SAUDI STATE TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Saudi Arabia, as it stands today, is a little more than fifty years old. All the rulers of Saudi Arabia during the twentieth century, including the present king Fahd (r. 1982–), are the sons of Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abd al-Rahman Al Saud, more famous simply as Ibn Saud, who created the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

The Saudi family traces its descent from Rabī‘a ibn Mānī al-Muraydī, who, about the middle of the fifteenth century A.D., shifted from Hasa‘ to settle in Wādī Manīfa. By the beginning of the seventeenth century his descendants had established themselves as rulers of a small amirate Wār‘īyya situated to the north of Riyadh. A little before 1720 Saud ibn Muhammad ibn Migrīn ibn Mar‘ān ibn Ḥabīb ibn Musa, the eponymous founder of the family, became the ruler. He was succeeded by his son Muhammad.

1. The best account of the history of the Saud family is perhaps given by H.St. J.B. Philby, Sa‘ūdi Arabia (London, 1955), pp. 8-22; J.G. Lorimer writes that the Saudis belonged to a family known as Al Maqram, of the Mishāili section of the Wālī Alī division of the Anayzah tribe; and from the name of his fathers was derived the alternate family name of Al Sa‘ūd which has been transmitted to his descendants. Cf. Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia (Calcutta, 1915), Vol.I, Pt.I, p. 1053. Also see A.Rīhānī, Jazīrat al-`Arab fi Qarn al-`Ishrin.
Muhammad ibn Sa'ud:

Muhammad ibn Sa'ud succeeded his father as the amir of Dar'iyya towards the end of 1726 or early in the following year. But the first Saudi state under the influence of the teachings of Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was formed only later in 1744-45 when he reached Dar'iyya and Muhammad b. Sa'ud moved by his mission, readily joined hands with him. Thus the two together laid the foundations of a state destined to reach such heights, a couple of centuries later, which neither of them could have envisaged.

The political situation of Najd, particularly the hostile areas surrounding Dar'iyya, at the time of the founding of this Wahhabi state, needs to be reviewed afresh in brief. Hasa' and 'Uyayna, the two main rivals of Dar'iyya at that time, were ruled by Sulayman ibn Muhammad ibn Ghurayr and 'Uthman ibn Hamad ibn Mu'ammarr respectively.

2. Ibid., p. 22.

3. An account of this meeting is given in Chapter-III.

4. For details see J.L. Burckhardt, Notes on Bedouins and Wahabys, Vol. II; also see Chapter-II above.

5. It may be recollected here that it was Sulayman ibn Muhammad of the Banu 'Hald who had prevailed upon Ibn Mu'ammarr to expel the Shaykh from 'Uyayna when the Shaykh had started his movement there. It was therefore but natural that the Wahhabis were to have their worst conflicts with the Banu 'Hald. See Lam' al-Shihab fi Ta'rih Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab, p. 33.
Towards the south of Dar‘iyya was a more powerful state of Riyadh which was ruled by Dahham ibn Dawwas whose rule is believed to have started probably in or around 1740. It was these forces that Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud had to face in order to fulfill his dreams of a united Najd under the Saudi-Wahhabi rule. He started straight away adopting the typical Arab method of raiding. The first of these raids, it is said, started with only seven riders on camels.

Hostilities between Dar‘iyya and Riyadh started as early as 1746. During the next twenty years of Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud’s rule attacks and counter attacks followed one after the other. The amir himself or his son ‘Abd al-‘Aziz led the Wahhabi forces in the battles. These were of mixed consequences some gaining victory and with it booty while others ending in defeats and therefore disgrace. Much of Najd excluding Riyadh was brought under the control of Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud. Although he had made many attempts to overwhelm Riyadh from the very beginning of his reign as the Wahhabi amir but to no avail. It was only towards the end of his reign that he could achieve some fulfillment from that quarter. In the 1762-3 season of campaigning two

excursions were sent to Riyadh. The ruler of Riyadh, tried with the incessant fighting, ultimately sent a deputation to the Shaykh and the amir with a cash indemnity of two thousand gold pieces and a request for admission to the Wahhabi fold whose leaders he promised to honour and obey thenceforth.

