suad was faced with new threat. This threat stemmed from some elements of the *Ikhwan* who adopted "uncompromising religious fanaticism" and started a rebellion against him. Ibn Sa'ud had no option but to use coercion to eliminate this internal threat to his authority. Hence, he raised an army and fought them and finally brought them under his control.<sup>76</sup>

To bring his domain under order he pursued administrative control strategy after eliminating all sources of threat to his authority, Ibn Sa'ud adopted the administrative control strategy to institutionalize his authority. Administrative control strategy included the division of his realm and appointment of its rulers from own family, the creation of a unified law, development of roads and mass media for connecting all parts of the country and also creation of some political institutions like *Majlis al-Shura*, Council of Deputies and latter on Council of Ministers.

In short, the various measures of control pursued by Ibn Sa'ud were aimed at institutionalizing and perpetuating Ibn Sa'ud's authority over all parts of Saudi Arabia. The creation of mass media and a network of roads not only

---

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

facilitated communication between Ibn Sa'ud and his subjects, but also provided him with a means to socialize people into accepting the new political system. Moreover, the creation of a network of governors and unified law, enhanced Ibn Sa'ud's authority and penetration over all society.

Between 1902 and 1926, three monarchies existed in the Arabian Peninsula, namely the Al-Hashemite, the Al-Rashid and Al-Saud. Although all three monarchies shared the same cultural values, and received foreign aid, only the Al-Saud monarchy has survived to date. The durability of the Al-Saud monarchy is the result of Ibn Sa'ud's statecraft and political skills. Through the adaptation of the three strategies of charisma, coercion and control, Ibn Sa'ud succeeded in overcoming his rivals and in institutionalizing his authority over the whole Arabian Peninsula.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

## Chapter 8

# Conclusion

The Arabian Peninsula, known to the Arabs as the *Jaziratul Arab* (Island of the Arabs) occupies a unique place in the history of the world for its amazing variegations. Being an isolated territory, it is bounded on the west by the Red Sea, on the east by the Persian Gulf, on the south by the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean and on the north by the Syrian desert. It occupies a strategic position between the continents of Africa and Asia.

Before the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the Arabian Peninsula was under diverse and various external influences. The physical character of the Arabian Peninsula combined with religious and political barriers did not make it easy for the western explorers and scholars who ultimately found their way to its oases and deserts always to make correct assessments of this singular land and its people. When the area came under Islam, it played a very vital role under the pious caliphs. Since then the Arabian Peninsula especially Hejaz as the cradle of Islam, holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of the Muslims all over the world. But with the expansion of Islam in northward in the seventh and eighth centuries this region was isolated for nearly a thousand years. During this period, the centre of the gravity of the Islamic World was shifted first to Damascus and then to Baghdad, and the very centre and birth place of Islam lost its predominant influence and former position. With the passage of time it came under the control of the Ottomans in the early part of the sixteenth century. But the Porte exercised little power in the affairs of Arabia. Within the sandy and mountainous interior, there was no established order and as a result, tribal life continued much as it had for centuries before the rise of Islam. As a result, the local chiefs seemingly worked out a balance of power, each generally respecting the others' zone of influence, together they tolerated the Turkish claim of sovereignty as a not unmixed evil. The loss of influence of the Arabian Peninsula was not recovered even under the centuries of Ottoman rule.

This unhealthy situation continued till the beginning of the eighteenth century. During this period there took place no major political and social development in Arabia. But a significant breakthrough in this respect was achieved in the mid eighteenth century when this area came under the sharp focus of modern history through the rise of the Wahhabis and their patron Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765). Under the Ottomans, Islam in Arabia drifted away from the Islam preached by the Prophet. Hence the prevailing situation needed reformation. The modern history of Arabia did begin with the rise of Wahhabism by the mid eighteenth century. The principles of Wahhabism put emphasis on establishing pristine Islam. The Wahhabis called themselves *Muwahhidun* (Unitarians or Monotheists) because they opposed pagan saint worship and other illegal un-Islamic practices. But while preaching this sort of teaching Ibn Abdul Wahhab had to face opposition in his native areas and this forced him to take refuge with Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1765), *Amir* of Daryyah.

In 1744 Ibn Sa'ud formed an alliance with Ibn-'Abdul Wahhab in which both agreed to eradicate heresy and restore pure Islam to Arabia. By his acceptance of Wahhabidoctrine, Ibn-Sa'ud became the *imam* (leader) of the Unitarian Community, thus obliged to uphold the *Sharia* (Islamic Law) and to spread the faith. With the Saudi support, the Wahhabimovement gained a vigorous religio-political character and within half a century succeeded in extending its sway over the greater part of Arabia, including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hejaz. The subsequent expansion of Sa'udi-Wahhabi realm brought a number of regions under their control. But the behaviour of the conquering troops was fanatical in the extreme. The Wahhabis regarded the ordinary Muslims with complete contempt. In their zeal to rid Islam of its cult of saints and other innovations (sing. *bid'ah*) they sacked Karbala in Iraq in 1801 and destroyed the domes of the shiite tombs because they were associated with saint worship. At the sametime, they also interrupted the annual *Hajj* (Moslem pilgrimage) to Mecca and Medina. These acts precipitated a wave of revulsion throughout the Muslim World.

But this situation was not ignored by the Porte, the then real authority of the area. The Porte considering the gravity of the situation, responded to the Sa'udi-Wahhabi challenge by sending the troops of Muhammad Ali into Arabia in 1811. The tribal confederations that had already suffered the punitive raids of the Sa'udis responded by switching allegiance to the foreign troops. Sa'ud Ibn Abdul Aziz died in 1814, leaving his son Abdullah to face the challenge of the Egyptian troops. Muhammad Ali's son Ibrahim Pasha led the invasion of Najd after Egyptian troops established a strong base in Hejaz. As a result, Abdullah (1814-18) was taken to Cairo and was latter sent to Istanbul where he was beheaded. The sacking of Dariyah marked the end of the first Sa'udi-Wahhabi *emirate*. The influence of the Wahhabis was, however, temporarily subdued. With the destruction of this unifying force Arabia lapsed into its traditional fragmentations. This condition of the Unitarians did not continue for long. Within a short time, chances again came to revive it. With the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from the region, Turki Ibn Abdullah came forward to re-establish the Sa'udi-Wahhabi authority in 1824. But he had to face the greatest internal challenge to his authority. This originated from internal dissension within his family.

In addition to facing internal challenge to his authority Turki in a plot was assassinated and was succeeded by his son Faisal whose rule was disrupted again in 1837 when he refused to pay tribute to the Egyptian forces deputed in Hejaz. In an expedition Faisal was captured and was sent to Cairo. Again internal dissension took place in the Al Saud dynasty. During the prevailing situation, Faisal managed to escape from his captivity in Cairo and returned to Riyadh in 1843. On his return, he took over the chieftainship and it continued till his death in 1865. The revival was possible because of the fact that about 1841, when a decree of the European powers had deprived the Pasha of Egypt of his holdings in Asia, the grandson of the Wahhabi Prince who had been taken prisoner by the army of Muhammad Ali having escaped from his Egyptian captivity, re-established the rule of his House, in their homelands, with a new capital at Riyadh; but this was only a partial recovery.



But the internal struggle between the Saudi brothers was fuelled by the desire of the various confederations to free themselves from Saudi domination. Between 1870 and 1875 the Saudi brothers were not able to reach an agreement and continued to challenge each other. Taking the weakness of the Al Saud, the Turks occupied the province of al-Hasa, along the coast of the Persian Gulf in 1871 and a family quarrel in the House of Sa'ud over the succession to the diminished Wahhabi principality, which broke out in 1882, enabled the rival house of al-Rashid from the Jabal Shammar, to seize Riyadh and annex the dominions of al-Sa'ud to their own about the year 1885.

While the disintegration of the first Saudi realm was partially due to the intervention of the Egyptians acting on behalf of the Ottoman Empire, the second realm collapsed for two reasons. First, the fragile Saudi leadership of the second half of the nineteenth century was further weakened by internal strife among members of the Saudi family. Second, the increasing power of a rival central Arabian *emirate* to the north of the Saudi base was able to undermine Saudi hegemony during the crucial period when the Sa'udis were struggling amongst themselves for political leadership. With the flight of Abdur Rahman, the Saudi capital, Riyadh, fell under the authority of the Rashidis, the remaining members of the Al Saud were taken as hostages to the Rashidi capital, Hail.

Riyadh remained under the authority of the Hail *Amirs* until 1902. The Saudi *Amir* Abdur Rahman had to take refuge in Kuwait in 1893 under the patronage of the Al Sabah and with a stipend from the Ottoman government. It was the exile of the Al Saud to Kuwait that allowed a friendship to develop with the Al Sabah rulers of this port. This friendship proved crucial for the return of the Al Saud to Riyadh in the twentieth century. The revival of Saudi power took place in the early phase of the twentieth century with the dramatic capture of Riyadh by Ibn Sa'ud in 1902 from the hands of the Rashidi governor *Wali* Ajlan. This opened the door for evolution and restoration of the third and durable Saudi realm into a fully fledged state.

The rise of Ibn Sa'ud as the undisputed and acknowledged leader in the politics of the Arabian Peninsula in the early phase of the first half of the twentieth century was no doubt an important phenomenon in the history of the world in general and Arab Middle East in particular. It is to be noted that after the consolidation of the Saudi position in Najd with the new capital at Riyadh in 1902 a play of diplomacy was necessary by Ibn Sa'ud to deal with the Ottomans in the one hand and to enlist the support and sympathy of the British on the other with a view to strengthening his position in the area against his rival and pro-Ottoman forces. In the course of his rise with the daring capture of Riyadh in 1902 from the hands of the Rashidi governor he did not fail to draw the attention of the British and enlisting their support to this cause by making a number of overtures for years together. But the British did not respond to his overtures incessantly. This may be attributed to their disliking for involvement in central Arabian affairs evaluating the Wahhabis not a threat to their interests and considering economic unimportance of the area at that time.

