CHAPTER - I

PRE-OIL SOCIETY AND POLITY IN ARABIA
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Tribal social structure:

The pre-oil Arabian society was a predominantly tribal society. Its structure was not monolithic and homogeneous. It was a highly diversified and heterogeneous (structurally, culturally and economically) society. In fact the whole Arabia was a conglomeration of various tribes. Many tribal confederations existed in it. These so-called tribal confederations were highly unstable and weak. The fissiparous and destabilizing cultures were themselves inherent in the tribal socio-political set up. The entire socio-political structure of the Arabian tribal society was torn apart due to the absence of a legitimate centralized political authority and system. The clan and lineage based political institutions were the real hubs of political activities. The fragmented and segmented socio-political structures had played instrumental roles in dividing the entire Arabian tribal society.

In a nomadic pastoral society, the tribe was composed of parallel segments or clans, each led by a chief, commonly known as the Sheikh. Each segment/clan moved with its herds through the annual regime of grazing in the tribal territory. Summers were spent in camps on the permanent wells, generally near settlements. With the first rains the segments (sections or "clans") moved out into their grazing territories in close or open order as security demands. The ecology of camel pastoralism required frequent movement and the capacity of the camel to withstand thirst and to consume dry forage made it possible to exploit territories beyond the range of sheep herders.
The Bedouin encampment typically was composed and aligned in lineages. The smallest unit comprising the single family tent set among the cluster of patrilineal kin. The oldest male was the leader of the group and with him were likely to be associated brothers, sons, cousins, and nephews, unmarried women, wives, widows and children. Lineage endogamy was considered typical of Bedouin society. Chiefs of lineages sections and tribes used marriage as a means of cementing alliance with chiefs of other units. A man’s marriage to the daughter or sister of another whose rank was above him was tantamount to allegiance and, vice versa, to expecting allegiance.  

While the encampment consisted of a core of patrilineally related tribesmen, non members were also usually found as protected neighbours, or as herdsmen under customary contact relations to the head of a family group. In a section (clan) tribal chief’s camp, a blacksmith, salubba guides and slaves were also found.

The disputes in Bedouin society were settled by tribal law, administered by recognized judges. Louise E. Sweet has written that “the blood feud involve a group of kinsmen to the fifth degree from the victim or murderer called the Khamsa, and customs surround the vengeance acts in such a way as to promote settlement by payment of camels and equipment in customary equivalencies for the life of a man or woman; while the murderer and his kin seek sanctuary with some distant tribe until the matter is settled.”

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2 Ibid.
The Arabian society was basically a tribal Bedouin society. It was ethnically as well as tribally heterogeneous society. Although Arabian social history was marked with complete linguistic, racial and cultural homogeneity, but it was politically a highly fragmented society. All kinds of centrifugal forces and tendencies were inherent in this fragmented and segmented tribal social structure. The family or household living together was the smallest unit in this tribal social structure. Several closely related families lived together, promoted and pastured their animals husbandry. Several integrated and interdependent, economically as well as politically, families constituted clan. Several clans used to organize themselves in flexible genealogical groupings formed a tribe. But the clan was the basic socio-political unit. It was the basis of individual as well as the entire clan identity. The individual relationship with his/her tribe was regulated through the clan organization.

The population of the Arabian peninsula was divided broadly into two categories, the Badu and the Hadar population. Both the groups were having symbiotic as well as adversarial relationship. Economically as well as politically they were integrated and interdependent. The sedentary and nomadic population had always been engaged in intense social, economic and political interaction. Inspite of this interaction both the groups developed their own distinct identities and self-images. The distinctive demographic compositions, socio-economic bases and geographical climatic conditions helped in sustaining different features in them. Thus, demographic compositions, socio-economic

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bases and geographical-climate conditions also produced distinctive values, attributes, self-images and local perceptions between these two different groups of population of Arabian tribal society. Apart from differences based on different economy and geographical differences, another factor which divided the population into the two groups was politics and its historical setting at a particular juncture of time. Sometimes powerful tribes or central authority who had subjugated and encapsulated the other tribes under their authority claimed their badu origin despite presenting themselves in a sedentary socio-political milieu just to get political mileage out of this claim. Inspite of many commonalities, in terms of ethnicity, economy, race, values, attributes, self-images and territorial perceptions, etc., between the peoples of these two groups, the ruling gentry used to differentiate themselves from one or another group, and used to claim badu origins. In other words, the distinction was regarded as a component of historical setting in which it was invoked. This distinction was embedded in relations of inequalities relating to status, origin, attributes and power. Consequently, it was not merely a mechanism for categorization which the local population used to maintain their separateness and exclusiveness; it was also anthropologically significant in understanding the interconnection between identity and self-image on the one hand, and history, power and military hegemony on the other. The claimants of badu origin and identity also claimed superior political rights and privileges vis-a-vis the hadar.

4 Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit. p. 118.
The Badu

The simplistic translation of the term 'badu' is pastoral nomads, (animal-herding and nomadism). But according to Madawi Al Rasheed this is not complete and exact translation. This translation is devoid of genuine sociological foundation of the badu. Although nomadism was an essential component of the notion of badu, but it was not the determining factor which allowed a group to be so classified. Within the Arabian context, all animal herders were badu, but not all badu were pastoral nomads. Many people or groups of people used to live in the Oasis - based settlements and engaged in non-bedouin economic activities, i.e., trade, mercantile profession, agricultural activities, date cultivations, joining powerful army etc., but at the same time used to maintain their badu connections. They used to maintain their ethnic/tribal identity and origin and associated economic bases by identifying themselves economically as well as culturally with their peoples of origins.

The term badu referred to a cultural category which included both the pastoral and the sedentarized nomads. Both shared a set of images of themselves with regard to their tribal origin, values, attributes and qualities. The badu often had elaborate genealogies defining their ancestors and lines of descent which they located in a distant past. These genealogies were ideologies of descent invoked to justify their high status arising from their links with ancient Arab tribes. They emphasized their asil (nobility) and the purity of their origin uncontaminated by contacts and marriages with outsiders. They had

Madawi Al Rasheed, op. cit. p. 118.
images of themselves as pure Arabs of traceable and unmixed origins, an asset which guaranteed superiority vis-a-vis other groups, especially the hadar - who were considered to have lost the purity of descent, or to have had no noble descent at all. In addition the badu held a set of values regarding the ideal life styles. They despised occupational specialization and regarded activities other than animal - herding and raids as humiliating and dishonourable. They regarded farmers and artisans as humble, subservient and weak. The badu claimed that these activities were inflicted on those who engaged in them disgrace, humiliation and vulnerability. The true badu, however, was someone who was able to enhance his ascribed status, i.e. his nobility by achieving a set of valued attributes. To have asil without these achieved attributes would immediately place individuals and groups outside the badu category.6

The badu were independent people by nature and temperamentally who always refused to compromise their tribal autonomy. They never accepted total suzerainty of any central authority over them. Although they recognized and respected the authority of their own Sheikhs, they did not perceive it as oppressing, binding or requiring total submission. These conditions were thought to describe the relationship between the hadar and their leadership who were believed to have lost their autonomy as a result of centuries domination. Hospitality, defending the weak and eloquence were some of other aspects of badu values which were the chief raw materials which shaped their self images.

The badu as a whole was not a monolithic and homogeneous social group. There was internal distinctions in the badu social structure. It was

Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit., pp. 119-120.
structurally stratified society. The badu society was vertically divided. Status hierarchy was present in the social structure itself. The basis for the hierarchy was less material and more non-material assets and attributes. Abstract values were the guiding principles for determining the position in the status hierarchy. Material conditions played secondary roles in determining the status in badu social hierarchy. The asil badu (noble) were the groups of people consisting of the camel-herders, high and pure nobility, people of pure language, people with superior martial attributes which were demonstrated frequently in tribal raids and battles, were granted the highest position in the status hierarchy. The asil badu never allowed themselves to be completely subjugated and encapsulated by any powerful tribal or centralized authority. They frequently used to demonstrate the tribal values such as charity, bravery, courage, hospitality, generosity and tribal raids.

Next to the asil badu were the badu of the sheep and goat herders who had compromised their tribal autonomy and many of the tribal attributes and values and had placed themselves under the protection of the asil badu. The badu of sheep and goat herders lacked the means to demonstrate their martial manoeuvrability and might in the desert.

The Sulab were at the bottom of the badu society. They were often hunters of gazelles and ostriches and believed to have no known tribal origin. They never participated in raids and tribal warfares. Their property and belongings were not considered to be worth plundering by the strong camel herding tribes as this would not constitute an activity which would honour those
who engaged in it. In addition to their hunting, the Sulab used to manufacture baskets and utensils. They were also guides and travel companions.\(^7\)

The social distance, pattern of interactions and place in the status hierarchy of the badu society was clearly demonstrated by their marriage patterns. The asil badu preferred to marry off their daughters only in the asil badu families. They did not marry off their kids into another badu social groups, i.e., sheep and goat herders. In the matter of marriage preferences, equality of origin and status was the sole guiding principle. This preference promoted tribal endogamous marriage as the most valuable and preferable kind of marriage. Huber commented that the Arabs regarded the Sulab badu as an inferior race. "There is no inter-marriage between them and the other Arab tribes. They have no religion and their language lacks the range of holy formulas which Arabs use so profusely. They suffer from the detestable reputation of eating the blood of animals with the dead flesh, and of eating dogs\(^8\)" These mythical or real views confirmed the inferior status of the Sulab.