The late success of Muhammad ibn Sa'ud brought him face to face into conflict with the greater powers such as the rulers of Hasa' – the Banu Khalid, Najran – the Sadat, and Hijaz – the Sharif. A critical period of ibn Sa'ud's rule appeared in 1764 when after a number of skirmishes and battles the chiefs of Hasa' and Najran decided to launch a combined attack on Dar‘iyya. His son, 'Abd al-'Aziz proceeded to meet the advancing forces from Najran but was badly defeated with heavy casualties not very far from Dar‘iyya, but fortunately the leader of the Najran forces agreed to come to terms with him and returned back. When the Banu Khalid arrived on the scene all was over for them, since their allies had made peace therefore they withdrew and the day was saved for the Wahhabi amir. Muhammad ibn Saud had now fought the last of his battles against the Najran army. Actually, he had last been on the

8. Philby, op. cit., p. 56
10.Ibid., pp. 57-58.
the battlefront in 1750 against Riyadh, since then most of his battles were fought by his son and heir 'Abd al-'Aziz. Whatever may be said of his achievements but it can be said without hesitation that but for him Wahhabism would not have accomplished much.

‘Abd al-‘Aziz ibn Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud:

Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud died in 1765 and was succeeded by his son ‘Abd al-‘Aziz whom he had nominated in his lifetime. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was well acquainted with the administrative and military responsibility which fell upon him. The new amir from his previous experience realised that the immediate threat to his rule was from Riyadh, therefore he diverted his full attention towards subduing it and which he eventually did in the eighth year of his rule in 1773. This victory boosted the morale of the Wahhabis who now felt strong enough to meet the Banu Khalid and even to carry the war into Hasa‘ itself. The Wahhabis consolidated their position in Najd. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was now assisted in his military campaigns by his son Sa‘ud who was

11. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was the son-in-law of ‘Uthman ibn Mu‘ammar, the ruler of ‘Uyayna.

12. It was only after 28 years of intermittent fighting that the Wahhabis were able to finally annex Riyadh.
now being given independent charge of the forces. In the following years small skirmishes with Hasa' continued. Sa'dun, the ruler of Hasa', attached the Wahhabis in 1778 in al-kharj, in 1779 in al-Majma'a, in 1780 again in al-kharj, and in 1781 in Burayda. Meanwhile a revolt amongst the Banu Halid chiefs indirectly helped the Wahhabis. Sa'dun was overthrown and ousted from Hasa'. He came to Dar'iyya and sought the assistance of 'Abd al-'Aziz to recapture Hasa' for him. Sa'dun died within a year after reaching Dar'iyya. The Wahhabis under Sa'ud made repeated incursions into Hasa' beginning from 1784. Probably in order to test the strength of the Banu Halid after the resumption of their internal strifes. It was not until 1775 that Hasa' was finally subdued by the Wahhabis and Barra'il ibn 'Abd al-Muhsin, one of the Halid chiefs, was installed as governor (wali) of Hasa' by 'Abd al-'Aziz. It is also reported that while the Wahhabi forces under Sa'ud were engaged towards the Hijaz, Barra'il tried to throw off the Wahhabi yoke but was rendered


15. For details of these raids see Ibn Bishr, op. cit., pp. 83ff.

unsuccesful by Sa‘ud. Barrak was able to escape and Najim ibn Duwaynim of the common people of Hufuf was ultimately appointed the governor of the place.

With the capture and inclusion of Hasa‘ into their fold the Wahhabis soon became the masters of Eastern and Central Arabia. They captured Qatif in 1800, an oasis inhabited predominantly by sectarian shi‘ites, and subjected Bahrain to their suzerainty and reached the shores of the Arabian Sea.