But Ibn Sa'ud did not give up his endeavours for enlisting the support of the British during the period ahead. In the course of consolidation and expansion of the Saudi power with the restoration in Riyadh Ibn Sa'ud evaluating the reluctance of the British had to submit to the Ottomans as a vassal. But it was a diplomatic stand since he pursued the policy of strengthening his power in the area without creating any misunderstanding with the Porte.

In addition, two important and vital forces helped him to a great extent to the restoration and expansion of the Saudi power in the area under study. These were the *mutawwa*, a religious specialists and the *ikhwan*, tribal military force. The former were active agents in the unification of the Arabian Peninsula towards the ultimate aim of state building. They also acted as a pre-existing force ready to be mobilised in the service of the state. In contrast, the *ikhwan* were a crucial military force created as a result of the *mutawwa*'s efforts for the purpose of Saudi expansion and consolidation.

In order to draw the attention of the British Ibn Sa'ud then decided to occupy Hasa, on way to the Persian Gulf. He occupied it in 1913. But the British continued showing their reluctance to Saudi overtures. They rather advised him to come to terms with the Ottomans. As a result, Ottoman-Saudi Treaty was signed in 1914. In the treaty it was stated that Najd should remain the territory of Ibn Sa'ud and should go to his sons and grandsons by imperial *firman*. The convention also forbade Ibn Sa'ud from entering into treaty relations with foreign powers, or granting concessions to foreigners in his territories. The declining Ottoman Empire had to accept the *fait accompli* of the occupation of Hasa by Ibn Sa'ud in 1913. Since it was not possible to reverse the situation, the Ottomans had no other alternative but to recognize Ibn Sa'ud as the *de facto* ruler of Najd.

As soon as the Great catastrophe approached in 1914 the contending parties pursued the policy of least possible facilities. The Ottoman officials were not an exception in this regard. During the war, they exerted their energies to reconcile the two rulers in Najd, Ibn Sa'ud and Sa'ud Ibn Abdul Aziz Ibn Rashid with the hope of obtaining a promise of their military co-operation and assistance. The perpetual enmity between Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid was too deep rooted to permit the two rulers' collaboration as desired by the Porte. In addition, Ibn Sa'ud did not think it wise to offer an active support to the Turks at the cost of endangering the security of his newly occupied economically potential area Hasa by making them vulnerable to British bombardment. At the same time, Ibn Sa'ud viewed any future Turkish victory in the war as a potential threat to his much cherished idea of political hegemony and independence. It is in this diplomatic context that before 1914 and after Ibn Sa'ud made numerous efforts to open negotiation with the British with a view to bolstering his position against the Turks. Consequently the very idea of fighting Britain on behalf of the Porte had practically no appeal for him and it is quite doubtful whether Ibn Sa'ud even casually considered it.

On the contrary, as a big power Britain equally also did not fail to find out allies in the Arabian Peninsula to the cause of its own interest against the rival Ottoman Empire. The search for local allies in the area especially in Najd was essential for Britain because on the basis of their support she wanted to extinguish the Ottoman control in the region. The outbreak of the First World War induced the British in moulding and formulating the war-time policy towards the Middle East including the Arabian Peninsula. It is to be noted that throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century British policy towards the Ottoman Empire was to preserve the integrity of Turkey to combat Russian policy of dividing the property of the 'sick man' among the then European powers having no well-agreed formula for the same. In this phase of the Eastern Question Britain inspired Turkey to initiate internal reforms to face external pressure. But Turkish entry in the war in favour of Germany fully upset this British policy. Henceforth, the security of the British imperial life line through the Suez Canal became a corner stone of British war-time policy in the Middle East. The prevailing context persuade Britain to formulate her war-time policy to the Porte and other emerging local powers in the area under study.

It is to be noted at this stage that Turkish entry in the war and the possibility of the proclamation of *jihad* (religious war) by the *Sultan-Caliph* worried the British Government to a great extent. This may be attributed to the fact that by this time a few Arabs who could be used to protect the British interest in the area were imbued with the western idea of territorial nationalism. Rather most of the Arabs being illiterate and politically indifferent, responded to, on the whole, the *jihad* call of the Porte. In addition, the British apprehended that this proclamation of the *Sultan* would affect their position in India and Egypt as the Muslims of both the countries did have great sympathy and respect for the Ottoman *Sultan-Caliph*.

Under the situation, being frightened about the future status of the Arabian Peninsula the British decided to reverse the pre-war policy and put emphasis on creating their allies in the area under study. Hence, the policy

pursued so far towards Ibn Suad also changed. In this context the British Government sent its representative captain Shakespear to Ibn Sa'ud with the purpose of securing his goodwill and inducing him not to support the Ottomans in the event of hostilities. The purpose of the British envoy was to conclude a treaty with Ibn Sa'ud similar to treaties concluded earlier with the Gulf coastal rulers. Shakespear performed his diplomatic role and promoted the idea that Britain would gain control of the western littoral of the Gulf, control the arms traffic, and exclude all foreign powers from central Arabia. But fortune did not favour Shakespear to fulfill the aim of his mission because he lost his life in the battle of Jarrab that took place between Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid in 1915, before finalising the terms of the treaty.

In spite of the death of Shakespear the motive of his mission was successful because Ibn Sa'ud had to sign the Anglo-Saudi Treaty on 26 December 1915. While Britain sanctioned and recognized that Najd Hasa, Qatif, and Jubayl and their dependencies are the territories of Ibn Sa'ud. In addition, the British government agreed to come forward to the aid of Ibn Sa'ud if any sort of aggression was led against these territories. As a result of signing this treaty British government helped Ibn Sa'ud in respect of materials and money. He received 1,000 rifles and a sum of £5,000 and regular supply of machine guns and rifles. Ibn Sa'ud continued to receive this subsidy until 1924.

Ibn Sa'ud agreed not to 'enter into any correspondence, agreement or treaty with any foreign nation or power, and refrain from all aggression on, or interference with the territories of Kuwait, and Bahrain, and of the *Shaikhs* of Qatar and the Oman coast, who are under the protection of the British government, and who have treaty relations with the said government'. Through some other representatives in the Persian Gulf the British expressed their desire for Ibn Sa'ud's co-operation in the liberation of Basra from the Ottomans or alternatively prevent any Ottoman reinforcement from reaching Basra until the British arrive to seize the place, and protect British subjects and goods from plunder. This situation helped to increase Ibn Sa'ud's

bargaining position towards his independent existence. He was able to get assurance from Britain for his protection from an Ottoman attack or act of hostility by sea, recognition of his independence in Najd and Hasa and the conclusion of an Anglo-Saudi Treaty congenial for Saudi interest. Though the treaty was concluded in 1915, the British did not find any possibility of getting Saudi help since it became clear to them that Ibn Sa'ud was not in a position to defy openly the *jihad* call of the Porte. Ibn Sa'ud's failure in a war against Ibn Rashid was also an addition to this British susceptibility.

This situation alarmed the British to a great extent. Hence to defy the *jihad* call of the *Sultan* they were looking for an ally in the area understudy who could best suit their political as well as military purposes. This they found in Husain Ibn Ali, the governor of Mecca. As a member of the Prophet's family and custodian of the Holy places Husain, the Arab nationalist leader, was chosen for serving the purpose of the British against the Ottomans. The subsequent understanding between the British and *Sharif* Husain led the latter to raise the standard of revolt against the Porte. Although this revolt did not turn into an uprising on a large scale, it had a profound bearing on the shaping of the Arab world.

It is remarkable that in spite of pursuing pro-Hashimite policy the British policy makers did not fail to neglect Ibn Sa'ud considering his potentiality in the future Peninsular politics. Rather the comparative political and military potentials of both of the personalities created serious differences of opinion among the British policy makers. Some were of opinion that the political and military potential of Ibn Sa'ud was greatly overshadowed by the actual power of Husain. Using the same scale of religious, political, strategic and military importance, it became apparent to many that Ibn Sa'ud ran *Sharif* Husain a very bad second at the outset of the war and for sometime to come. From religious view point, Ibn Sa'ud stood at the head of a movement which was looked upon with a mixture of fear and disdain by many Muslims. Naturally his importance in this field was, in comparison to Husain, manifestly

negligible. Politically the Wahhabi leader had no influence outside the confines of central and eastern Arabia. Hence, in the context of prevailing political and strategic situations in the area under study, the British officials responsible for Arab affairs during the war, disagreed with each other over the question of evaluation of Husain and Ibn Sa'ud. In the midst of such conflicting views pursued by the British policy-making centres, the British officials during the war period compromised with each other by supporting with arms and money both Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain, although the latter received the lion's share.

Mention may be made that towards the end of the war there opened a new era of British diplomacy vis a vis *Sharif* Husain and Ibn Sa'ud. In spite of being an *Amir* under the Ottomans, Husain proclaimed himself as 'the King of the Arabs' but it was a wider demand and hence the British and the French considering his role in the Arab revolt recognized him as the King of the Hejaz only in 1917. But this created a serious rivalry between Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain in which the British diplomacy had to play its own role. During this period the British were anxious about Wahhabi attack on Hejaz. But the British diplomatic agent like H.St.J.B. Philby advised Ibn Sa'ud not to take up arms against *Sharif* Husain. Under the circumstances, Ibn Sa'ud had to wait for an opportune time till the end of the war and the cessation of war subsidies from the British. As a diplomatic step Ibn Sa'ud proceeded to consolidate his power in those parts of the Arabian Peninsula where he could not afford to antagonize the British.

So was the case with the Rashidi *emirate* of Hail. It is noticed that Ibn Rashid failed to make any friendship with a big power like Britain. He rather kept himself away from Britain as he continued his fragile alliance with the Ottomans, and naturally Hail remained within the Ottoman sphere of influence during the war. Rivalry that took place earlier between Ibn Sa'ud and Ibn Rashid in central Arabia continued during the war, and it strengthened their hostilities. Their rivalry was fuelled by a clearer demarcation of alliances.