There were mainly two kinds of tribal alliance groups whose sole functions were to foster social solidarity and minimize intra and inter tribal conflicts and strifs. It was based on the natural bond of a blood (kinship) relationship or on an artificial bond either through hilf or jiwar. Hilf was a mutual oath or pact between two or more asil badus (asil tribes) for the purpose of mutual protection. The allies partners considered themselves equal with each other. Each groups shared equal obligations in maintaining the solidarity by

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\(^7\) Madawi Al Rasheed. \textit{op.cit.} p. 121.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 121.
maintaining their tribal autonomy. They did not surrender their total tribal sovereignty to any other centralized or powerful Sheikh of a tribe. The asil tribes/hilf tribes did not form a stable category because of the fluctuating nature of intra-tribal political relations which allowed various allies tribes to change their loyalty and pursue any kind of tactical manoeuvrability. On the other hand, Jiwar was a formal commitment between two or more groups for protection and assistance by virtue of their neighbourly association. The jiwar form of tribal solidarity and association was not based on the ideology of equality between the allies. It was based on dominance-dependence and dominances subordination relationship. The stronger/larger tribal unit used to protect the weaker group(s) or smaller tribal or clan unit. These artificial forms of tribal solidarity and association promoted, consolidated and extended tribal or clan affinities, tribal social integration and cohesion.

The Hadar

The term 'hadar' referred to the inhabitants of the Oasis-based settlements, towns, and villages who were engaged in Oasis-based cultivation activities, farming, mercantile profession and many other professional economic activities. The Hadar population was heterogeneous in terms of economic activities, ethnicity, race and nationalities. The socio-cultural ethos of the Hadar populace was very much pluralistic and cosmopolitan in ethos and outlook. Its economic base, its closeness to the various big or centralized power centres, its socio-cultural ethos, its contacts with the foreign powers and socio-economic centres, its non-participation in the tribal warfare made the hadar population and its residential concentration something as objects of envy as well as censures of
the wandering and de-territorialized nomadic population of Arabia. The Hadar sedentarized and settled communities had developed fixed territorial perceptions of belonging to a particular geographical area for which they used to express their loyalty and commitment, which were lacking in the psychic of the nomadic Bedouins. Sometimes the hadar people were being recruited into the permanent army of the sheiks or amirs which some times put them on direct collision against the nomadic bedouins and entangled them into the tributary mode of production. Their militarily entanglement with the nomadic bedouins further created and accentuated envy in the psychic perceptions of the nomadic population towards the hadar.

The following peoples of four socio-economic classes were included in the hadar population of Arabian peninsula.

(1) The farmers, (2) The artisans, (3) The merchants, and (4) the slaves. The badu regarded the people of these groups inferior in status because of their low economic occupation and because of their mixed or no origin. The hadar were considered to have lost the purity of their descent as a result of inter-marriages with foreign groups. A number of artisans (Senna) and craftsmen were also present in the hadar population. The artisans occupied a lower position in the oasis status hierarchy because of their occupation. In Arabia, only individuals of humble origin would engage in the manufacture of artefacts such as weapons, knives, saddles, shoes, and cooking utensils. The craftsmen were either dispossessed nomads or people of foreign origin who had migrated to the oasis after failing to find work in their home towns. The low position of

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9 Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit, p. 126.
the artisans (Senna) both in the oases and among the badu in the desert were reflected in the fact that they were denied marriage rights among their hosts.\textsuperscript{10}

The merchants class was the most powerful in status hierarchy. This class was the highly heterogeneous, pluralistic and linguistically diversified. The culture of this class was highly cosmopolitan. Peoples from diverse origins, nationalities, tribes, clans and linguistic groups were represented by this class. Peoples of this class were very close to the tribal and sheikhly aristocracies as well as to the ruling tribal aristocracies and gentries. This class was the permanent and strongest supporter of the rulers of the time, having interests in the status quoist forces. They were mainly concerned with law and order and were against any kinds of disruptive forces and ideologies either from the war loving wandering nomadic tribes or from the ruling class’s political and territorial adventurism. Their interests were tied with peace, stability and cooperation between all segments and classes of the tribal population of Arabia. Their involvement in the caravan economy made them an important status group which represented the link between the local population, including other oases dwellers, the nomads and the outside regions which were beyond the reach of the local population. The prospects for development of the merchant community were dependent on two most important factors. First, ruling gentry’s patronage and second, the maintenance of peace and security along the trade and caravan routes. And another most important factor for their attachment with the ruling class and powerful sheikhs was that the merchants community was the biggest tribute paying community to

\textsuperscript{10} Madawi Al Rasheed. \textit{op. cit.}, p. 127.
the regimes. The main tasks of the amirs and sheikhs were to provide security to the trade caravans and levy tax and tribute on the merchants. Both the groups were dependent on each other. There was very precarious kind of relationship between the Amir and the hadar community on the one hand and between the amir and the nomadic bedouins on the other hand. Although the amirs used to live in the hadar population zones, they used to maintain their nomadic tribal values and traced their origins to the nomadic tribes. They used to patronize the tribes under their suzerainty and were known as Sheikh Al Masayakh (Sheikh of the sheikhs). The relationship between the amirs and other tribes was not of dominance - subordination and dominance - dependence nature. But the amirs were forced sometimes to exercise some coercive and punitive measures to suppress tribal uprising against the chief authority and plundering and looting the caravans. Sometimes they used some coercive exercises to pacify and subordinate some ferocious wandering tribes who loved tribal warfare and believed in looting and plundering. These threatened amirs' political rules and credibility as well as caravan trade routes which consequently affected the merchants trade and amirs' source of revenues.

Another important thing is that there was perennial cultural as well as economic clash between the hader and the nomadic bedouins. Sometimes this clash resulted into fierce battles which disrupted the entire system. The nomadic bedouins did not consider the hadar people (the farmers, artisans, merchants, and the slaves) as the people of pure origin and descent. The nomadic bedouins always looked down upon the hadar people. There was no or very little cultural interaction and marriages between these two groups. Geneologically, tribally
and culturally the amirs and sheikhs were very close to the people of the nomadic bedouins and were having predilections towards them but their commercial and mercantile interests were mainly tied with the hadar peoples (the farmers of the Oasis-based settlements, the artisans, the merchants, the ahrar people; people of free birth who were engaged in trade and commerce and the slaves who were associated with the ruling family too). Both kinds of relationships, symbiotic as well as adversial existed between the people of the hadar and the nomadic bedouins. Economically both the groups were integrated and dependent on each other. Most of the produces of each side were exchanged. Both groups were dependent on each other to fulfil their basic necessities.

**Tribal Political System:**

Upto the early twentieth century the Arabian socio-political structure was highly fragmented and segmented despite the presence of common cultural, linguistic, religious and racial foundation and common source for socio-political and racial unity and solidarity. A single ruling political ideology and system was absent in the Arabian socio-political system. Society was divided along lineage, clan and tribal lines and so the political system / institution too. Although tribe was the biggest socio-political unit, the real foundation of politics was based on clan system headed by Sheikh / Sayyid, the tribe was a loose confederation of many clans or Ashair (tribal Sections, Singular ashira) which had their own Sheikhs. The tribe had no leadership beyond the ashira which had its own sheikh. The ashair of a tribe remained politically and economically autonomous.
but claimed common descent and sometime territory too. The Sheiks of ashair (clan/tribal sections) interacted with each other at the economic, political and social levels. They were representatives of their respective ashira (tribal section/clan) and had authority to negotiate and enter into a deal with other heads/Sheikhs of the ashair. They were the de-facto and de-jure heads/sheikhs of their respective ashira.

A ashira was composed of many lineages which were having their own heads drawn from the prominent biut (Beit : House, Household and extended family, pl. biut), in the lineage. The head of the lineage was the grandfather or a senior son who was responsible for the management of the internal affairs of his lineage. Within the ashira / clan, some lineages were more prominent and powerful endowed with non-material and tribal attributes and values provided Sheikhs for the whole ashira. After becoming the Sheikh of the ashira his sphere of influence would then be extended beyond the limited confines of his own lineage. The Sheikh of a ashira would be a representative and spokesman of all the lineages but would have no authority over the other ashair who in turn had their own Sheikhs. There was no hierarchically structured relationship between the Sheikhs of the ashair of a tribe. Their socio-political status was equal. The lineages-clans segmented tribal structure was so made that internal independence and clan-tribal autonomy had been automatically ensured and rooted in their social history. Internal and local autonomy were inherent in the very structure of tribal social system. Tribal affairs were shared by all the members of the tribe. The tribal chief (Sheikh) was the symbol of tribal authority and its representative in intra and inter tribal affairs. He was the sole
representative and negotiating authority with other tribal leaders as well as foreigners. A tribe was not a homogenous and monolithic entity. It was composed of many clans. The leading and influential clan of a tribe used to play prominent role in its affairs. Generally the head/Sheikh of a leading and influential clan was elected as Chief / Sheikh / Sayyid of the tribe. The chief of the influential and leading clan was entrusted with the administrative and political functions of the tribe who was assisted and whose responsibilities were shared by other clans of the tribe. Tribal democracy was embedded into the structure of Arabian social system. Tribal life enjoyed some aspects of democracy such as equality, freedom, tribal egalitarian ethos, non-hierarchious socio-political order and representative authority. In his study of Arab tribalism, Gabrieli states that: Within its democratic and patriarchal structure the tribe acknowledges a freely elected head (Sayyid, Sheikh) with limited authority confined particularly to advice and guidance: The affairs of common interests are discussed and decided by the assembly of the entire tribe where great prestige is attached to the wisdom of old age prowess in War and to eloquence and skill in poetry.11