Meanwhile, the growing Wahhabi power was being viewed with concern by Sharif Ghalib of Mecca in the Hijaz. Sharif Ghalib was under the Ottomans and was a determined enemy of the Wahhabis. He had an interest in widening the breach between the Wahhabis and the Ottomans. Therefore, artfully and unremittingly, he spread reports of the Wahhabis being really infidels, in order to render abortive all attempts at negotiation with them. The Pashas of Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, who were nearest to the

17. Ibn Bishr, *op. cit.*, p. 112, reports that Barrak later on repented and joined the Wahhabi troops and was killed in one of their raids on Iraq.

18. Philby, *op. cit.*, p. 87; Ibn Bishr, *op. cit.*, p. 106, describes him as one of the populace of Hasa‘, (وهو من عامة أهل الحسا)
dreaded Wahhabis, were no less eager in representing under the blackest colours, the designs of these enemies of the Turkish abuses, and, as they consequently inferred, of the Turkish faith. Very soon it became generally believed throughout that the Wahhabis were endeavouring to establish an entirely new religion, and that they treated all Turks with increased cruelty because they were Muslims.

The Wahhabis on their part displayed great intolerance, especially towards the Turks, whose morals they regarded as lax and un-Islamic; while their opponents conscious of the logical soundness of Wahhabi doctrine, had recourse to calumnies and misrepresentation. Consequently each side virtually placed the other outside the pale of Islam, and that the Wahhabis, who were the more warlike, declared the lives and the property of their antagonists to have been forfeited by religious infidelity and applied themselves to execute the sentence.

Hostilities between the Wahhabis and the Sharif of Mecca broke out in 1792 or 1793 and the war continued for several years in the form of desultory raids and counter-raids by the tribes dependent upon either sides.


In the meantime the attacks of the Wahhabis on Kuwait had been affected between 1793 and 1795, and their raids on the borders of Iraq had started as early as 1784. These raids increased steadily during the next ten years. Although these attacks were largely unsuccessful but "the ease with which the Wahhabis assembled a force, and the rapidity with which that force marched when assembled, astonished and confounded the slowly moving Ottoman." 22

The first Turkish expedition against the Wahhabis was led by Ali Pasha in 1798 to Hasa'. There was no fight but a truce was arranged between the Pasha of Baghdad and the Wahhabis for six years. But very soon in April 1801 a crowning humiliation at the hands of the Wahhabis under Sa'ud overthrew Sulayman Pasha of Baghdad. A force of about ten thousand men with at least six hundred camels broke into Karbala and made straight into the shrine of Imam Husayn. The town was given over to slaughter and pillage. In eight hours they wrecked and plundered to the

24. Philby, op. cit., p. 93, states that it was Sa'ud himself who broke the spell of peace.
best of their ability and then withdrew. The great dome over the tomb of Imam Husayn was demolished and the bejewelled covering of his grave carried off as spoil. This expedition proved to be a starting point of a general revulsion against the Wahhabis. It later on had disastrous consequences for the nascent Wahhabi State.

The next year in 1802 there was a deterioration in the relations between the Sa‘udis and the Sharif of Mecca. It culminated in the Wahhabis attacking and capturing Ta‘if in the Hijaz. They followed it up by marching on to Mecca which finally succumbed after two or three months defence. Sharif Ghalib withdrew to Jeddah with his troops. The Wahhabis meanwhile demolished all the domes built over the tombs of the heroes and heroines of Islam, and other sites connected with the Islamic legend. This lasted for several weeks and in the course of it every building offending against the standards of the Wahhabis was


26. In fact everything of value in the town was taken off, Cf. Philby, *op. cit.*, p. 83. It is also said that more than 5,000 people were massacred in this expedition, cf. Ja‘far Subhani, *Ma‘al-Wahhabiyyin fi Khatathum wa‘Agā‘idhum* (Tehran, 1406 A.H.), p. 16.
reduced to dust and rubble. Jeddah was also attacked by the Wahhabis but unsuccessfully. Sharif Ghalib accepted Sa’udi sovereignty but later reoccupied Mecca after the return of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz to Dar‘iyya.