Britain encouraged and pushed Ibn Sa'ud to launch an attack on Hail in 1917 because its rulers were pro-Ottomans. But no major success was achieved, and Ibn Sa'ud took advantage of the war to request further help from Britain against Ibn Rashid. Ibn Sa'ud argued and claimed that the terrain between Qasim and Hail was barren ground and this would inevitably make it difficult for his troops to survive. In addition he argued that Hail was well fortified and difficult to conquer with the weapons in his possession. Britain agreed to assist him with 1,000 rifles and 100,000 pounds to annex the Rashidi capital. During the war, however, Ibn Sa'ud failed to add Hail to his realm.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the pro-Turkish *Amir* of the Jabal Shammar fell on an easy prey into the hands of Ibn Sa'ud. In the summer of 1921 Ibn Sa'ud's chief captain, Faisalud Dawish, attacked the Jabal Shammar in force; defeated the reigning *Amir* Abdullah b. Mitabi'r -Rashid, in a series of engagements until he forced him to surrender; and thereafter defeated the *Amir's* cousin, Muhammad b. Titali'r Rashid, and drove him behind the wall of Ha'il. Early in November 1921, Ha'il surrendered after a two month's siege; the surviving members of the House of Rashid were carried captive to Riyadh; and their dominions were annexed to those of Ibn Sa'ud. The conqueror, who in the meantime had been proclaimed *Sultan* of the Najd, acted with statesmanlike moderation. While a small garrison of Wahhabis was posted in the citadel of Hail, the governorship of Jabal Shammar was conferred upon Ibrahimu's Subhan, the head of a family which had served the Rashidis as wazirs and was related to them by marriage. In their exile at Riyadh, the fallen Rashidis were treated with honour. After extending his kingdom, Ibn Sa'ud took up the work of conciliation and consolidation. In 1922 he defeated the Rawalah tribe and occupied the Oasis of Jauf, a very important halting station on the trade route between Ha'il and Damascus.

The incident that took place during the inter-war period paved the way for future hostility between Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif* Husain. The British diplomacy over the issue played its own role to bring the result of the rivalry to their



political advantage. Though Husain was recognized the King of Hejaz, Ibn Sa'ud proved his armed superiority over the former by recapturing Khurma and Turaba after the war. By 1924 Husain's position became precarious when British subsidies were suspended. In addition having no formal treaty with the British Husain became more helpless. Britain was tired of *Sharif* Husain for his unacceptable excessive demands and taking arms as a threat to the British interests in the area under study. Britain was even happy to see *Sharif* Husain out from the political scene of the Peninsula, leaving his sons, Faisal and Abdullah on the thrones of two newly created monarchies in Iraq and Trans Jordan and respectively. Throughout the 1920s and after Britain played a vital role as an external player behind the formation of a durable and sustainable state of Saudi Arabia. So it is evident that unification of the Arabian Peninsula leading to the state formation under the leadership of Ibn Sa'ud was related to the context of British intervention and involvement in Middle Eastern Politics. British influence was paramount in the area under study before and after the First World War.

Realizing the gravity of the situation and taking the opportunity Ibn Sa'ud, who in the course of his rise was supported by the British Indian Government stood against the Hashimites and for international recognition of his status decided to occupy Hejaz till now under the control of *Sharif* Husain. During the following three years after 1922, relations between the *Sharif* of Mecca and Britain began to deteriorate. The *Sharif's* maladministration of the holy cities further isolated him from other Arab countries. When, in March 1924, the *Sharif* proclaimed himself king of Arabia and caliph of Islam, Ibn Sa'ud's patience ceased. Ibn Sa'ud at this moment decided to strike Husain when he assumed the title of caliph at Amman after its abolition in Turkey, Husain's latest provocation induced the British to remain neutral in the ensuing Najd-Hejaz war. Bolstered by the prevailing situation Ibn Sa'ud through successful military operations brought the fall of Husain and latter on his son Ali from Hejaz. In September of that year an army of the *Ikhwan* captured the city of Ta'if, with little delay and only minor

resistance, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina and the whole area of Hejaz came under the control of Ibn Sa'ud. This final consolidation of the Arabian kingdom was accomplished by the end of 1925. In the following year Ibn Sa'ud, responding to a popular demand from the people of Mecca, became the King of Hejaz and the *Sultan* of Najd and its Dependencies.

As soon as he occupied Hejaz, the British and Russian Governments offered their recognition to the Saudi potentate. This enhanced his prestige in international arena. But the occupation of Hejaz though brought international recognition, it created some other problems for Ibn Sa'ud. In addition to the difficult task of pacifying the Hejazis he was in need of bringing the Muslim communities into confidence particularly the Indians and Egyptians who extended their support for his attack and advance on the Hejaz. Ibn Sa'ud tried his level best to satisfy the Hejazis by introducing reforms and allowing them a proper share in the administration of the Holy Land. He also called a conference of the Muslim representatives whom he gave the right to discuss any matter pertaining to the Hejaz.

After the occupation of Hejaz in 1925, Ibn Sa'ud turned his attention towards Asir and declared his protectorate over it. With the passage of time, he faced the rebellion of its ruler who shook hands with the opponents of Ibn Sa'ud. He took actions against him and annexed Asir to his realm. Ibn Sa'ud declared the unification of his dominions in 1932 and gave the emergence of the state of Saudi Arabia. After the recovery of his ancestral domains he consolidated his power through the conclusions of treaties with Britain. The occupation of Hejaz facilitated further annexation in the north. At the same time it created some problems - internal and external. Ibn Sa'ud had to face and solve all these problems on his own way. This required to renew his treaty relations with Britain and to settle border disputes with Kuwait, Iraq and Trans Jordan by delimiting the boundary of his newly created state. He had

also to win Muslim opinion especially in India and Egypt in support of his post conquest policy in the Hejaz. He had to face the opposition and rebellion of the dissident *Ikhwan* leaders who demanded share in decision making policy of the state and stood against the policy of Ibn Sa'ud for the import of western technology for modernizing the medieval Saudi society and state. Latter on, the problem over the question of the frontiers between Yemen and Saudi Arabia was settled with the conclusion of the Treaty of Taif which brought an end to the feasibility of further Saudi expansion in the Arabian Peninsula beyond his realm.

It is noticed that this expansion and consolidation took place at a time when Arabia was gradually being drawn into the British sphere of influence after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of the First World War. It did not become a colony of the European imperialists similar to those of other Arab countries in the twentieth century. This sort of existence of central Arabia especially of Najd bears the testimony of its unique and independent history. But the success of the concerted efforts of Ibn Sa'ud led to the foundation of the modern state of Saudi Arabia. So Saudi Arabia did not inherit any colonial administration or it was not run by any sort of nationalist zeal like that of other areas of the Arab Middle East. Though the Arabian Peninsula was not brought under Britain as a colony, but British influence was paramount in the area during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Naturally it is difficult to imagine Ibn Sa'ud's successfully conquering one region after another without British blessings and subsidies.

It is quite discernable that Ibn Sa'ud's success was not a matter of chance, rather he achieved the success for his wise and calculative planning with regard to internal affairs and external matters. After a long and arduous struggle Ibn Sa'ud emerged as a successful conqueror, a statesman and a ruler. It may be remarked in nutshell that the Saudi dynasty under the leadership of Ibn Sa'ud

after seizing power in 1902 with the reoccupation of Riyadh from the hands of the Rashidi governor and afterwards unifying the major portion of the Arabian Peninsula within the first quarter of the twentieth century and consequently establishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 proved his capability as a unifier of the Arabian Peninsula bringing together under his rule the majority of the Peninsular diverse tribes. Charisma of Ibn Saud played a very vital role in this respect. The persuasion of charismatic strategy, coercion strategy and administrative control strategy brought fruitful result for him. The territorial expanse of unified regions under Ibn Sa'ud are roughly the Najd ("highland") in central Arabia; the Hejaz ("barrier") along the upper Red Sea coast; Asir ("difficult region") along the Red Sea between the Hejaz and Yemen and Hasa ("Sandy ground with water") along the Persian Gulf.

# Bibliography

## Published Documents

Hurewitz, J. C., *Diplomacy in the Near and the Middle East, A Documentary Record: 1914-1956*, Vol. II, Princeton: D Van Nostrand Company, INC, 1956.

Lorimer, J.G., *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, Vol. 2, Calcutta: Government Print House, 1908.

## Published Books

Abu Hakima, A. (ed.), *Lam' al-Shihab fi sirat al-Shaikh muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahhab* [The brilliance of the meteor in the life of Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhab], Beirut: 1967.

Abu Hakima, Ahmed Mustofa, *History of Eastern Arabia 1750-1800: The Rise and Development of Bahrain and Kuwait*, Beirut: Khayat's, 1965.

*Admiralty Handbook of Arabia*, London: HMSO (Naval Intelligence Division).

Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Snads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Vol. II, Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1933.

Al-Angari, H., *The Struggle for Power in Arabia: Ibn Sa'ud, Hussein and Great Britain, 1914-1924*, Reading, Ithaca Press, 1998.

Al-Azmeh, A. *Islam and Modernity*, London: Verso, 1993.

al-Bassam, A., *'Ulama najd khilal sital qurun* [Najdi 'ulama during six centuries], Mecca: al-Nahda al-Haditha, 1918.

Al-Rashid, I. *The Struggle between the Two Princes: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Final Days of Ibn Sa'ud*, Salisbury, NC: Documentary Publications, 1985.

al-Siba'i, A., *Tarikh mecca* [A history of Mecca], 1984.

Al-Zirkili, K. *Shibh al-jazira fi' and al-malik 'Abd al-'Aziz (The Arabian Peninsula during the period of King 'Ahd al' Aziz)*, 1st (edn), vol. 4, Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1970.

Anderson, M. S., *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations*, London: Macmillan, 1966.