The checks and balance were inherent in the tribal socio-political system which did not allow tribal leaders, sheikhs/ Sayyid to resort to authoritarian socio-political order and practise nepotism. The rules of succession were not based on any fixed patterns of rules. It was not according to the rule of primogeniture. Generally the person belonging to a prominent and leading clan

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or lineage of a tribe endowed with exceptional qualities of military prowess, generosity, hospitality, diplomatic skills, eloquence and poetic genius and with certain fundamental tribal values and virtues used to succeed the institution of the Sheikh. He enjoyed traditional authority and recognition. The Sheikh did not have the means to ensure that succession remained within his own lineage or clan. He did not have any kind of permanent bureaucratic like institution under his command to implement the tribal law and obligation by using any kind of coercive measure and method. His role and status within a clan and within a tribe was determined by the traditional virtue of being a primus inter pares (first among the equals). He enjoyed an immense tradition of legitimated authority. The pastoral nature of economy also did not allow him to have or accumulate surplus wealth to bribe or buy loyalties in his favour. The lineage and clan based segmented tribal social structure was highly fluid and fragile in nature. The Sheikh was always in fear of lurking dissatisfaction among other lineages of the ashira and fear of shifting nature of loyalty of the head(s) of lineage(s) and Sheikh(s) of the ashira (clan) or ashair (clans). The culture and tendency of splitting loyalty was itself inherent in the tribal social structure. The danger that lineage(s) / clan(s) might split up as a result of dissatisfaction concerning the authority of domineering Sheikhs acted as checks on the possibility of coercing tribesmen. The splitting up of lineages threatened the unity of the ashira as this process led to smaller lineages being swallowed by bigger ones. The fragmentation of the lineage or ashira (clan) increased the vulnerability, of the groups during external threats. Fear of loss of autonomy resulting from
fragmentation brought the lineages together around the Sheikh and prevented him from indulging in authoritarian government.

At the economic level the Sheikh used to deal with matters related to the seasonal migration of his clan/tribe in search of green pastures, water and suitable place for camping. He used to fix terms and conditions by negotiating with the Sheikh(s) and another clan(s) or (tribe(s) either of nomadic bedouin origin or of Oasis-based head or Sheikh(s). He represented his clan/tribe everywhere. He negotiated and entered into Khuwa (protection obligation and tax) relationship with another tribe if needed and fixed its terms and conditions. He used to supervise and looked after the economic activities of his men. He talked with the oasis people and its ruler to get its access for his tribe/clan. He was always concerned with the welfare and well being of his people. He also supervised the activities of caravan economy of his clan/tribe. Sheikh was the leader of warriors who voluntarily fought against the enemies and attached on other tribes as well as their caravan to extract ghanima (booty) which was distributed among the warriors. The Sheikh was also entrusted with the responsibilities to supervise and provide complete security and safety to the pilgrims of his clan/tribe.

The Sheikh also had judicial functions. He acted as mediator in intra- and inter-lineage, ashira / clan and tribe conflicts for its judicious resolutions. He dealt with cases of blood revenge, theft and robbery. He also mediated and tried to resolve civil disputes, like problems related with marriage, divorce and inheritance.
Joseph Kostiner writes that the chieftaincy was the predominant form of political organisation in Arabia until the early twentieth century. It "consisted of loose tribal alliances based on power sharing, mutual responsibilities and duty sharing relationships among nomadic tribal groups, sedentarized inhabitants centred in villages and towns and a ruler who governed these alliances. The ruler was a member of a leading family of a major tribe who had both the authority and the obligation to maintain internal order in the chieftaincy to protect his people (himaya) and to wage war against enemies. Sometimes he had religious authority as well. The nomads received the benefit of urban facilities such as markets (musabala) and institutionalised religious rites. In return they acknowledged the leader’s authority, pledged their allegiance to him and sometimes even paid tribute (or protection money; khuwa) to the ruler. The sedentarized population had to fight for the state and to pay tribute to the ruler and sometimes to the regional nomadic tribe and provide facilities for the nomades, in return for trade benefits and protection."

Borders between chieftaincies were not sharply defined, but were rather a function of the dirahs or respective grazing zones of the tribes. The administration of the chieftaincy was quite simple, if non-existent, with practically no bureaucracy. It followed that ‘the authority structures of a chieftaincy’s various sectors were not controlled by the ruler but retained

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autonomy in the conduct of their internal affairs. Loyalties in chieftaincies were personal and provisional and thus inherently unstable; tribes came and left the polity. Social cohesion and co-operation between the various tribes and between tribes and the ruler were not based on an overriding loyalty, national or otherwise. To assure loyalty, the head of the chieftaincy had to provide the tribes with strategies or tools of survival other than those which the tribe might possess independently. These included protection, raiding to gain booty and access to markets. At times, loyalty of tribes to the chief was augmented by a religious factor, as was often case with Islamically mobilized chieftaincies.

Eighteen and Nineteenth centuries Arabia witnessed the emergence of this centralised power centres/blocks in central and west-north central Arabia whose basis of authority and source of its legitimacy were different from each other. These were the rule of the Rashidi dynasty of the Shammar tribe at the Hail and the rule of Ibn Saud dynasty at Diriyya. The demographic bases of these ruling dynasties were different from each other. The other power centres were the Idrissi’s rule in Asir and the Meccan based rule of the Sharifian - Hashemite clan of Hejaz. The power centres and areas of influence of all these four patriarchically centralised powers were within the geographical boundary of present day Saudi Arabia. Each perpetually questioned each other’s political

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14 Ibid., p. 114.
authority and sources of its legitimacy by invoking different kinds of socio-political history and its ideological foundations.

The Mecca based Sharifian-Hashamite clan rulers of the Hejaz consistently invoked the traditions of Arab tribal values and its supremacy, the supremacy and pioneering role of the Quraish tribe (qabila) in the history which had sanctioned prominent role and status of the Hashemite clan of the Qurassh tribe (qabila) to which the prophet of Islam belonged and the historical role of the Hashemite clan as the custodian and guardian of the Kabba, the most sacred place of Islam. The ruler of the Hejaz invoked these socio-cultural and religious factors to justify and legitimize his rule. He traced his lineage to the Hashemite clan and exploited it forcefully along with other factors for legitimizing his political dominance over the Hejaz. The Meccan society was the highly politically, economically and culturally developed society in comparison to other regions of Arabia. This region was the commercial centre of the entire Arabian peninsular region since a long time. Even in pre-Islamic Arabia, the ascendancy of the Meccan peoples especially the Quraish tribe had been accepted by the entire Arabian region. The Islamic-Arab rulers since the prophet Muhammad inherited this glorious historical legacy of the Meccan society and further enriched it through reformation and by injecting Islamic values and its body-polity into the Meccan-Arabian tribal socio-political structure. There was a big and well-developed merchant class and culture in this society. Its administration was well developed. The Shariff Hussain of Mecca had inherited a well structured and established public institutions and bureaucratic system to deal with the commercial system as well as religious establishment of the Hejaz. The
Hejaz is situated at the cross road of world civilizations. It connects all the regions of Arab economically, geographically, religiously, culturally, racially and linguistically with each other and connects commercially and navigationally South Asia, South East Asia Mediterranean and Africa. It has always received migratory hordes of peoples from diverse racial, nationalities and cultural stocks. It has always been a confluence of many many cultural and civilisational streams. But Al-Hejaz (the north western region of central Arabia) had always been able to maintain its political independence during the pre-Islamic as well as in the post-Islamic era. Al-Hejaz alone was able to maintain its political independence while the rest of the Arabian peninsula was subjected to foreign political and religious influence. The people of al-Hejaz were always restricted to their territories by the harsh environment of their arid land and lifeless desert. This semi-isolation fostered in them a considerable sense of freedom and solidarity. Professor Hassan Ibrahim Hassan of Cairo University writes:

"Al-Hejaz maintained its independence for a very long time. As a result of this long independence its people developed certain peculiar characteristics of their own among which were the exalted nobility of their origin, the honoring of their ancestors, and the purity of their language." 15

This culture of exclusivity inherent in the Al-Hejaz society always influenced the policies of its rulers which continued upto the 1920s. Although the Sharif Hussain of Mecca had accepted the Suzerainty of the caliphat-Sultan

of Turkey which lasted till 1924 but had been able to maintain his political dominance and local autonomy; and he was never challenged from within the Al-Hejaz’s various tribes/clans. The historical dominance and prominence of the Quraish tribe as a whole and various Islamic religious practices associated with Kabba and Medina provided biggest supporting factors to the rule of the Sharifian-Hashemite clan in Al-Hejaz and its legitimacy.