The same year i.e. 1803, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz was assassinated at Dar‘iyya in the mosque of Turayf while offering prayers. The assassin was a Persian who professed to be a Darwish and was given all opportunity to satisfy his desire for learning something of the precepts and practices of the Wahhabis. Thus ended the period ‘Abd al-Aziz, renowned for his humility, asceticism and justice, who carried out the precepts of the faith scrupulously and without favouritism.

Sa‘ud ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz:

‘Abd al-‘Aziz was succeeded by his son Sa‘ud as the new amir. In fact Sa‘ud’s nomination was secured by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab himself as early as in


28. Philby, op. cit., p. 96. It is said that the assassin’s three sons had been massacred in Karbala. He had pretended to convert to Wahhabism and had worked in the Wahhabi capital for a year awaiting an opportunity to avenge his children. Cf. J.B. Glubb, op. cit., pp. 44-5.

29. For a thorough account of the personality and administration of ‘Abd al-‘Aziz see Salah al-Din Mukhtar, op. cit., pp. 77 – 85.
1787. Sa‘ud was a seasoned military campaigner and his military career had already covered about thirty-five years by the time he ascended the throne of Dar‘iyya.

Sa‘ud’s military campaigns started as soon as he assumed the command of the State. His first major victory was in Hijaz when he reconquered Mecca in 1805. This time Sharif Ghalib himself was appointed the agent of Sa‘ud in Mecca. Soon after he annexed Madina and the whole of Hijaz came under the authority of the Wahhabis. Ghalib was made incharge of Hijaz with the orders to destroy all the domes and structures in Jeddah and Madina. Sa‘ud also initiated certain reforms in the performance of the pilgrimage. He especially stopped the ancient tradition of the Mahmal which was brought from Egypt on pilgrimage as a rallying standard for their people. He also prohibited them


31. His first independent military campaign had been in 1768, Cf. Philby, op. cit., p. 63.

32. It may be recalled here that when Sa‘ud had conquered Mecca earlier he had left Sharif Mu‘in as his representative there. But soon afterwards Sharif Ghalib was able to take the city back again, Cf. Hafiz Wahba, op. cit., p. 106.

33. For Sa‘ud’s conquest of Hijaz se Amin Sa‘id, op. cit., pp. 79 – 82.

34. For the history of the Mahmal, see F. Buhl, ‘Mahmal’ in Encyclopaedia of Islam (shorter), pp.313-14; also J.Jomier, Le Mahmal et la caravane Egyptienne des pelerins de La Mecque (Cairo, 1953).
from bringing drums, pipes and so on on their pilgrimages. Sa’ud expelled all Turkish civilians and soldiers from Mecca and also expelled all suspicious persons from Madina. On Fridays the *khutba* till now being delivered in the name of the Sultan of Turkey was stopped. Above all the effective loss of the Holy Cities was more than the Ottoman Sultan could countenance. Sultan Salim III, after failing to attack from Iraq after several attempts, ultimately appointed Muhammad Ali of Egypt as the viceroy of Hijaz in 1805 with orders to combat the Wahhabis. In 1811 with the intention of attacking the Wahhabis, Muhammad Ali despatched a huge army under the command of his son Tusun Bey. Tusun occupied the port of Yanbo and attacked Madina the same year. But Tusun’s army was repulsed with heavy losses when it was attacked by a huge force of the Wahhabis. After large reinforcements having arrived from Egypt, Tusun again attacked Madina the next year in 1812. The city was occupied and plundered by Tusun’s army within a fortnight of its attack. This victory was followed up by the occupation

---


of Mecca, Jeddah and Ta’if by the Egyptian army in 1813. The same year Muhammad Ali himself arrived in Jeddah on orders from Constantinople. Sharif Ghalib was arrested and deported to Constantinople. After achieving these victories the Egyptians returned home.