- Anscombe, F., *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of Arab National Movement*, New York: Hamilton, 1958.
- Area Handbook for Saudi Arabia*, Washington D.C., US Government Printing Office, 1971.
- Armstrong, C. Harold, *Lord of Arabia, Ibn Sa'ud: An Intimate Study of the King*, London: Arthur Berker Ltd., 1934
- Ayubi, N., *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, London: Routledge, 1991.
- Aziz, K. K., *Britain and Muslim India*, London: Heinemann, 1963.
- , *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1967.
- Bamford, P. C., *Histories of the Non-Co-operation and Khilafat Movements*.
- Bang, A. *The Idrisi State in 'Asir 1906-1934: Political, Religious and Personal Prestige as State Building Factors in the Early Twentieth Century*, Bergen: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1996.
- , *The Idrisi State in 'Asir 1906-1934: Political, Religious and Personal Prestige as State Building Factors in the Early Twentieth Century*, Bergen: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1996.
- Berger, Morre, *The Arab World Today*, New York: Doubleday, 1962.
- Bligh, A., *From Prince to King: Royal Succession in the House of Saud in the Twentieth Century*, New York: New York University Press, 1984.
- Blunt, A., *A Pilgrimage to Nejd, the Cradle of the Arab Race: A Visit to the Court of the Arab Emir and our Persian Campaign*, Vol. 2, London: Jhon Murray, 1968.
- Bourne, K and Watt, D. C. (eds.), *Studies in International History* (London: 1967).
- Brown, Edward Hoagland, *The Saudi Arabia-Kuwait Neutral Zone*, Beirut: Middle East Research and Publishing Centre, 1963.
- Busch, C. Briton, *Britain and the Persian Gulf 1894-1914*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928.

- , *Britain, India and the Arabs 1914-1921*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.
- , *Persian Gulf: An Historical sketch from the Earliest Times to the beginning of the Twentieth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.
- Cash, Wilson, *The Muslim World in Revolution*, London: 1925.
- Cook, M., "The Expansion of the First Saudi State: The Case of Wahhabism", in C. Bosworth, C. Issawi, R. Savory and A. Udovitch (eds.), *The Islamic World: From Classical to Modern Times*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1988.
- Dickson, H.R.P., *Kuwait and Her Neighbours*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956.
- , *The Arab of the Desert*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1949.
- Doughty, C., *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 2.
- Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition, Vol. II.
- Farsy, Al Fouad, *Saudi Arabia: A Case Study in Development*, London: Stacey International, first published, 1978, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1980.
- Fattah, H., *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia and the Gulf 1745-1900*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Fisher, N. Sydney, (ed.), *Social Forces in the Middle East*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955.
- , *The Middle East A History*, London: 1960, reprinted in 1966, second edition, 1971.
- Fisher, W. B., *The Middle East A Physical, Social and Regional Geography*, London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., first published 1950, third edition 1956.
- Frye, N. Richard, *The Near East and the Great Powers*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951.
- Gaury, de Gerald, *Rulers of Mecca*, London: George Harrap & Co., 1951.
- Graves, Philip, *The Life of Percy Cox*, London: 1941.

- H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (ed.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: 1953.
- Habib, J. S., *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910-1930*, Leiden: Brill, 1978.
- Hamza, F., *Qalb al-Jazira al-'Arabiyya* [The heart of the Arabian Peninsula] 1936.
- Hay, Rupert, *The Persian Gulf States*, Washington: Middle East Institute, 1959.
- Haykal, Husain, Muhammad, *The Life of Muhammad*, translated from the 8<sup>th</sup> edition by Ismail Ragi A. al Faruqi, Delhi: New Crescent Publishing Co., 1976.
- Helms, C. Moss, *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, London: Croom Helm, 1981.
- Hitti, P.K., *History of the Arabs*, London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., first edition, 1937, reprinted 1972.
- Hogarth, D.G., *Arabia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922.
- , *Hejaz before World War I: A Handbook*, Cambridge: Oleander press, 1917.
- , *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Sa'ud*, London: Collins, 1964.
- , *The Penetration of Arabia*, London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1904.
- , *The Penetration of Arabia*, London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1904.
- Holden, D. and P. Johns, *The House of Saud*, London: Sidgwick, 1981.
- Holt, M. Peter, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, 1566-1922*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Holt, P. M., Ann K. S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 1A, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, reprinted 1979.
- Hopkins, L. Halford, *British Routes to India*, New York: Longmans Green, 1928.
- Hopwood, Derek (ed.), *The Arabian Peninsula Society and Politics*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972.



- Hourani, Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Howarth, David, *The Desert King: Ibn Sa'ud and His Arabia*, New York: Mc Graw- Hill, 1964.
- Hurewitz, J. C., *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Vol. 1, Princeton: D Van Nostrand Company Limited, Inc. 1956.
- , *Middle East Dilemmas*, New York: Harper, 1953.
- , *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension*, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.
- Ibn Bishr, O. *Unwan al-majd fi tarikh Najd* [Glory in the history of Najd], vol. 2, Mecca: 1930.
- Ibn Ghanam, H. *Tarikh najd* (The history of Najd), vol. 2, Cairo: 1970.
- Imamuddin, S. M, *A Modern History Of The Middle East and North Africa*, (1258-19390), Vol. 1, Dacca: Najma Sons, First Published, 1960, second edition, 1970.
- Iqbal, Afzal, *Life and Times of Mohammad Ali*.
- Kelly, J. B., *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1755-1880*, London: Asia Publising House, 1908.
- , *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*, London: Faber and Faber, 1964.
- Khaliquzzaman, Chowdhury, *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lahore: Longmans, 1961.
- Kiernan, R. H., *The unveiling of Arabia*, London: George Harrap & Co., 1937.
- Kirk, George E., *A Short History of The Middle East from the Rise of Islam to Modern Times*, New York: Praeger, 1955.
- Kishk, M., *Al-Sa'udiyyun Wa al-Hal al-Islami* [The Sa'udis and the Islamic solution], Massachusetts: 1981.
- Kohn, Hans, *A History of Nationalism in the East*, Margaret M. Green trans., New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929.
- Kumar, Rovinder, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1998-1880*, Oxford: 1968.
- , *India and the Persian Gulf Region 1858-1907: A Study in British Imperial policy*, Bombay: 1965.

- Laquer, Z. Walter, (ed.), *The Middle East in Transition*, New York: Prager, 1958.
- Leatherdale, C., *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925-1939: The Imperial Oasis*, London: Frank Cass, 1983.
- Lewis, Bernard and Holt, M. Peter, (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Lewis, Bernard, *The Arabs in History*, London: The Anchor Press Ltd., first published 1950, second edition, 1954, 1960.
- , *The Middle East and the West*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
- Lewis, Pelly, *Report on a Journey to the Wahabee Capital Riyadh in Central Arabia*, Bombay: 1866.
- Long, D., *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997.
- Lorimer, J. G. *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, vol. 2, Calcutta: Government Print House, 1908.
- Lyell, Thomas, *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia*, London: 1923.
- Marlowe, John, *Arab Nationalism and British Imperialism*, London: The Cresset Press, 1961.
- Marlowe, John, *The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century*, London: The Cresset Press, 1961.
- Marriot, J. A. R., *The Eastern Question: An Historical Study in European Diplomacy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917.
- Meulen, Van de Daniel, *The Wells of Ibn Sa'ud*, New York: Praeger, 1957.
- Monroe, Elizabeth, *Philby of Arabia*, London: Faber & Faber, 1974.
- , *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-1956*, London: John Hopkin's Press, 1963.
- Morris, James, *The Hashimite Kings*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1959.
- Mu'inuddin Ahmad Khan, *History of the Fara'idi Movement in Bengal*, Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1965.
- Musil, A., *Nothern Negd*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1928.

- Neibuhr, Carsten, *Travels Through Arabia and the other Countries in the East*, vol. II, trans., into English by R. Heron, Edinburgh: 1792.
- Nejla, Izzeddin, *The Arab World, Past, Present and Future*, Chicago: Henry Regenery, 1953.
- Nevakivi, J., *Britain, France and the Arab Middle East, 1914-1920*, London: 1969.
- Niblock, T. (ed.), *State, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hejaz under Ottoman Control 1940-1908*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984.
- Nicolson, A. Reynold, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953.
- Niemeijer, A. C., *The Khilafat Movement in India (1919-1924)*, Delhi: Nijhoff, 1972.
- Ochsenwald, W., *Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hejaz under Ottoman Control 1840-1908*, Columbus: Ohio State University press, 1984.
- P. Khoury and J. Kostiner (eds.), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1991.
- Palgrave, W. G., *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, vol. I, London: 1865.
- Peretz, Don, *The Middle East Today*, Praeger: Praeger Special Studies, Praeger Scientific, 1983.
- Peters, F., *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Peterson, J., *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia*, Metuchen: Scarecrow press, 1993.
- Philby, H. St J. B., *Arabia of the Wahhabis*, London: Constable, 1928.
- , *Arabia*, New York, Scribner, 1955.
- , *Arabian Jubilee*, London: Robert Hale, 1952.
- , *Forty years of Wilderness*, London: Robert Hale, 1957.
- , *Saudi Arabia*, London: I.B., Tauris, 1991.