The Rashidis of Arabia:

Abdullah Ibn Rashid founded the Rashid’s dynastic rule in the Hail in 1836. The Rashidi belonged to the powerful Jaffar lineage of the Shammar tribe. The Rashidi rulers of the Shammar tribe adopted the title of Amir. The very adoption of this title by the Rashidi’s rulers signified the emergence and consolidation of a new and different kind of political and power structure in the region. This move was meant to establish a powerful centralized political rule under a single dynastic umbrella. This move was against the ethos and tradition of Arabian tribal socio-political history, tradition and values. The powerful Shammar tribes were not homogeneous and monolithic in terms of structure, economy, demographic composition and cultural values. The population was broadly divided into the nomadic bedouin tribes and the hadar population of the Oasis-based settlement communities. The nomadic bedouins tribal population was highly segmented and based on lineage and clan consideration. Whereas the population of the Oasis-based settlement under the Rashidi rule was heterogenous and pluralistic in nature. The class differentiation was present in this hadar society. Social status was based / determined according to the
hierarchicus - structured social values and economic classes. The sources and bases of their (the nomadic bedouins tribes and the hadar population) relationship was different from each other. The foundation of relationship and cooperation was very volatile and fluid in nature. Culturally the peoples of these such categories were different from each other. The hadar population was racially, linguistically and culturally heterogeneous whereas the nomadic bedouins were the people who always took pride in the purity of their tribal descent blood, language, culture and their tribal traditions. These basic and fundamental differences in terms of economy, tribalism, culture, demographic composition and traditions between the nomadic bedouins and the hadar affected and influenced the patterns of leadership of the Sheikh(s) and Amir(s). These differences did not allow the Amirs to transform the entire political structure of the Shammar tribe(s) into a single monolithic power centre by doing away, militarily or persuasively with their other power centres and political institutions. The in-built contradictions and conflicts produced all sorts of fissiparous tendencies among the chiefs, Sheikhs and Amirs of the Shammar tribal populations. Although the establishment of an Oasis-based Rashidi amir’s leadership did not undermine the roles of the Shammar Sheikhs but Amirs’ endeavoured to establish their hegemony through centralization process was consistently thwarted by the Sheikhs’ stubbornness for the preservance of their tribal as well as territorial autonomy. The Amirs had greater economic resources and power at their disposal than the Sheikh(s). However the Amirs co-existed with the Sheikhs, each having separate political spheres in which they exercised their authority. The Shammar Sheikhs were primus inter pares, without any
military or police body to forcefully enforce their will and decisions. The Sheikh(s) had no command over his/their followers other than his eloquence, wisdom and power of persuasion.\textsuperscript{16}

The Sheikh relied on his authority among his group and his status as a knowledgeable person and this authority guaranteed that disputants obey his recommendations. On the other hand the Shammar Amirs were having a strong and highly centralized permanent military body to enforce their decisions and wills but they never thought to destroy and destabilize the tribal autonomy and tribal sovereignty. So a kind of diffused sovereignty existed between these two types of leadership. But it is a fact that the Amir’s area of influence and operation was very large and was backed by a powerful political system and majilis (council) of the Shammar (both the nomadic bedouins and the hadar population alongwith some sedentarized Oasis-based non-Shammar groups) Sheikhs, headed by the Rashidi Amir. Madawi Al Rasheed has written that the terms amir (ruler, commander or prince) and Sheikh (head of tribal section/clan) refer to two types of leadership. The desert-based Shammar section Sheikhs never used the title of amir. In contrast the Rashidi amirs were often referred to as Sheikh(s) by the Shammar. In other words, the amir was a Sheikh but the reverse was not true.\textsuperscript{17}

She has also written that although the amir’s basis of legitimacy was to a great extent similar to the Sheikh’s, the settlement of the former in Hail led to the departure of this leadership from the traditional tribal pattern and the

\textsuperscript{16} Madawi Al Rasheed. \textit{op.cit.} p. 77.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid. \textit{op.cit.} p. 77.
beginning of dynastic rule. The founder of the Rashidi dynasty was initially regarded as a bedouin Sheikh, a leader who spent a long time among his jaafar lineage. When he settled in Hail, he became an Oasis ruler.18

This was an important step which marked the emergence of differences between the amir and the Sheikh. These differences were manifested at the level of their sphere of influence, economic, political and military power, and relations with outside government.19

While the sphere of influence of the leadership of the Shammar Sheikh was limited to his tribal section, the amir had a wider constituency which included the tribe, the settled population of the Oasis in jabal Shammar and the conquered nomadic group. The Sheikhs represented their groups to the amir and had access to his majlis (council).

The economic foundation of both the Shammar Sheikh(s) and the amir’s leadership was different from each other. The Shammar Sheikh’s revenues were derived from a combination of pastoralism, limited agriculture and trade. This mixed economy was not prone to the generation of wealth and surplus accumulation. As a result social differentiation was not a characteristic of the Sheikh who remained economically indistinguishable from the rest of his section. The revenues of the Hail Amir, however, were not entirely dependent on this mixed economy. They were derived from a variety of sources such as land ownership in the Oasis, Subsidies from the ottoman government, tax on trading and pilgrims’ caravans and tribute extracted from the conquered sedentary and

18 Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit. p. 78.
19 Ibid. p. 78.
nomadic population. The amir's revenues contributed to the growing social
differentiation between him and his subjects; he became a member of a distinct
socio-economic group with dynastic and aristocratic features. 20

The existence, among the Shammar, of this types of leadership which
was different at the level of constituency and powers, contributed to the
emergence of underlying political tensions. These emerged from the co-
existence of a centralizing agent (the amir) and a decentralized political
ideology which was unfavourable to the crystallization of power in the hands of
a single amir. 21

The growing tendency towards greater centralization and the creation of
more stable forms of government were constantly being checked by the
inherently decentralizing tendencies of the Shammar tribal system. This system
was not favourable to the maintenance of permanent political relations and
alliances. It was based on the principle of local group autonomy at the political,
military and economic levels. The central political authority of the amir had to
co-exist with tribal autonomy which meant that sovereignty was diffused in the
tribe and among its various sections. 22 In Jabal Shammar, the crystallization of
the Rashidi amir's role set in motion the process of establishment of a dynastic
rule. The same case was not with the nomadic bedouins. Although the amirs
were physically separated from their fellow Shammar, but there was a strong
genealogical bond between them.

20 Madawi Al Rasheed, op cit, p 79.

21 Ibid., p. 81.

22 Ibid., p. 81.
The Hail Amir was one of the variants of traditional authority. The traditional values of nobility and patrilineal descent from a prominent lineage were frequently referred and highlighted to legitimize their leadership and rule. However, these traditional attributes for getting legitimacy or sources of legitimacy were combined with personal sources of legitimacy. Strong attributes such as military skills, wisdom, courage, bravery, hospitality and generosity were themselves sources for legitimation. The personality of the ruler constituted a source of legitimation in both traditional and non-traditional leadership. These factors were counted in the establishment of Ibn Rashid’s leadership in the Hail.

The Ibn Saud’s Rule in Central Arabia (in the Najd)

The Ibn Saud’s ruling elites’ background and the nature and composition of demography on which they had based their ruling system were entirely different from other Arabian peninsular ruling counterparts and its demographic foundation. All the rulers, except the Saudis of the Arabian peninsula were either Sheikhs of a strong tribe or confederation of tribes like the Shammar tribes Sheikhs and the Al-Idsirssi Sheikhs or with a highly prominent and venerated tribal / Clan descent background like the Sharifian-Hashemite rulers of Mecca. The Saudi rulers had been the rulers of settled population of Deraiya since 1446.25

25 Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit, p. 89.
The Saudi ruling dynasty was the most powerful dynasty of the Sedentarized (Umran) population of Deraiya. The royal elites were at the top of the pyramid of hierarchy. They were tied with the rest of the population of Deraiya according to the Arabian traditional protection (khuwa) custom. The powers of the Saudi rulers rested on their ability to collect the tax from the settled population of Deraiya in return for protection (Khuwa). This system provided the biggest source of revenues for the Saudi rulers as well as its effective implementation ensured the people's loyalties and legitimacy to the Saudi rulers. The Saudi leadership was based on tradition (traditional leadership) which was greatest legitimizing factor to the Saudi ruling dynasty. Deraiya's people expected protection and patronage from their traditional leaders mainly from external threats and benevolent attitudes towards them.

The Deraiya population was not homogenous and monolithic in its social structure, economy and culture. It was a highly diverse and stratified population. Social differentiation was based on economic and occupational factors. Like in other sedentarized parts of Southern Najd, the population of Deraiya was composed of peasants (predominant of trade palms), merchant class, traders, religious personnel (like qadis and Imams) and slaves. The merchants of Deraiya had strong economic links with other parts of the Arabian peninsula. They were predominantly engaged in caravan economy and thus had linked themselves with every commercial and economic centres and trading classes of Arabia. The caravan economy was one of the biggest sources of income and revenues for the ruling elite. The Deraiya population had a very strong and flourishing Oasis-based economic production base and had trading and exchange relationship with
rest of the population of the Arabia. Nomadic pastoralism was not practised widely. It was on the fringe of society and one of the minor ingredients of Deraiya’s economy. Tribalism was not the deciding factor.