In the meantime in Eastern Arabia the Wahhabis had attacked Zubayr and Basra in 1804, Najaf, Samawah and Zubayr again in 1806, and in 1810 a plundering expedition was carried out by ‘Abdullah b. Sa’ud against Iraq when he penetrated to within a short distance of Baghdad. The same year an expedition against Syria was undertaken and it is said that about thirty-five villages were sacked within three days.

In April 1814 Sa’ud succumbed to fever in Dar‘iyya. His death was a serious setback for the Wahhabi cause for his was a steadying, if awe-inspiring personality.

39. For the Egyptian conquest of Hijaz see Amin Sa’id, op. cit., pp. 93 – 102. It is also recorded that there were some negotiations between the agents of Muhammad ‘Ali and Sa’ud but the talks had no result, Cf. Hafiz Wahba, op. cit., p. 110.

40. For details see Amin Sa’id, op. cit., pp. 83ff.

41. A good assessment of Sa’ud’s personality and his administration is found in Salah al-Din Mukhtar, op. cit., pp. 133 – 42.
'Abd Allah ibn Sa'ud:

Sa'ud was succeeded by his son 'Abd Allah (r. 1814 - 1818). He was a man known for his wisdom and intelligence but lacked his father's firmness and military abilities. The very beginning of his reign was marked by dissensions within his supporters. He faced internal opposition when he was challenged by his uncle 'Abd Allah ibn Muhammad for the throne on the grounds that being the son of Muhammad ibn Sa'ud he had prior claims. In the fight that followed he defeated his uncle. This was the chance that Muhammad Ali was waiting for. In 1815 Tusun Bey marched on Qasim, half way between Madina and Dar'iyya. An agreement was reached between him and 'Abd Allah wherein the latter renounced any claim to Mecca and Madina and Tusun returned to Madina. But Muhammad Ali refused to ratify the agreement since he wanted nothing less than total surrender. Thus the fight was to continue. Tusun was recalled to Cairo

42. According to Philby the terms of the agreement were: (a) to terminate hostilities; (b) to end Turkish intervention in the affairs of Najd; and (c) to establish freedom of trade between Arabia and its neighbours, and to assure the freedom of the pilgrimage for all concerned. Cf. op. cit., p, 131.

43. Philby, op. cit., p. 132, states that Muhammad Ali duly confirmed the truce.
and Muhammad Ali sent another of his sons, Ibrahim Pasha, with a fresh force. Ibrahim Pasha landed in Hijaz towards the end of 1816 and slowly but steadily began moving towards the Sa’udi capital. He finally appeared before Dar‘iyya in April 1818. The Wahhabi forces surrendered after about five months siege. ‘Abd Allah was arrested and sent to Cairo from where he was sent to Constantinople where, after being paraded through the streets, he was beheaded in the square of St. Sophia along with some of his companions. 44 In the meantime Dar‘iyya was pillaged by Ibrahim Pasha along with all the adjoining territories. Ibrahim Pasha withdrew after nine months from Najd and Hasa‘ leaving the area in the charge of the Banu Khalid who were his representatives of the Turkish government. Thus ended the first Sa’udi Arab state.

Mushari ibn Sa‘ud:

Soon after the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Najd, Mushari ibn Sa‘ud ibn ‘Abd al–‘Aziz, one of the deported brothers of the late amir, who managed to

44. J.G. Lorimer, op. cit., p. 1089.

45. Ibid., p. 1091. For details of the Egyptian occupation see R.B. Winder, Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 16 - 49.
escape his guards on way to Egypt, returned to Dar‘iyya and assumed the authority. Although Egyptian authority was still maintained to some extent. The manner in which Mushari’s rule ended is uncertain. Most probably he was overthrown by Muhammad ibn Mushari ibn Mu‘ammar or fell into the hands of the Egyptians and put to death.