- , *The Heart of Arabia*, Vol. 2, London: G.P. Putnam, 1922.
- Puryear, J. Vernon, *International Economics and Diplomacy in the Near East, 1834-1853*, Stamford: Stamford University Press, 1935.
- Rasheed, Al Midawi, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- , *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1991.
- Rihani, A., *Ibn Sa'ud of Arabia*, London: Constable & Co. Ltd. 1928.
- , *Ibn Saoud of Arabia, Maker of Modern Arabia*, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1930.
- Safran, N. *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Salame, G., "Political Power and the Saudi State", in A. Hourani, P. Khoury and M. Wilson (eds.), *The Middle East: A Reader*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1993.
- Sanger, H. Richard, *The Arabian Peninsula*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954.
- Shamiyyah, J., *Al-Sa'ud: Madihun Wa Hadiruhun* [Al Sa'ud: their past and present], London: 1986.
- Sharabi, H.B., *Government and Politics of the Middle East in the Twentieth Century*, Princeton: D. Van Company, Inc. 1962.
- Sluglett, P. and Sluglett, M. "The Precarious Monarchy: Britain, Abdul Aziz Ibn Sa'ud and the Establishment of the Kingdom of Hejaz Najd and its Dependencies, 1925-1932", in Niblock (ed.), *State, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hejaz under Ottoman Control 1940-1908*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984.
- Stein, Leonard, *The Balfour Declaration*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1961.
- Steinberg, G., "The Shites in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia (al-Ahasa'), 1913-1953", in R. Brunner and W. Ende (eds.), *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History*, Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Steiner, M. G., *Inside Pan- Arabia*, Chicago: Packard and Company, 1947.

- Storrs, Ronald. *The Rise and Fall of the Hashemite Kingdom of Arabia*, London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001.
- , *Orientations*, London: Nicholson and Watson, 1937.
- The Middle East and North Africa 1976-1977*, London: Europa Publications Ltd.
- Toynbee, J. Arnold, *Survey of International Affairs, 1925*, Vol. 1, London: Oxford University Press, 1927.
- Troeller, G. *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Saud*, London: Frank Cass, 1976.
- Twitchell, K. *Saudi Arabia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947, second edition, 1953 and third edition, 1958.
- Vander Meulen, D. *The Wells of Ibn Sa'ud*, London: John Murray, 1957.
- Vassiliev, A. *The History of Saudi Arabia*, London: Saqi Books, 1998.
- Vidal F. S., *The Oasis of al-Hasa*, Dahrán: Arabian American Oil Co., 1955.
- Wahba, H. *Arabian Days*, London: Arthur Barker Ltd, 1964.
- Watt, W. Montgomery, *Mohammad, Prophet and Statesman*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Williams, K., *Ibn Sa'ud the Puritan King of Arabia*, London: Cape, 1933.
- Wilson, P. and D. Graham, *Saudi Arabia: The Coming Storm*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1994.
- Wilson, T. Arnold, *The Persian Gulf*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1954.
- , *The Persian Gulf: An Historical Sketch from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1939.
- Winder, R. Bayly, *Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1965.
- , *Saudi Arabian the Nineteenth Century*, New York: St., Martin's Press, 1966.
- Winston, Haroy V. F., *Captain Shakespear: A portrait*, London: 1976.

Yale, William, *The Near East: A Modern History*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958.

Yizraeli, S., *The Remaking of Saudi Arabia*, Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle East and African Studies, 1997.

Young, Major Sir Hubert W., *The Independent Arab*, London: John Murray, 1933.

———, *The Independent Iraq*, London: John Murray, 1933.

Zeine N. Zeine, *Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, Beirut: 1958.

———, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Faisal's Kingdom in Syria* (Beirut: Khayat's, 1960).

### Unpublished Thesis

Al-Juhany, M. "The History of Najd prior to the Wahhabis: A Study of Social, Political, Economic and Religious Conditions in Najd during Three Centuries preceding the Wahhabi Reform Movement", Ph.D thesis, University of Washington, 1983.

Colman, R.L., "Revolt in Arabia, 1916-1919: Conflict and Coalition in a tribal Political System", Unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1976

Farra, T. El, "The Effects of Detribalizing the Bedouins of Internal Cohesion of an Emerging State: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pittsburg: 1973

Goldberg, Jacob, "The Foreign Policy of the Third Saudi State, 1902-1918", Harvard University, 1978.

Goldrup, L. P., "Saudi Arabia 1902-1932: The Development of a Wahhabi Society", Unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of California: Los Angeles, 1971

Winder, R. Bayly, "A History of the Saudi State from 1232/1818 until 1308/1891", Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Princeton University, 1950.

### Short Papers

Bari, M. A., "The Early Wahhabis and the Sharifs of Mecca", *Journal of Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. III, 1953.

———, "The Early Wahhabis: Some Contemporary Assessments", *Rajshahi University Studies*, Vol. III, January, 1970.

Crawford, M., "Civil War, Foreign Intervention, and the Quest for Political Legitimacy: A Nineteenth-century Saudi Qadi's Dilemma", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 14, 1982.

Cunningham, A., "The Wrong Horse - A study of Anglo Turkish Relations Before the First World War", St. Antony's papers, No. 17, *Middle Eastern Affairs*, No. 4, 1965.

Dawn, C.E., "From Ottomanism to Arabism", *Review of Politics*, Vol. XXIII, 1962.

———, "The Amir of Mecca al-Husain Ibn Ali and the Origin of the Arab Revolt", *Proceeding of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. CIV, 1960.

Goldberg, Jacob, "Philby as a Source of Early Twentieth Century Saudi History: A critical Examination", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, April, 1985, No. 2.

———, "The 1913 Saudi occupation of Hasa Reconsidered", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January, 1982.

———, "The 1914 Saudi-Ottoman Treaty: Myth or Reality", *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 19, 1984.

Haq, Ziaul, "Inter-Regional and International Trade in Pre-Islamic Arabia", *The Islamic Studies*, Vol. VII, No.3, Karachi, September, 1968.

Hogarth, D.G., "Wahhabism and British Interests", *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. IV, 1925.

Kelly, J. B., "Mehmet Ali's Expedition to the Persian Gulf, 1837-1840" *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 1 & 2, No. 4 & 1, 1965, Frank Cass, London.

———, "Review of R.B. Winder's Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth century", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1966, published by Frank Cass, London.

- Khan, Ali Asgar, "The Assumption of Caliphal Office by *Sharif Husain*-Its Reaction in India", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. xxii, No. 3, December, 1977.
- , "The Balkan War: Its Repercussions in India" *The Rajshahi University Studies*, vol. v, 1973.
- Khan, Rasheeduddin, "The Arab Revolt of 1916-1918", *Islamic Culture*, Vol. xxxv, No. 1, January 1961.
- Kostiner, Joseph, "On the instruments and their Designers: The Ikhwan of Najd and the Emergence of the Saudi State", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3, July, 1982.
- Pelly, L., "A Visit to the Wahabee Capital, Central Arabia", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. XXXV, 1865.
- Philby H. St. J.B., "The Triumph of the Wahhabis", *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XIII, Part-IV, 1926.
- , "Trans Jordan", *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. II, 1924.
- Rentaz., G.S., "Dickson's Arab of the Desert", *The Muslim World*, Vol. XLI, 1951.
- Rosenfeld, H., "The Iraq-Najd Frontier", *Journal of the Central Asian Society*, Vol. XVII, Part-1, 1930.
- , "The Social Composition of the Military in the process of State Formation in the Arabian Desert", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1965.
- Saud M. Al-Otaibi, "The Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East Reconsidered: A Case Study of Saudi Arabia", *Journal of King Saud University*, Vol. 10, Admin Sci. (2), AH., 1418/1998.
- Silverfarb, David, "The Anglo-Najd Treaty of December, 1915", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, October, 1980.
- Teitelbaum, J., "Sharif Husain ibn 'Ali and the Hashemite Vision of the Post-Ottoman Order: From Chieftaincy to Suzerainty", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34/1, 1998.
- Toynbee, A., "The Rise of the Wahhabi Power" and "The Delimitation of Frontiers", *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, Vol. 1, 1927.
- Troeller, G., "Ibn Sa'ud and *Sharif Husain*: A Comparison in Importance in the Early years of the First World War", *Historical journal*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1971.



**Journals and Periodicals**

British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies

Current History

Foreign Affairs

Historical Journal

International Journal of Middle East Studies

Journal of Contemporary History

Journal of Pakistan Historical Society

Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs

Journal of the Central Asian Society

Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute

Journal of the Royal Geographical Society

Middle East International

Middle East Journal

Proceeding of the American Philosophical Society

Rajshahi University Studies

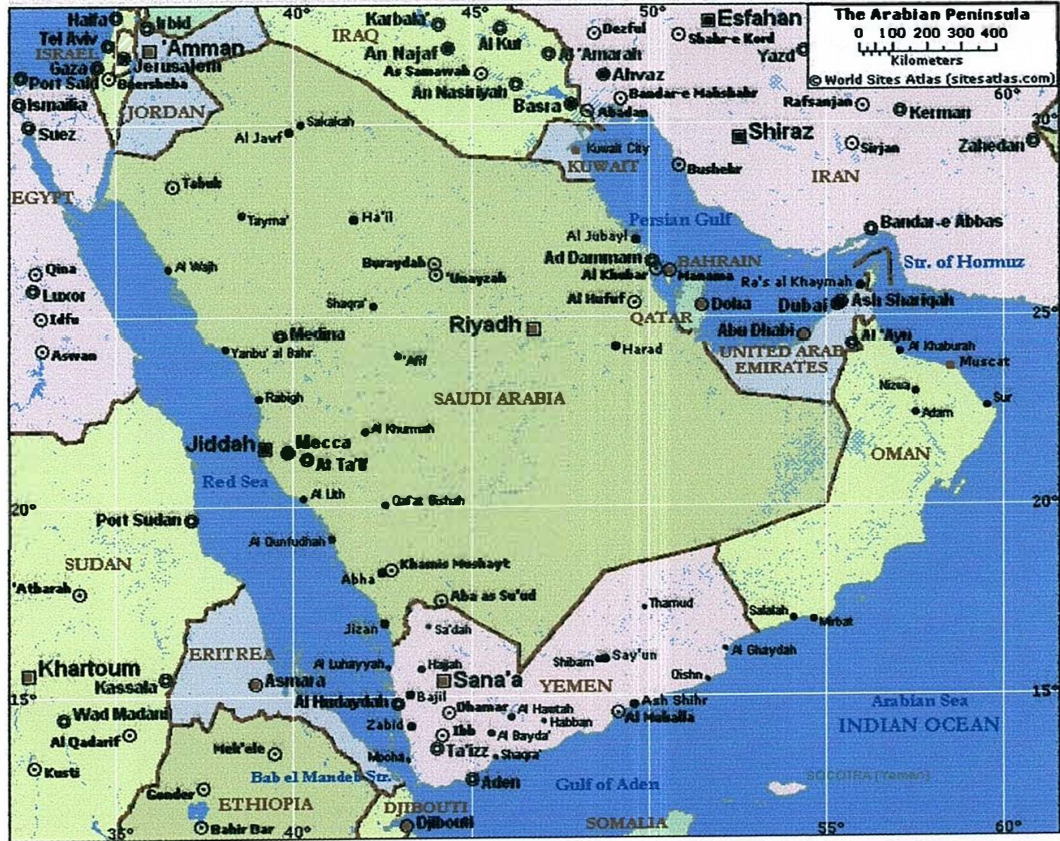
Review of Politics

The Middle Eastern Studies

The Muslim World

# Appendix I

## Political Map of the Arabian Peninsula



Map: World Sites Atlas

Appendix II

Political Map of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Map: World Sites Atlas

