PREFACE

Saudi Arabia, with its enormous wealth and oil reserves has suddenly jumped into fame from oblivion. Therefore it becomes extremely important to make a detailed study of the social and religious past of its people. In the present thesis entitled Trends in Islam in Saudi Arabia an attempt has been made to study the religious background of this country from the time the Saudi state was founded in the eighteenth century.

The thesis is broadly divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the Ideological roots of the Wahhabiyya. Attempt has been made to study the life, works and thoughts of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (d. 799), Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Oayyim al-Jawziyya, (d. 1350), the three persons on whose ideas the Wahhabi movement is based.

The second chapter is a study of the social, political and religious conditions of Arabia in the first quarter of the eighteenth century — the period in which ‘Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab was born and spent his early life. This is followed by the third and fourth chapters which together cover the early life of Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab,
his studies, his writings, and his thoughts. The fifth chapter concerns the political growth of the Saudi State founded jointly by Muhammad ibn Sa’ud and Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab. It covers the rise and fall of the Saudi Wahhabi state from 1744 to 1891. The sixth chapter covers a period of about thirty years from 1902 to 1932 i.e. from the establishment of the third Saudi-Wahhabi state to its development into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under ‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Sa’ud, the founder of Saudi Arabia. In this chapter a study has also been made of the Ikhwan settlements and their role in establishing the Kingdom. Chapter seven contains my own conclusions.

I must acknowledge my indebtedness to my supervisor Prof. Mahmudul Haq who has very patiently gone through the thesis. My thanks are also due to Prof. N. Almal Ayyub, Chairman of my Department who very kindly provided all the necessary facilities for the preparation of this work.

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