The political regime and the Deraiya’s population were greatly stable and peaceful in comparison to other tribal principalities of Arabia. The umran (Sedentarized) population of Deraiya had developed a sense of territorial loyalty and commitment in them which provided maximum stability to the social order and political regime. The development of a sense of territorial nationalism was in itself a unique phenomenon in the history of the region. The second important factor was that the Deraiya’s population was not fragmented and segmented on tribal/clan/lineage lines so conspicuously and did not play much political roles as in the situation of other tribally, clan and lineage based segmented and fragmented nomadic bedouins tribes and also in the other Oasis-based settlement-communities who had maintained dual identity (Sedentarized as well as nomadic bedouin tribal) for the sake of economic, military and political hegemony and other interests like political legitimacy, i.e. the Shammar tribes and its Rashidi rulers who had maintained their dual identity. The third stabilizing factor was that like in other sedentanized (umran) population, the religious influence in the Deraiya’s Socio-Political set up was also very strong which played significant role in providing stability and legitimacy. The Saudi rulers did not harbour any expansionist design against any other rulers and did not practise and allow unnecessary tribal raid for extracting booty (ghanima) and did not practise religious proselytizing. All these factors and policies provided
fairly better peace, order and stability to the region in comparison to other regimes of the region.

The Saudi rulers had adopted a blend of Islamic and tribals' customary legal system which brought them closer to other segments of Arab population and influenced the world-view of Saudi rulers accordingly. Duality in the legal system was practised and was in popular vogue. Criminals cases were dealt mainly according to the tribals' customary laws but the civil cases related with inheritance, divorce, marriage etc., were decided mainly according to the laws of Islam.

This shows that the legal duality was in a wide range practice and the foundation of the socio-legal system was based on the Islamic as well as the tribal legal system. The Saudi leadership was entirely based on Arab Sedentarized (umran) population. The Saudi leadership was rooted and embedded into the centuries old social structure and its tradition which provided legitimacy and stability to the leadership.

However, fundamental changes took place in the political structure and ideologies of the state when the Saudi ruler Ibn Saud came into contact with Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, commonly known as Al-Sheikh, founder of the first Islamic revivalist and fundamentalist movement, the Wahhabi Movement in 1744. Ibn Saud embraced the fundamentals and creed of the Wahhabi movement whose sole aim was to return to the pure fountainhead of faith by strictly adhering to the pristine values of the Holy Quran. Sharia and Sunnah, the sole basis of Islamic monotheism, foundation of faith and religion, culture, polity and umma. Ibn saud embraced the Wahhabi doctrine and laid the
foundation of a new socio-political and cultural order. The religion Islam again acquired the centre stage in the socio-political life of the state. Islam became the ideological foundation of the Saudi State and the objectives of the state was defined accordingly. Al-Saud transformed himself from a tribal leader, acquired the status of a Islam legitimated leadership. Ibn Saud became Imam and Sheikh al mashayak, (Sheikh of the Sheikhs). This transformation from a tribal-traditional leadership into an Islamic leadership and concomitant. Socio-political change became the sole criteria for differentiating the Saudi state from other Arab tribal and dynasty based political leadership and its rule.

The term Imam meant in the Saudi-Wahhabi context, both leader of prayer and political leader of the community. The term stood for political and religious leadership as there was no distinction between the two. Madawi has written that the religious basis of Saudi leadership was reflected in the adoption of the title of Imam. The Saudi leaders set a clear agenda and goals for the transformation of socio-political system along Islamic lines, according to the legacies of Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence, Ibn Taimiyah’s interpretations of puritanical version of Islamic Sharia and its application in the socio-political life of state and Al-Sheikh’s interpretation of Islam and his call and strategies for its applications. Islam became the biggest driving force, tool and mechanism for effecting transformation through Islamization. Islam became the basis and source of legitimacy, status and identity, individual as well as collectivity. The objective of the state was to transform itself after the model of classical concept of Islamic Polity through asserting the roles and applications of

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24 Madawi Al Rasheed. op. cit. p. 84.
the Greater traditions of Islam (based on holistic tradition of Islam, Islamic monotheism, egalitarianism and umma) and comprehensive Islamization of body polity. The Saudi ruler established The Zakat (Islamic tax) system, and he introduced beit al mal (public treasury) system and used these for the welfare of the masses. The Islamic sharia provisions were comprehensively implemented to deal with the criminal as well as civil problems like murder, adultery, rape, theft, marriage, inheritance, divorce etc.

The leadership of the Saudi Imams provided an alternative to tribal leadership as it derived its ideological foundation from Islam. The imam aimed to establish an Islamic rather than a tribal government. With the adoption of Islam, the state and religion became one and completely inseparable from each other. According to D. Easton’s terminology, with the adoption of the Wahhabi movement, wahhabism became a political religion. The sacred was employed to develop a system of political legitimacy and to aid in mobilizing the community for secular ends. In this case, the ends were political. Thus it is clear that politics and religion became one and source of legitimacy for each other.

There was a qualitative difference between the traditional tribal leadership, i.e., represented by the amirs of the Shammar tribe and the Islamic leadership represented by the Imams of Deraiya. Madawi Al Rasheed has very neatly demonstrated the fundamental differences between the tribal leadership and the Islamic leadership which as follows.

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26 Ibid., p. 90.
TRIBAL AND ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>TRIBAL LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Legitimation</td>
<td>Tradition and personality.</td>
<td>Political religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Status</td>
<td>High derived from descent, personal qualities and military skills.</td>
<td>High derived from piety and knowledge of Islam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Roles</td>
<td>Political and Military roles and mediator in disputes</td>
<td>Political and military roles and judge in disputes.</td>
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<td>5. Objective of War</td>
<td>Expansion and defence of Shammar supremacy</td>
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<td>6. Revenues</td>
<td>Tribute, booty, and tax collected according to custom.</td>
<td>Zakat and booty according to Islamic law.</td>
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<td>7. Succession</td>
<td>Indeterminate.</td>
<td>Shura in theory but primogeniture in practice.</td>
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The tribal leadership was based on traditional legitimation (lineage elders, patriarchalism and patrimonialism are variations of leadership based on traditional legitimation). In contrast, the authority of the Saudi Imams rested on their adherence to an Islamic ideology with a mission to establish an Islamic state where Islamic law was declared supreme and infallible.

The tribal leaders based on traditional legitimation, like Shariff Hussain of Mecca, the Rashidis of the Shammar, Al Idrissi of Al Asir etc., enjoyed a high status derived from their privileged descent. In contrast, the Saudi imams
also enjoyed a high status but derived from their role as the guardians of Islamic law. Their knowledge of the Sharia, their willingness to enforce it and their piety enhanced their position.

The tribal leaders and Saudi imams played military and political roles. They took part in military expeditions and were involved in the expansion of their realm. The tribal leaders imposed their own hegemony on the conquered towns, Oasis and the tribes, whereas the imams regarded their expansion as a holy war to spread the "true beliefs of Islam".

The tribal leaders used tribal manpower, slaves, mercenaries and conscripts for their military expeditions whereas the imams relied heavily on the converts who were willing to spread the teachings of wahhabism.

The tribal leaders justified warfare by reference to an ideology of tribal supremacy, whereas the Saudi Imams highlighted the concept of jihad (holy war). The tribal leaders were mediators in disputes whereas the imams were judges who had at their disposal the divine law of the Sharia. Tribal leaders used a blend of Islamic and tribal-customary legal system; whereas the imams considered the Sharia law ultimate and supreme. Both rulers relied on revenues from raids and taxes which were imposed on the conquered territories. The tribal leaders collected a protection tax (Khuwa) according to tribal custom whereas the Imams amassed the Zakat tax (Islamic tax). The tribal leaders followed tribal urf (custom) when distributing the booty whereas the imams used Islamic law.

With respect to succession to the office of Sheikhs or Sheikh al mashayakh (Sheikh of the Sheikhs), this passed to brothers, sons, and even
patrilateral cousins. In contrast, succession to the office of imams was in theory based on the Islamic concept of Shura (negotiation and consultation). However, in practice, the Saudis adhered to the system of primogeniture.

The establishment of Islam legitimated political system under the leadership of Ibn Saud of Deraiya was the biggest hallmark and turning point in the history of post-Abbasid Arabia. The acceptance of the Wahhabi doctrines by Ibn Saud and his formal alliance with the propounder of the wahhabi doctrines Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab, popularly known as Al Sheikh in 1774 made him formidable and most Prowess ruler of the Arabian peninsular region. This alliance widened and strengthened the ideological foundations of his rule. He got historically most sanctified source (Islam) of legitimacy for his rule and leadership. This provided further justification for his further expansionist and irredentist ideological-political manoeuverability. The Saudi-Wahhabi combined ideological as well as military powers challenged the entire gamut of existing tribal socio-political order. The new force questioned the very legitimacy of the prevailing socio-political order of Arabia and put itself forth as the most historically and culturally sanctified alternative model. The entire Arabia felt the tremors of revolution alongwith repeated desertstorm which left a permanent imprint on the psyche of the people. It became a permanent threat to the rulers of the Arabian peninsula. The main objective of this movement was the creation of an Islamic nation-state in the light of the holy. Quran, the Islamic Sharia and the Sunnah of the prophet of Islam. The Islamic ideology of governance and its objectives inspired and motivated Ibn Saud to pursue the strategy of social and political transformation for the realization of an ideal
Islamic nation-state. This Islamic ideology and zeal challenged all sorts of segmentary and fragmentary socio-political ideologies. The Islam-legitimated political order de-legitimatized the basis of tribal socio-political order. It put forth itself as the best and perfect model for socio-political order. The Arabia’s Socio-Political structure did not withstand the military and ideological onslaught of Saudi-Wahhabi forces and finally crumbled down.