Turki ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad:

The credit of founding the second Saudi-Wahhabi state goes to Turki ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn Sa‘ud. He came to power in 1824 when he expelled the Egyptian detachment from Riyadh and captured it. Riyadh was then made the capital of the second Sa‘udi State. Turki began consolidating his rule in Najd by constant campaigning and then began to expand. In the process he conquered Hasa‘ in 1830. By 1833 he had exacted recognition of his rule

46. Ibid., p. 1093.

47. Hafiz Wahba, op. cit., p. 113, states that he was taken prisoner by Ibn Mu‘ammar of ‘Uyayna, who wanted to rule Dar‘iyya himself, and handed over to the Turks. See also A. Rihani, Ta‘rikh Najd al-Hadith, p. 77.

48. He was the son of ‘Abd Allah, the brother of ‘Abd al-Aziz, the second Sa‘udi amir. It is said that he had escaped from Dar‘iyya. When it fell into the hands of the Egyptians and went into hiding in Sudayr and later in Basra, Cf. Philby, Arabia, p. 106.

49. J.G. Lorimer, op. cit., p. 1094. It is also said that Turki attacked Dar‘iyya and took Ibn Mu‘ammar as prisoner and then attacked Riyadh and thus had recovered both Dar‘iyya and Riyadh, Cf. R.B. Winder, op. cit., p. 54.
along the entire coast of the Gulf. But everything was not going smooth for Turki. There was power rivalry within the family. His distant cousin Mushari ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Sa‘ud, whom he had appointed governor of Manfuha, revolted against him in 1831. But by the time Turki reached Riyadh he managed to flee. Later Mushari submitted to Turki who put him under house arrest. However, in 1834 Mushari was successful in getting Turki assassinated. Mushari was acknowledged the new Imam.

**Faisal ibn Turki:**

At the time when Turki was assassinated his son Faisal was engaged in war with Bahrain. Mushari’s rule lasted for only forty days for Faisal soon marched on Riyadh and defeated and executed Mushari. Faisal was one of the ablest and most courageous of the Sa‘uds. At the time when the Egyptians had invaded Dar‘iyya Faisal was one of their prisoners but he had managed to escape after about eight years’ of imprisonment. Faisal’s reign began auspiciously. But everything was not smooth for Faisal. Both the Turks and Muhammad Ali were alarmed at the reinstatement of the

Sa‘udis in Najd. In 1836 an expeditionary force from Egypt landed at Yanbo and marched on Najd. This force was accompanied by a Sa‘udi pretender, a cousin of Faisal named Khalid ibn Sa‘ud. Meanwhile Faisal was in preparation to meet the Egyptians but since there were dissentions within the Saudi family he could not muster enough support and had to leave Riyadh for the Egyptians without a fight in 1838. Towards the end of 1838, however, Faisal’s first reign ended when he was made a prisoner by the Egyptians for a second time and sent to Egypt.

Khalid ibn Sa‘ud:

The end of Faisal’s reign can be dated to 1837 when the Egyptians under Khurshid Pasha entered Riyadh and Khalid was installed as the new imam and a representative of Muhammad Ali. Although various governors

52. By that time Muhammad Ali had broken away from the Ottomans and had brought Palestine, Syria and Lebanon under his rule. He wanted to incorporate the whole of the Arabian peninsula into his empire.

53. He was the brother of ‘Abd Allah whom Ibrahim Pasha had defeated in 1818. He was brought up and educated in Egypt under Muhammad Ali in order to put him as a pliant governor of Najd once it was captured. Cf. R.B. Winder, op. cit., p. 108.

54. A detailed account of Faisal’s surrender is given by Ibn Bishr, op. cit., pp. 81 - 84.
visited Khalid to acknowledge him as the new ruler but there are no evidences to show that any of the Wahhabi religious leaders of the Shaykh’s family had came to pay homage to Khalid as imam.