## Appendix III

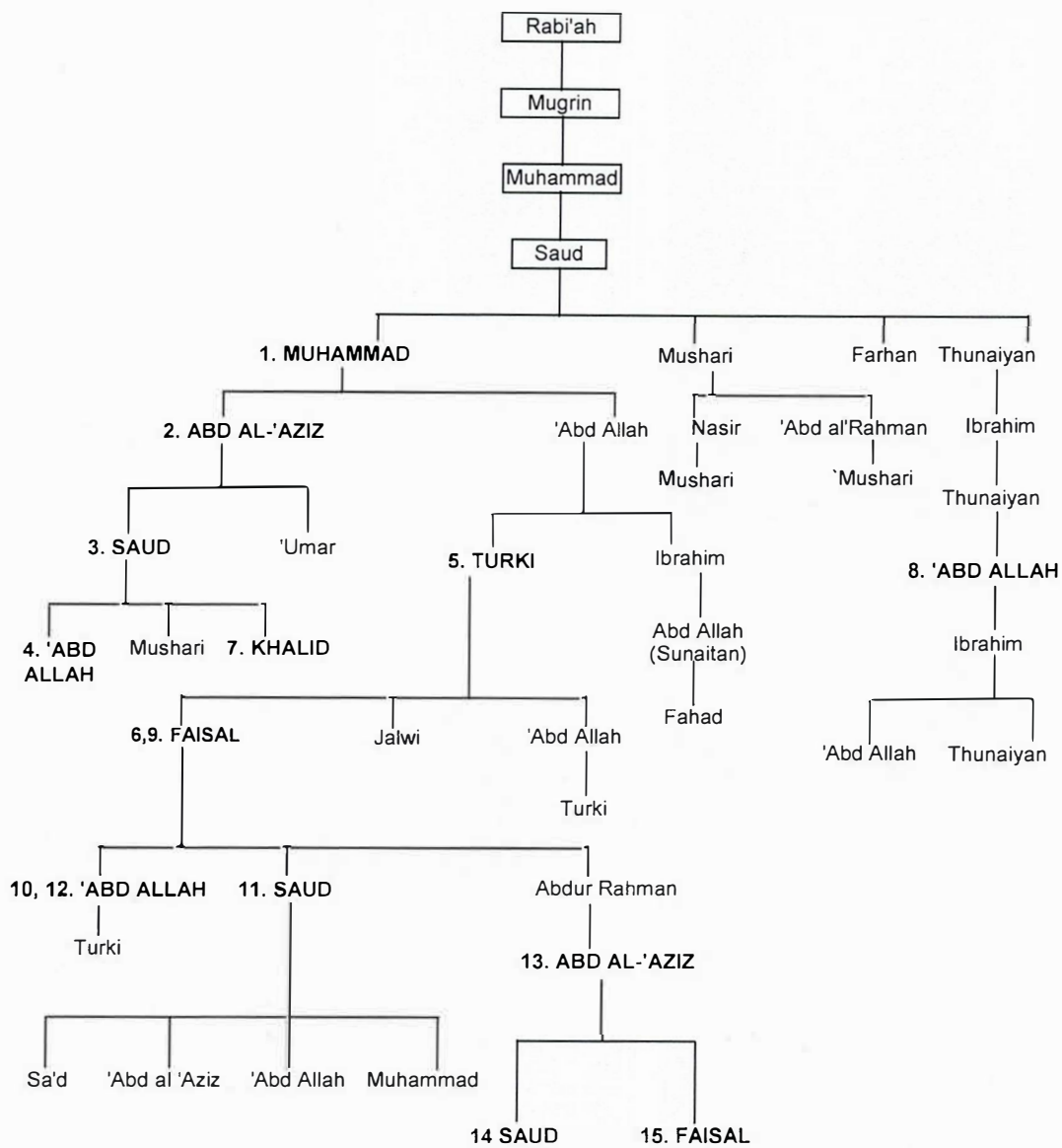
## Political Map of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia, Main Tribes, Source: D. Schofield and R. Kemp, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (London: Stacey International, 1990), Courtesy of Stacey International.

Appendix IV

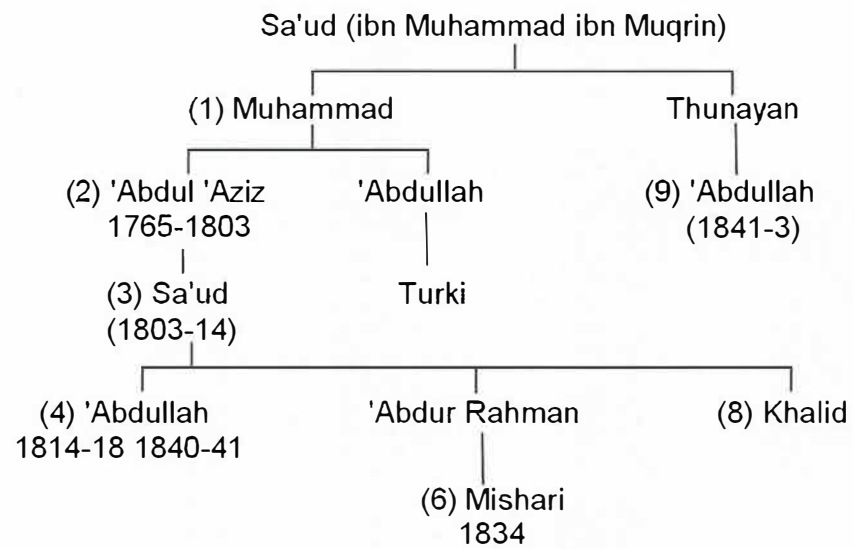
Abbreviated Genealogy of the House of Sa'ud (Numbers and capitalisation indicate the line of major rulers)



GENEALOGY TAKEN FROM WINDER PAGE 279

## Appendix V

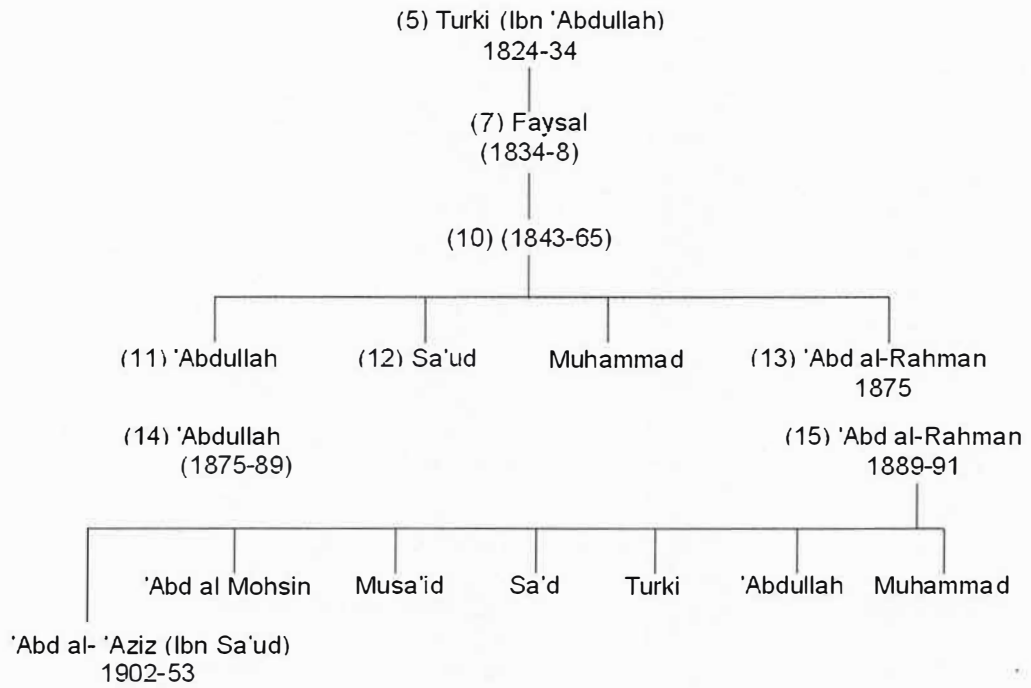
## AL SA'UD RULERS IN DAR'IYAH (1744-1818)



GENEALOGY TAKEN FROM *MIDAWI AL-RASHEED* PAGE 224

## Appendix VI

### AL SA'UD RULERS IN RIYADH (1824-1891)



For Rulers 6, 7 & 8 see Appedix IV

GENEALOGY TAKEN FROM MIDAWI AL-RASHEED PAGE 225

**Appendix VII**  
**Translation**  
**of**  
**Treaty between Ibn Sa'ud and the Turks.**  
**Dated 4th Rajab 1332-15th May 1914.**

(Original found among Turkish records at Basrah)

**Wali of the Vilayet of Basrah. Suleiman Shafik bin Ali Kamali.**

*Article 1.* This Treaty is signed and executed between the *Wali* and Commandant of Basrah, Suleiman Shafik Pasha, who is specially empowered by Imperial Iradeh, and H.E. Abdul Aziz Pasha Al-Saood *Wali* and Commandant of Najd: This Treaty is relied on by the Imperial Government and consists of 12 articles, explaining secret matters mentioned in the Imperial Firman dated ..... With reference to the Vilayet of Najd. The text of this Treaty shall be secret, and relied upon.