Wahhabism and Ibn Saud

Wahhabism as a socio-political and religious revivalist ideology with concrete programmes and objectives for reformation, regeneration and social reconstruction took birth in the eighteenth century. It was a civilizing movement. Its historical and intellectual antecedent could be traced to the works of Ibn Tamiyya, a great Islamic intellectual and revivalist of thirteen century. Ibn Tamiyya started and inspired intellectual campaign to dispel ‘neo-jahilliyya’ from the Arab’s socio-political and religious temperament through reformation and revival of puritanical classical Islam. The coming up of ‘neo-jahilliya’ had rendered the Arab system completely shattered and degenerated. Many un-Islamic and anti-Islamic polytheistics rituals and values had again regenerated and penetrated the body polity. A shift had started taking place from monotheism to polytheistic religion and superstitious values. Elements of animistic religion had been revived and come into practices. The ‘neo-jahilliya’ had revived some of the values of pre-Islamic or Jahilliyya period’s tribal paganism. The pre-Islamic values of jahilliyya (ignorance and superstition) was marked with the absence of rule of law, prevalence of superstition, ignorance,
tribal and fratricidal warfare with strong feeling for assabiyya (tribal solidarity).

The development of neo-jahiliyya values seriously undermined the greater traditions of Islam which is founded on a world view which is apparently non-hierarchical, is purely monothestic and messianic - historical in ethos, which had enveloped and encapsulated the Pan-Arabian socio-political and religio-cultural system into a single entity. Islam as a foundation for socio-political unity had lost its relevance. The neo-jahiliyya values had completely shattered the centuries of old Islamic body policy. It had fragmented and fossilized the entire system. The little traditions of the Arabian Peninsular social system had got-ascendancy and supremacy over the greater traditions of Islam and its values.

To dispel the neo-jahiliyya, intellectual regeneration started with the works of Ibn Tamiyya. He disowned many of the alien concepts and values who had creeped into Arab’s religio-cultural body politic. He appealed for reversion to the puritanical classical version of Islam, based on the holy Quran, the Hadith and the Islamic Sharia. He opposed the feudal authoritarian, socio-political structural order and fought for the revivalism for the Sharia based socio-political and cultural system.

Ibn Taimiyya was a liberal Muslim reformer. He adopted the middle path. He considered any view that regarded man as a super human or degraded him as un-Islamic. He held that men of all ages are rational beings and capable of thinking for themselves. He was opposed to rigid and uniform thinking. He maintained that every group should be tolerated, provided it upheld the overall unity of the Umma (Islamic Nation) guided by the Sharia. He
was a reformist, moderate and progressive thinker. He wanted to revitalize the inherent dynamic character of Islam by transforming it into an egalitarian, viable and resilient socio-political and religious alternative from a feudal-authoritarian and tribal-patriarchical based rigid socio-political and religious system. Through his intellectual writings he relocated and revitalized the accommodative, adaptive and progressive elements/features of Islam. He strongly advocated in the favour of opening the gates of Ijtihad (independent and rational interpretation of Islam). Ibn Taimiyya held the opinion that Ijtihad was necessary for discovering what would best serve man and government under God and that therefore it was a never-ending process.27

Ibn Tamiyya's writings influenced, patronized and inspired hordes of intellectuals who dedicated themselves to the socio-political reformation, revitalization and reconstruction in Arab Islamic world through religious revivalism. Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Najd (Central Arabia) was one of them. He was a great scholar of Hanbalite school of Islamic jurisprudence. He was greatly inspired by Ibn Tamiyya's writings and literatures. The term 'Wahhabism' is used here to refer to the eighteenth century religious revivalist movement of Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab whose followers preferred to call themselves al tawhid or muwahidun (the unitarians) rather than Wahhabis.28 Al-Sheikh launched a revivalist, reformist and reconstruction movement whose objective

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28 Madawi Al Rasheed, op. cit. P. 29.
was to transform the Arab-Muslim society along the precepts of pristine-puritanical values and spirits of Classical Islam which lasted up to the period of Khulfa-e-Rashidun (Guided ideal four caliphs of Islam). He was mainly inspired by Ibn Taimiyya's call for a return to the original 'source', the holy Quran, the Islamic Sharia and the Traditions of the prophet. Elwan states:

Wahhabism was essentially a fundamentalist movement of political and religious reforms. It was born out of an alliance in 1744 between Ibn Abdul Wahhab and the powerful Saudi family of Najd to establish in Arabia state based on Muslim public law, as interpreted by Ibn Hanbal.²⁹ The Wahhabi movement was completely full with Islamic nostalgia. Its objective was the restoration of 'lost'glorious era of Islam through the promotion of Islamic re-awakening. This movement also symbolized a period of reawakening, reassessment, adjustment and political activism on the part of central Arabian Muslim. Sheikh Mohammad Abdul Wahhab (Al-sheikh) saw panacea of all problems faced by Arab-Muslims in this revivalist, re-awakening and fundamentalist movement. It was movement with a definite and more perfect vision for future.

Al - Sheikh developed the first principle, the doctrine of the oneness of God (Tawhid) of the Wahhabi movement. He called upon people to return to the fundamentals of classical Islam and to purify the faith from bida (innovation) which had crepted in the Arabian socio-cultural body polity. The bida consisted of Saint-worship, animistic rituals and indulgence in luxuries. Visiting holy trees for baraka (grace), the use of saints for Shafaa (absolution).

²⁹ Shwillsar T. Elwan, Constitutional Democracy and Islam: A Comparative study, p 95. (Cited in Deiranieh, Alsrarn Raslan. op.cit. p 191.)
building shrines on holy men’s tombs (including the prophet’s tomb, that of his cousin and the four caliphs) were practices condemned by Wahhabi doctrine.

Ijtihad (independent judgement by religious personnels) was declared as the second principle of Wahhabism. Al Sheikh restricted Ijtihad to three sources, the holy Quran, the Sunna (the prophet’s sayings and deeds) and Sirat al Salaf (sayings and deeds of the early caliphs). Jihad (holy war) was declared the third doctrine of the Wahhabi movement. Al - Sheikh made it integral part of the Wahhabi movement. He considered Jihad the most important and obligatory duty for the muwahidun (the unitarians). He gave a call on the Muwahidun to shoulder the responsibility with a strong commitment to fight against ahl al bida (the innovators). Through this he (Al - Sheikh) instilled a very strong and specific type of religious zeal and militancy in his followers which proved very much helpful and instrumental in the implementation of war (jihad) strategies of Ibn Saud against his religious as well as political opponents. He (Ibn Saud) used the doctrine of jihad as a mechanism for his expansionist and consolidating move. It (jihad) also provided legitimacy to the religious as well as political irredentist movements.

Al Sheikh signed a mithaq, covenant with the ruler of Deraiya Ibn Saud in 1744 which laid down the foundation, ideological as well as political, for further collaboration and basis of Saudi - Wahhabi dynasty. Both decided to adopt each other’s objectives and to give legitimacy and justification for each other’s moves. The creation of a true Islamic state and umma (community) based on the sanctity of Islamic Sharia under the political tutelage of Ibn Saud became the common objective of both these leaders. They jointly started a
mission of Jihad (holy war), the objectives of which were religious as well as political. Al Sheikh dreamed off seeing a reformed and dynamic Islam and Islamic umma (community) based on the obligations of Islamic Sharia. And Ibn Saud himself dreamed off seeing himself the leader of this emerging Islamic umma. They started the mission of re-Islamization of the entire socio-political and cultural system of Arabia.

Another doctrine of the Wahhabism which proved very effective together with Jihad was the effective application of the Zakat (Islamic tax) system. The revival and imposition of the Zakat (Islamic tax) system helped the Saudi - Wahhabi cause in many ways. These two had a tremendous appeal to the Saudi ruler as well as the masses because it promised a good source for considerable revenues. It helped in transforming the socio-cultural and political base of Deraiya society. Ibn Ghanam has described Deraiya in the age of shirk (polytheism), i.e. before the spread of Wahhabi teachings as a poor town with no basic supplies of food while in the age of tawhid (monstheism), it had excessive amounts of food, gold and silver money, horses, camels and clothes.30

The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam as a result of the rigorous adoption and application of Wahhabi doctrines challenged the entire edifice of the Arabian system. The fulfilment of this religious mission brought tribes and rulers of other regions to direct confrontation with combined onslaught of Wahhabism and Ibn Saud because they perceived Ibn Saud's expansionist adventures a direct and naked threat to their political autonomy. Ibn Saud incorporated, encapsulated and integrated many other tribes and tribal

30 Madawi Al Rasheed, op.cit., P. 32.
systems into his religio-political domain. Many tribes embraced the Wahhabi doctrines and acknowledged the Suzerainty of the Wahhabis by paying the Zakat and accepting the political leadership of Ibn Saud. Thus a highly centralized and religiously motivated political, military and religious leadership of the Saudi-Wahhabi dynasty crystallized and established. The crystallization of this religio-political and ideological foundation for the accomplishment of Wahhabi and Ibn Saud religio-political mission produced a new kind of storm whose effect was felt at a greater length.

The establishment of first Saudi-Wahhabi rule in 1744 challenged the domination of the Ottoman rule in the area ideologically as well as militarily. The Wahhabism seriously challenged the ideological as well as political hegemony of the Caliph-Sultan rule. The Ottoman Empire as well as local tribal rulers felt threatened by the rising tide of Wahhabism and its political manifestation. The first Wahhabi-Saudi rule was militarily crushed in 1818 by the Egyptian ruler, Mohammad Ali. He was politically and militarily assisted by the Ottoman rulers and some local tribes. The Second Saudi-Wahhabi regime was inaugurated when Ibn Saud re-captured the Deraiya in 1824 and established its rule. It started expanding rapidly like earlier regime and captured a big area of the Arab Gulf territory. This time its expanding tide was halted and smashed by a local and rival tribal leader Al Rasheed of the Shammar tribe. The Shammar leader was assisted by the Ottoman Caliph-Sultan in his war against the second Wahhabi-Saudi rule. This was culminated into the victory of Al Rasheed over Ibn Saud. Deraiya was again completely shattered and its territory was captured and incorporated into the Shammar state. One most
important characteristic of Al Rasheed regime was that it was not having any type of antagonism against the Wahhabism as a religious doctrine unlikely other rulers of the region like Shariff Hussain of Mecca but the Shammar ruler was certainly afraid of political implications and ramifications of the Wahhabi revivalist ideology. Wahhabism's political manifestation was primarily contested everywhere. Third Saudi-Wahhabi rule was established with the capture of Riyadh by Ibn Saud in 1901 by defeating the Shammar ruler. This time Ibn Saud arrived in the central Arabia with more power and commitment to the religious as well as political causes of Wahhabism. Since 1901 and onwards Ibn Saud expanded his rule very successfully and never faced setbacks. This time he got military as well as religious help from a permanent army, the Ikhwan, devoted to the cause of Wahhabism. They stood behind Ibn Saud like a rock. From 1901 to 1932 when the kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a modern nation-state with centralized power system was proclaimed, his fortune was favoured by changed international as well as regional political scenario. The fluctuation and uncertainties in the global as well as regional power system encouraged him to engage in adventurist pursuits which proved very successful to him. Rivalries among the global empires, world war first and its precarious consequences and the tottering down of the Ottoman Empire helped Ibn Saud greatly in achieving his religio-political goal. Many autonomous tribes and rulers could not withstand the Saudi-Wahhabi onslaught and finally succumbed to his ideological as well as military might. They changed their political loyalties, accepted Wahhabism and joined the Ikhwan brigade. The Ikhwan shouldered the responsibilities of the Ibn Saud's army and fought for the
cause of Saudi - Wahhabism. The creation of the Ikhwan and its successful engagement in the expansion and consolidation of a modern nation - state was the biggest hallmark of the time.

The Roles of the Ikhwans in the Formation of Saudi Arabia

Abdul Aziz encouraged the various tribes to settle in small communities/settlements, called hujar (plural of hijrah) where they were indoctrinated into the doctrines of Wahhabism. He created the Ikhwan as a mobile fighting force and a reincarnation of the Saudi armies of the nineteenth century which combined religious zeal with fighting discipline. The Ikhwans were indoctrinated and suitably trained to accomplish the tasks of Wahhabism. Their mind was introxicated with religious fanatacism and were convinced to adopt the strategy of jihad (holy war) for realizing the cause of Wahhabism and Ibn Saud’s rule. The Ikhwan greatly empowered Abdul Aziz to expnd his dominions. The Ikhwan was enabled the Al Saud to successfully challenge the patterns of tribal authority and to expand and establish its rule overthe region.”

The Ikhwan settlements seriously challenged and undermined the raison d’etre of the tribally segmented and fragmented society of Arabia. The Ikhwan movement encouraged sedentarization of the nomadic Bedouins which later on helped very much in putting them under a single centralized political system. The Ikhwan’s patterns of socialization and religious indoctrination produced a new kind of nation and nationalism exclusively based on religious bond and solidarity. It seriously weakened the tribal assabiyya (tribal solidarity) and
replaced it by a new kind of solidarity (assabiyya) based on the bondage of common religion Islam. The Ikhwan movement and the creation of hujar laid the foundation (ideological as well as social) of the forthcoming modern nation-state of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia which was realized in its present form. The creation of the Ikhwan settlement affected the entire aspects of the emerging socio-political systems of the time. It influenced the wind of socio-political change and made it favourable and helpful for Ibn Saud’s designs. It effectively influenced the patterns of changes which were going on and made it conducive for the realization of Saudi - Wahhabi cause. The geographical location and distribution of the Ikhwan settlements proved strategically very significant and conducive in expanding and providing effective security umbrella to the newly emerging nation under the political and religious tutelage of Wahhabi - Saudi regime. Helen lackner has written that:

The geographical distribution of Ikhwan colonies, and the wide range of tribes which they represented, enabled the striking arm of Ibn Saud to be flexed in such a way that no part of the Peninsula would be more than a day’s march from the wrath of his Ikhwan. The tribal distribution provided tribal, clan and family links to all the major tribes of Najd. The synthesis of geographical and tribal considerations provided Ibn Saud with a network of military type cantonments that at once served as an outpost of loyalty and a collection print of intelligence at the farthest points from Riyadh during peace: in war, they became centres of mobilization and access to given targets. Ikhwan troops marching from the farthest corners of Najd, say from al Artawiyah, could find brothers...
in arms in the hujar of the Ikhwan in the Hijaz and jawf, and in between these two points find hujar which would give them provisions, water, intelligence, and other essentials as they stopped there during the march. The hujar served as military bases, supply bases, and religious outposts, and since many of them were located close to the traditionally sedentary places - such as Ghut ghut’s location in relation to Mhazamiyyah - they acted as a disciplinary influence on these towns, keeping them well within the Wahhabi fold.

The Ikhwan settlements did not serve only militarily to the Al Saud; it served doctrinally too. It became the bastions of Wahhabism, source of civilizing, regenerated, revivalist and reformatory cultures and bastions for jihad (holy war) for the cause of Islam and Ibn Saud’s rule. It became centres for indoctrination into the Wahhabi teachings and models for the forthcoming purified Islamic nation and society. Helen Lackner has written that:

"Ibn Saud, who had started the process of regeneration among the tribes through his missionaries, placed all necessary facilities at their disposal: money, seed, and agricultural implements, religious teachers, and the where withal for building mosques, schools and dwellings: and last but not least, arms and ammunition for the defence of the faith, the basic article of which was the renunciation of all the heathen customs and practices of the old tribal code. The brotherhood of men who accepted the new order, regardless of their tribal affiliations and social status.

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analyzed the Warlike propensities of the Arabs in the service of god and his representative on earth. Inter-tribal raids, highway robbery, tobacco and all the other amenities of the old life became taboo; and all attention was concentrated in the colonies on preparation for the life hereafter."

The Ikhwan movement proved equally helpful and conducive factor like Wahhabism in uniting the various tribes under a single religio-political set up. The creation of the Ikhwan settlements galvanized the process of forging relationship among the tribes for the accomplishment of the tasks of Wahhabism. The British historian Toynbee has noted that “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.”

Sociologically significant arguments regarding the creation of hujar and its accomplishments could be summarised as follows:

First, the purpose of these hujar was to break down tribal bonds by creating a broader bond based on religion. The men of the hujar came from different tribes and called each other akh’or brother, from which the term Ikhwan, literally brethren, is derived. These hujar promoted the sense of universal brotherhood among the tribes. The foundation of their identity

32 Helen lackner. op.cit., p. 23.
drastically changed from specific and particular tribal mooring (s) to their universal religion, Islam.

Second, the hujar settlements and the associated religious environments produced a specific kind of vision among the tribes which were more catholic, egalitarian and forward looking (in the revivalist context). The environment itself was so intensely religious that it produced a fresh kind of puritanical religious fervour which was later on exploited for the cause of Islamic religious jihad and consolidation of Arab nation under Ibn Saud’s rule. It united the fragmented and segmented Arab tribes into a single cohesive socio-political system of a nation.

Third, it successfully replaced tribal based assabiya (solidarity) to religion based solidarity and brotherhood. It changed, expanded and broadened the cognitive frontiers of the people. They started thinking beyond the limitation and confinement of a particular tribe. It produced a new kind of empathy which motivated them for further change.

Fourth, these hujar settlements further encouraged the sedentarization process which gradually developed the concept of territorial loyalty. The settlements and sedentarization changed their economic bases too. Earlier in the absence of a strong sense of territoriality, especially among the nomads, the tribes adopted the strategies of looting, raiding and plundering as the Chief means for their survival. These cultures had produced and legitimatized the prevalence of tribal fratricidal warfare.
Finally, these hujar (Ikhwan settlements communities) development encouraged, strengthened and legitimated the process of evolution of a Arab nation with territorial loyalty.