*Article 2.* The Vilayet of Najd is to remain in charge of Abdul Aziz Pasha Al-Saood so long as he is alive, according to the Imperial Firman.

After him it will go to his sons and grandsons by Imperial Firman, provided that he shall be loyal to the Imperial Government and to his forefathers, the previous Valis.

*Article 3.* A Technical Military Official shall be appointed by the said *Wali* and Commandant (i.e. Bin Saud) to live wherever he wishes: if he sees fit and necessary he may introduce Turkish Officers for the fundamental technical training of Local Troops, and their number shall depend upon the choice and wishes of the said *Wali* and Commandant (i.e. Ibn Sa'ud).

*Article 4.* A number of soldiers and gendarmerie, as deemed fit by the *Wali* and Commandant aforesaid, shall be stationed at seaports such as Katif, and Ojair, &c.

*Article 5.* All the business of the Customs, Taxes, Ports and Light houses shall be exercised subject to the international rights of Governments, and shall be conducted according to the principles of the Turkish Government under the direction of the said *Wali* and Commandant.

*Article 6.* Till the sources of the revenues reach a degree sufficient to meet the requirements of the Vilayet and the local expenditure and military dispositions according to the present circumstances and normal conditions of Najd, the deficiency in the budget shall be met from the Customs, Posts, Telegraphs and Ports revenue; and if there is a surplus, it should be sent to the Porte with a report.

If the local revenue is sufficient to meet all expenses, the income of the Posts, Telegraphs and Customs shall be remitted to their respective Departments. Also as regards local incomes other than those mentioned above, if there is any surplus, 10 per cent of it shall be sent to the Government Treasury.

*Article 7.* The Turkish flag shall be hoisted on all Government buildings and places of importance on the sea and on the land, and also on boats belonging to the Vilayet of Najd.



*Article 8.* Correspondence shall be conducted with the marine Department for the regular supply of arms and ammunition.

*Article 9.* The said *Wali* and Commandant is not allowed to interfere with, or correspond about foreign affairs and international treaties, or to grant concessions to foreigners.

*Article 10.* All the correspondence of the *Wali* and Commandant shall be direct with the Imperial Ministries of Interior and Marine, without intermediary.

*Article 11.* Post Offices shall be established in the Vilayet of Najd, in order to facilitate communication; and arrangements shall be made to despatch posts to the necessary places in a fitting manner; Turkish stamps shall be affixed to all letters and packages.

*Article 12.* If, God forbid, the Government should have to fight with a foreign power or if there should be any internal disturbance in any Vilayet and the Government asks the said *Wali* for a force to co-operate with its own forces it is incumbent on the *Wali* to prepare a sufficient force with provisions and ammunition, and to respond to the demand at once, according to his power and ability.

Signed. Abdul Aziz

*Wali* of Najd Wilayet, and Commander of its Army.

Signed. Suleiman Shafik Bin Ali Kamali,

*Wali* of Basrah Wilayet, and Commander of its Forces.

## Appendix VIII

### (Part 1)

#### A comparison of the Drafts of the Anglo-Sa'udi Treaty of 1915

##### British draft

##### In the name of God the Merciful and compassionate

The High British Government on its own part, and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud, Ruler of Najd, Al Hasa and Qatif, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors and tribesmen, being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which have for generations existed between the two parties, and with a view to consolidating their respective interests – the British Government have named and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., British Resident in the Persian Gulf, as their plenipotentiary to conclude a Treaty for this purpose with Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud.

The said Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal al Saud, hereafter known as "Bin Saud", have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:-

##### I.

The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, Al Hasa and Qatif, and their territories and ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf are the territory of Bin Saud and of his fathers before him, and do hereby recognise the said Bin Saud as the independent Ruler thereof, and after him his sons and descendants by inheritance, but the selection of the individual shall be *subject to the approval of the British Government, after confidential consultation with them.*

##### II.

In the event of *unprovoked* aggression by any foreign power on the territories of the said Bin Saud and his descendants, the British Government will aid Bin Saud to such extent and in such manner as the situation may seem to them to require.

##### III.

Bin Saud hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement or Treaty with any Foreign nation or Power and further to give immediate notice to the political authorities of the British Government of any attempt on the part of any other Power to interfere with the above territories.

##### IV.

Bin Saud hereby undertakes *for ever* that he will not cede, *sell*, mortgage or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to a Foreign Power or to the subjects of any Foreign Power without the consent of the British Government, whose advice he will unreservedly follow.

##### V.

Bin Saud hereby promises to keep open the roads leading through the above territories to the Holy Places and to protect pilgrims on their way to and from the said shrines.

## VI.

Bin Saud undertakes as his fathers did before him to refrain from all aggression on, or interference with, the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman Coast, or *other tribes and Chiefs* who are under the protection of the British Government, and the limits of whose territories shall be hereafter determined.

## VII.

The British Government and Bin Saud agree to conclude *so soon as this can conveniently be arranged*, a further detailed Treaty in regard to *other matters* jointly concerning them.

**Bin Saud's draft****In the name of God the Merciful and Compassionate.**

The High British Government on its own part, the Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal as-Saud, Ruler of Najd, El Hasa, Qatib, *Jubail*, and the *towns and ports belonging to them*, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors and tribesmen, being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which have for a long time existed between the two parties, and with a view to consolidating their respective interests – the British Government have named and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal as Saud, hereafter known as "Bin Saud", have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:-

## I.

The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, El Hasa, Qatif, *Jubail, their dependencies and territories, which will be discussed and determined hereafter*, and their territories and ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf are the *countries* of Bin Saud and of his fathers before him and do hereby recognise the said Bin Saud as the independent Ruler there of *and as absolute Chief of their tribes*, and after him his sons and descendants by inheritance, but the selection of the individual shall be according to the designation of his successor (by the living Ruler) *or by the calling for the votes of the subjects in habiting those countries.*

## II.

In the event of aggression by any Foreign Power on the territories of the countries belonging to the said Bin Saud, and his descendants, the British Government will aid Bin Saud *in all circumstances and in any place.*

## III.

Bin Saud hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement or Treaty with any Foreign Nation or Power and further to give immediate notice to the political authorities of the British Government of any attempt on the part of any other Power to interfere with the above territories.

## IV.

Bin Saud hereby undertakes that he will not cede, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or (*grant*) concessions within those territories to a Foreign Power or to the subjects of any Foreign Power without the consent of the British Government, whose advice he will unreservedly follow, *where his interests require it.*

## V.

Bin Saud hereby promises to keep open the roads leading *through his countries to the Holy Shrines* and to protect pilgrims on their *return* to the Holy Places.

## VI.

Bin Saud undertakes as his fathers did before him to refrain from all aggression on or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, *the Shaikhs of Qatar* and the Oman Coast, who are under the protection of the exalted Government and have Treaty relations and the limits of their territories shall be hereafter determined.

## VII.

The British Government and Bin Saud agree to conclude a further detailed Treaty in regard to matters jointly concerning the two parties.

(Signed) ABDUL AZIZ BIN ABDUR RAHMAN-BIN-FAISAL-BIN-SAUD (Seal of Abdul Aziz-bin Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal-bin-Saud)

## Appendix IX

### (Part 2)

#### TEXT OF THE TREATY OF DECEMBER 26, 1915 In the Name of God the Merciful and Compassionate

##### **Preamble**

The High British Government on its own part, and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud, Ruler of Najd, El Hassa, Qatif and *Jubail*, and *the towns and ports belonging to them*, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors, and tribesmen, being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which have *for a long time* existed between the two parties, and with a view to consolidating their respective interests – the British Government have named and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., British Resident in the Persian Gulf, as their Plenipotentiary, to conclude a treaty for this purpose with Abdul Aziz-bin-Faisal Al-Saud.

The said Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud (hereafter known as "Bin Saud"), have agree upon and concluded the following articles:-

##### I.

The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, El Hassa, Qatif and Jubail, and dependencies and territories, *which will be discussed and determined hereafter*, and their ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf are the *countries* of Bin Saud and of his fathers before him, and do hereby recognise the said Bin Saud as the independent Ruler there of *and absolute Chief of their tribes*, and after him his sons and descendants by inheritance; but the selection of the individual shall be in *accordance with the nomination (i.e. by the living Ruler) of his successor; but with the proviso that he shall not be a person antagonistic to the British Government in any respect; such as, for example, in regard to the terms mentioned in this treaty.*

##### II.

In the event of [*'unprovoked' omitted*] aggression by any foreign Power on the territories of the countries of the said Bin Saud and his descendants *without reference to the British Government and without giving her an opportunity of communicating with Bin Saud and composing the matter*, the British Government will aid Bin Saud to such extent and in such a manner as *the British Government after consulting Bin Saud may consider most effective for protecting his interests and countries.*

##### III.

Bin Saud hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement, or treaty with any foreign nation or Power, and further, to give immediate notice to the political authorities of the British Government of any attempt on the part of any other Power to interfere with the above territories.

##### IV.

Bin Saud hereby undertakes that he will *absolutely not cede*, sell mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to any foreign Power or to the subjects of any foreign Power, without the consent of the British Government.

*And that he will follow her advice unreservedly provided that it be not damaging to his own interests.*

V.

Bin Saud hereby *undertakes* to keep open within his territories the roads leading to the Holy Places, and to protect pilgrims on their *passage* to and from the Holy Places.