The emergence of the Ikhwan as a permanent and stable military force also affected the social structures of the Arab society. According to Radcliff Bronen military organization influences social structures, mainly by determining the distribution of naked power or the ability to use legitimate violence. Military organization also reflects the changes which take place at the political and economic levels. It was clearly demonstrated with the creation of the Ikhwan. It seriously undermined the political autonomy of the tribe(s) and the sheikh(s). With the creation of the Ikhwan, the badu as the military force was marginalized and consequently their political as well as economic bases were also got marginalized. The establishment of a permanent and stable force like the Ikhwan also undermined the sources of perennial nature of conflicts and opposition between the badu and the hadar. The Ikhwan settlements and movement further weakened the tribal bond and cohesion by promoting and encouraging the further fragmentation of the tribes. The hujar weakened the social and economic bases of the badu population.

The emergence of the Ikhwan movement and the creation of the hujar settlements synchronized with the changing global as well as Arab regional situation which had badly affected the social and economic conditions of the Arab region. The Ottoman empire was losing its grip over the Arabs. The entire Arab region was witnessing the emergence of a new kind of political set up. The entire area was undergoing further fragmentation and various smaller
principalities were gradually emerging as new nation-states. The territorially defined nation-states were emerging. Simultaneously in another development, a highly theocratic and centralized monarchical system of governance was gradually materializing into reality under the guiding principles of wahhabism and political leadership of Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud. The Ikhwans had dedicated themselves to the cause of Saudi-Wahhabism. The Saudi-Wahhabi state was gradually expanding. It very soon covered a vast area of the Arabian peninsula.

But the emerging territorially defined nation-states put limitation before the Ibn Saud and his army, the Ikhwan. The local as well as international powers wanted to stop further movement of Ibn Saud and his army, the Ikhwan. When Ibn Saud annexed the Hejaz in 1926 and integrated it into his domain, the Ikhwan’s threat to the neighbouring rulers was heightened. The emerging political reality of nation-states put the Ikhwans at the loggerhead against the reality of territorially fixed and defined boundary of emerging nation-states. This development forced them to confine their religio-political activities within a fixed territorial boundary.

To consolidate his state geographically as well as politically Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud decided to tame the Ikhwan militia men and to make them more disciplined and law abiding militia men. He even exercised punitive actions against the Ikhwan militia men who defied him. Akhar S. Ahmad has written that with the establishment of Abdul Aziz’s rule the Ikhwan became a threat to him. They resisted the introduction of innovation in any form, including motor-cars and telephones. So in the battle of Sabila in 1929 Abdul Aziz destroyed
The dedicated idealist warriors, the Ikhwan - the Muslim Brothers who stood like a rock behind Saudi - Wahhabi cause were finally vanished. A de facto and de jure modern nation-state of Saudi Arabia established in 1932. Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud became king of this new state and this country got new name as the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This was the biggest turning point in the modern history of the Arabian peninsula. Akhar S. Ahmad has written that with the creation of Saudi Arabia the concept of a modern nation state grew among the Arabs. Before then people belonged to a particular clan and, more, generally, tribe. Some, the literate, were aware of a larger entity called the ummah, the brotherhood of Islam. But not all Muslim brothers were liked. Abdul Aziz wrote in a letter in 1913 about the Turks, who had until recently ruled most of the peninsula as part of the Ottoman empire: 'a people who, calling themselves Musalmans, had for years neglected their faith, oppressed their subjects, embezzled religious endowments, broken every ordinance of the Quran and subverted the Khilafat. This shows that Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud did not claim the institution and title of Khilafat for himself as others like Shariff Hussain of Mecca claimed; but he was not happy and satisfied with the ways the institution and title was exploited for vested interests and how Islam was defamed and people were oppressed in the name of religion. This also reflects how he felt himself attached with the puritanical and classical version of Islam, as interpreted by the Wahhabism. This attachment with the religion guided him throughout his life which was demonstrated time and again by his actions.

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34 Akhar S. Ahmad, Discovering Islam, Vistar, 1990, p. 149.

35 Ibid., p. 149.
With the formal proclamation of the state of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932, an Islamic state with monarchical and highly centralized system of governance came into being after the formal abolishment of the institution of Khilafat in 1924. The history of evolution of this state can not be separated from the history of Wahhabism. Both are two sides of the same coin. The organic links between the state and Islam was re-established.

The Politico-religious foundation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The founder of the Saudi State, King Abdul Aziz, declared in 1926 that the kingdom should be governed according to the Quran and the sunna and that he held himself bound by the Sharia. Later on his son, King Faisal reaffirmed the Saudi devotion to the Islamic Principle of government when he stated that:

“Our constitution is the Koran and our law is the Sharia of Muhammad (God’s peace and blessing be upon him). Our system of government is based on the interest of this country Saudi Arabia, where such interest does not conflict with the principles of our religion and the Sharia.”

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Islam are intertwined and embedded into each other. Both are symbiotically attached and serve each other’s interests. The king of Saudi Arabia is not all powerful authority. He derives his authority and limited himself according to the provisions of Islam. Hisham

王子法赛尔说... p.41 (沙特信息和广播部)
Sharabi views it as an absolute monarchy in which the king's authority is limited only by Islamic law.

The Saudi rulers are committed to the Wahhabi reformist movement and apply its religious doctrines to their political institutions. They maintain that Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state governed by the Sharia. They have modelled their socio-political and religious institutions according to the Wahhabi teachings of Islam.

The Saudi monarch is both a spiritual leader and supreme temporal ruler. He is sheikh al Mashayakh (Sheikh of sheikhs), 'Imam of the believers and Malik (king) of his country. This shows how Arabian tribal traditions, their religion and their political set up are embedded into each other. This also reflects how the Islamic umma (community of believers), their ruler(s), their tribal social moorings and their religion have united and integrated and finally have become single entity. This unity has become the foundation of their socio-political and religious integrity.

The Saudi society is basically tribal society with deep attachment to the traditional customs and values. The value systems and political institutions are not only closely related; they interact and influence each other. The Islamic religious, moral and ethical value systems have greatly influenced the government and politics in Saudi Arabia. Relations between the rulers and the ruled are intimate and informal. It is said that the Saudi king's majilis is just functional extension of the old tribal sheikh's majilis. Its style of functionings

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and deliberations resemble to the institutions of the early Arab-tribal Sheikh's majilis.

The Saudi Monarch (Malik) is the head of the state and the unifying symbol of its authority. He combines in his person the political power supported by the religious doctrine of Wahhabism. Executive, legislative and judicial powers are derived from his roles as malik (king), Imam of Believers and sheikh of sheikhs. He is elected to and is subjected to removal by the Saudi leadership. The rule of succession to power and removal from office is determined by the collective leadership of the ruling Saudi family in consultation with the influential religious leaders. Confirmation, however, becomes effective by the support of these two major groups in conjunction with the consent of the leading heads of the influential tribes. The head of the Saudi state resembles the early caliphs of classical Islam in his temporal and spiritual authority. He is elected by the responsible representatives of the community and in subject to the rule of Sharia. His leadership likewise is viewed as a trust delegated to him by the people. The collective religion and political authority of the council of Ministers together with the senior members of the royal family, the ulema and the tribal chiefs resemble the early Islamic practice of the council of Shura.

In his role as Malik, the monarch is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining internal order and defending the nation against external dangers. The political and religious roles of the monarch are united in his person as king and Imam. For the first time the Saudi rule got the title of Imam al Mumineen (Imam of the believers) in 1744. It invests both spiritual and political authority to the person of the ruling monarch. The Saudi monarch is entrusted with
authority to protect and propagate the faith in his domain. In his role as Sheikh of sheikhs, the Saudi monarch conforms the traditional concept of Bedouin - Warrior - sheikh relationship.

The strong hold of tribal social traditions and religions are in fact in Saudi Arabia. Islam is the state’s official religion and the source of its authority. The Sharia remained supreme over civil law. The Quran and the Sunna are the primary source of all legislation. Islam has been a major determinant of social values. The ulema are closely tied with the political organization of the state. They exercise influence on every aspects of state and society. They always advocate in the favour of the supremacy of the Sharia law over the civil law in every aspects of the society. They are recognized as the guardian of the Sharia and of social morality. They shoulder responsibility for religious instructions and for the observance of the Sharia. Their wishes carry great weight in the matter of governability. Sometimes policies are presented to them for their evaluation and prior consent. The ulema’s legal decisions and dispensation are solicited even in political matters such as the question of royal succession to the throne.

In nutshell, the chief accomplishment of the combined forces of the Wahhabism and Ibn Saud was the end of the perennial nature of socio-political anarchy and tribalism which had enveloped the entire socio-political and cultural landscape of the Arabian Society. The socio-political and intelectual anarchy had fossilized the dynamic character of the Arab Islamic Society. These intellectual and cultural anarchy had degenerated the social values and made it stagnant and immutable. With the successful accomplishments of the objectives
of the Wahhabism, these anarchy came to an end. The society was put on the path of regeneration and reconstructions. The puritanical values of Islam was again revived and was made the foundation of socio-political relationship of the society.