- The words 'or the subjects of any foreign Power' were accidentally omitted in the copies signed by Sir P. Cox and Bin Saud on the 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1915. Sir P. Cox drew Bin Saud's attention to this omission in a letter dated the 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1915 (38086/16), and added: 'I have duly written them in the text of the original document which I am submitting to Government, and Government will consider it in this form; so that if the same mistake occurs in the copy with you, I trust you will add the words above quoted.'

VI.

Bin Saud undertakes, as his fathers did before him, to refrain from all aggression on or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrein, *and of the Sheikhs of Qatar* and the Oman Coast [*other tribes and chiefs* omitted], who are under the protection of the British Government, *and who have treaty relations with the said Government*; and the limits of their territories shall be hereafter determined.

VII.

The British Government and Bin Saud agree to conclude [*words in original draft omitted*] a further detailed treaty in regard to [*word omitted*] matters concerning the two parties.

Dated 18<sup>th</sup> Safar 1334, corresponding to 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1915.

(signed and sealed)

(Signed)

ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD  
P.Z. COX, LIEUTENANT-Colonel,  
British resident in the Persian Gulf.  
CHELMSFORD,  
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

This treaty was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India at Simla, on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1916 A.D.

(Signed)

A.H. GRANT  
Secretary to the Government  
Of India, Foreign and  
Political Department.

## Appendix X

### BRITISH TREATY WITH IBN SA'UD

26 December 1915

(Ratified by the Viceroy of India, Simla, 18 July, 1916)

[C.U. Aitchison, comp., *Collection of Treaties* (1933, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.), vol. 11, pp. 206-08]

The House of Sa'ud fell on evil days in the early eighteen eighties and lost its patrimony – the district of al-Najd – to a quondam ally, the House of Rashid, whose original bailiwick embraced the Jabal Shammar in north central Arabia. 'Abd-al-'Aziz b. 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud (1881-1953) reoccupied Riyadh, the Sa'udi capital of the Najd, on 15 January 1902. By May 1913 'Abd-al-'Aziz not only recovered the Najd in its entirety but conquered the district of al-Hasa from the Ottomans, thus converting the Sa'udi *Shaikhdom* into a Persian Gulf principality. The Anglo-Ottoman draft convention of 29 July 1913 recognized the Sa'udi *Amirate* as part of the Ottoman Empire (article 11, I Doc. 108). After the outbreak of war the India government desired to broaden Britain's special treaty system in the Persian Gulf Zone to encompass all the *Shaikhdoms* along the eastern coast of Arabia. Since the Jabal Shammar fell into the Ottoman sphere, the Anglo-Sa'udi treaty aimed militarily at encouraging Sa'udi warfare against the Rashidi *Shaikhdom*. But Ibn Sa'ud also took a hostile view of *Sharif* Husain, who was at the time in the midst of his negotiations with the British Foreign Office. Thus two ministries in London were in effect subsidizing antagonistic Arabian chieftains. "Indeed, the officials of the India Office, had they been driven into a corner by infuriated British tax-payers," latter observed Arnold J. Toynbee (*Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 283), "might have represented with some plausibility that in purchasing Ibn Sa'ud's benevolent neutrality at £5,000 sterling a month they had made a better bargain than their colleagues at the Foreign Office who had contracted to pay £200,000 a month of the tax-payers' money for Husain's military cooperation." In the 1915 treaty, it should be noted, Ibn Sa'ud assented to the same status—a British veiled protectorate – as that of the Persian Gulf *Shaikhdoms* near-by. H. St. J. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, chaps. 9-10; P. Graves, *Life of Cox*, chaps. 14-16; *Survey of International Affairs*, 1925, vol. 1, pp. 271-88.

I. The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, Al Hassa. Qatif and Jubail, and their dependencies and territories, which will be discussed and determined hereafter, and their ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf are the countries of Bin Sa'ud and of his father's before him, and do hereby recognise the said Bin Sa'ud as the Independent Ruler there of and absolute Chief of their tribes, and after him his sons and descendants by inheritance; but the selection of the individual shall be in accordance with the nomination (i.e., by the living Ruler) of his successor; but with the proviso that he shall not be a person antagonistic to the British Government in any respect; such as, for example, in regard to the terms mentioned in this Treaty.

II. In the event of aggression by any Foreign Power on the territories of the countries of the said Bin Sa'ud and his descendants without reference to the British Government and without giving her an opportunity of communicating with Bin Sa'ud and composing the matter, the British Government will aid Bin Sa'ud to such extent and in such a manner as the British Government after consulting Bin Sa'ud may consider most effective for protecting his interests and countries.

III. Bin Sa'ud hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement, or Power, and further to give immediate notice to the *Political authorities of the British Government* of any attempt on the part of any other Power to interfere with the above territories.

IV. Bin Sa'ud hereby undertakes that he will absolutely not cede, sell, mortgage lease, or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to any *Foreign power*, or to the subjects of any Foreign Power, or to the subjects of any Foreign power, without the consent of the British Government.

And that he will follow her advice unreservedly provided that it be not damaging to his own interests.

V. Bin Sa'ud hereby undertakes to keep open within his territories, the roads leading to the Holy Places, and to protect pilgrims on their passage to and from the Holy Places.

VI. Bin Sa'ud undertakes, as his father did before him, to refrain from all aggression on, or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, and of the *Shaikhs* of Qatar and the Oman Coast, who are under the protection of the British Government and who have treaty relations with the said Government; and the limits of their territories shall be hereafter determined.

VII. The British Government and Bin Sa'ud agree to conclude a further detailed treaty in regard to matters concerning the two parties.



## Appendix XI

### TREATY (JIDDAH): THE UNITED KINGDOM AND KING IBN SA'UD OF THE HEJAZ AND OF NAJD AND ITS DEPENDENCIES

20 May 1927

(Ratifications exchanged, Jiddah, 17 September 1927)

[Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers, 1927, Treaty Series No. 25, Cmd. 2925*]

The Anglo-Najdi treaty of 26 December 1915 (Doc. 9) placed the then *Amir Ibn Sa'ud's* principality in the same category of veiled protectorate status as that of the lesser Persian Gulf *Shaikhdoms*. But the 1915 treaty became, in the words of Toynbee, "an anachronism in the course of ten years during which Ibn Sa'ud, by his successive conquests of Jabal Shammar and Hejaz, had built up his Wahhabi principality into a state stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea and embracing the Holy Cities of Islam" (*Survey of International Affairs, 1928, p. 285*). Formal relations between the two countries were accordingly readjusted under the following instrument, which recognized "the complete and absolute independence of the dominions" of King Ibn Sa'ud. The frontier questions, to which reference is made in an accompanying exchange of notes (not reproduced), still remains open (cf. *Parliamentary Papers, 1925 Cmd. 2566*). The treaty of Jiddah was renewed on 3 October 1936 and 3 October 1943; at the second date article 8 was amended automatically to prolong the agreement "for successive periods of seven solar years unless either of the two High Contracting parties, shall have given notice to the other six months before the expiration of any of the said periods ..." (Treaty Series No. 10 (1937), Cmd. 5380, and Treaty Series No. 13 (1947), Cmd. 7064). H.St. J. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, chaps, 10-11; C.a. Nallino, *L'Arabia Sa'udiana; Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol. 1, pp. 271-324, and 1928, pp. 284-307*; r. Sanger, *The Arabian Peninsula*, chap. 3.

Art. 1. His Britannic Majesty recognises the complete and absolute independence of the dominions of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Najd and its Dependencies.

Art. 2. There shall be peace and friendship between His Britannic majesty and his majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Najd and its Dependencies. Each of the high contracting parties undertakes to maintain good relations with the other and to endeavour by all the means at its disposal to prevent his territories being used as a base for unlawful activities directed against peace and tranquillity in the territories of the other party.

ART. 3. His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its dependencies undertakes that the performance of the pilgrimage will be facilitated to British subjects and British-protected persons of the Moslem faith to the same extent as to other pilgrims, and announces that they will be safe as regards their property and their person during their stay in the Hejaz.

ART. 4. His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes that the property of the aforesaid pilgrims who may die within the

territories of His majesty and who have no lawful trustee in those territories shall be handed over to the British Agent in Jeddah or to such authority as he may appoint for the purpose, to be forwarded by him to the rightful heirs of the deceased pilgrims; provided that the property shall not be handed over to the British representative until the formalities of the competent tribunals have been complied with and the dues prescribed under Hejazi or Nejdi laws have been duly collected.

ART. 5. His Britannic majesty recognises the national (Hejazi or Nejdi) status of all subjects of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies who may at any time be within the territories of His Britannic majesty or territories under the protection of His Britannic majesty.

Similarly, His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies recognises the national (British) status of all subjects of His Britannic Majesty and of all persons enjoying the protection of His Britannic majesty who may at any time be within the territories of His majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies; it being understood that the principles of international law in force between independent Government shall be respected.

ART. 6. His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes to maintain friendly and peaceful relations with the territories of Kuwait and Bahrain, and with the Sheikhs of Qatar and the Oman Coast, who are in special treaty relations with His Britannic Majesty's Government.

ART. 7. His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes to co-operate by all the means at his disposal with His Britannic majesty in the suppression of the slave trade.

ART. 8. The present treaty shall be ratified by each of the high contracting parties and the ratifications exchanged as soon as possible. It shall come into force on the day of the exchange of ratifications and shall be binding during seven years from that date. In case neither of the high contracting parties shall have given notice to the other six months before the expiration of the said period of seven years of his intention to terminate the treaty it shall remain in force and shall not be held to have terminated until the expiration of six months from the date on which either of the parties shall have given notice of the termination to other party.

ART. 9. The treaty concluded between His Britannic majesty and His majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies (then Ruler of Nejd and its then Dependencies) on the 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1915, shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the present treaty is ratified.

ART. 10. The present treaty has been drawn up in English and Arabic. Both texts shall be of equal validity; but in case of divergence in the interpretation of any part of the treaty the English text shall prevail.

ART. 11. The present treaty shall be known as the Treaty of Jeddah.