The Egyptians were not destined to rule in Arabia for long. Events outside Arabia led to the termination of the Egyptian rule. In 1839 Muhammad Ali achieved a decisive victory over the Ottomans and the European powers had to intervene. They forced upon Muhammad Ali a settlement whereby he was confined to the hereditary rulership of Egypt. Consequently the bulk of the Egyptian force was withdrawn from Najd. Khalid was left with a small contingent of the Egyptians. With no support of the religious leaders Khalid’s rule was fragile, as Lorimer has neatly summed up the situation:

"The reign of Khalid, who as the creature of the Egyptians was generally disliked, and who appears to have possessed no capacity for government, was short and troubled... The Egyptian troops by whom Khalid’s power was supported received no pay and became discontented; moreover

55. Ibid., p. 73. It may be recalled that in the Saudi State the political leaders belonged to the Al Sa’ud and the religious leaders to the Al Shaykh.

56. R. B. Winder, op. cit., p. 133.

57. Cf. op. cit., pp. 1104 - 5.
they were regarded with intense jealousy by the Arabs of the country, who considered that a Wahhabi Amir should rely on the swords of his fellow-countrymen alone."

'Abd Allah ibn Thunayyan:

Soon after the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Najd, 'Abd Allah ibn Thunayyan took Riyadh by storm. He was proclaimed imam in 1841. Thus ended the reign of Khalid ibn Sa'ud. Although Khalid made many attempts to regain Riyadh but all proved unsuccessful. Khalid became a fugitive and took refuge in Hijaz. Ibn Thunayyan’s rule is credited with the final expulsion of the Egyptian troops from Najd.

Faisal ibn Turki (Second Reign):

After five years of detention in Egypt Faisal made good his escape from Egypt early in 1843. Faisal

58. For details of Ibn Thunayyan’s occupation of Riyadh see Ibn Bishr, op. cit., pp. 94 - 5. 'Abd Allah ibn Thunayyn ibn Ibrahim ibn Thunayyan ibn Sa'ud was a great-great-grandson of the eponymous founder of the House of Sa’ud and the only member of the Thunayyan branch of the family to rule.


60. His escape from Egypt was made possible by Abbas Pasha I, who had great admiration for him. Cf. Hafiz Wahba, Arabian Days, p. 115.
gained Riyadh after a twenty day siege. Thunayyan was captured and imprisoned. Faisal received immediate recognition as imam. Faisal’s second reign was a stable and prosperous period for Arabia. Philby gives the following estimate of his reign:

“Faisal now entered upon an unchallenged reign of all but a quarter of a century, in which must be sought the real beginnings of the modern Wahhabi state... [He] ruled a territory considerably smaller in extent than that of his great ancestors, but perhaps more compact and better woven together on the loom of Wahhabism. A new generation had grown up whose oldest members knew not the Jacob of the old paganism, whose faded and perished remnants may yet be found in our day as patches on the new garment of dour dogmatism which passes for philosophy among the nomad tribes of the desert. The Arabia of Faisal was Wahhabi, in a sense unknown to the heyday of the Wahhabi empire; and Faisal’s reign was one of administrative consolidation and progress in education and other acts of peace, leading up, by the irony of fate, to a final tragedy of dynastic dissension.”

---

61. According to Amin Rihani, Ta’rikh Najd al-Hadith, p. 81, Faisal had already called on ibn Thunayyan for recognition and ibn Thunayyan had responded by saying he was only acting as regent for Faisal. Faisal at first accepted this ruse at face value, but realised the true situation just before his entry in ’Unayzah, after which ibn Thunayyan fled to Riyadh. Also see Ibn Bishr, op. cit., pp. 99 - 103, for details of the ouster of ibn Thunayyan.

Faisal died in 1866 and Najd lost a great ruler who had done much to unite the different parts of the country into one orderly whole, and a wise administrator who knew when to be lenient and when to use the mailed fist. In short Faisal’s reign has been termed as ‘the golden age of the second Sa’udi realm.

‘Abd Allah ibn Faisal and Sa’ud ibn Faisal:

Faisal had four sons - ‘Abd Allah, Sa’ud, Muhammad and ‘Abd al-Rahman. In his lifetime Faisal had nominated ‘Abd Allah to succeed him and had even allowed him great power. ‘Abd Allah was known for his generosity and piety, but also as a fanatic. His brother Sa’ud, on the other hand was moderate and tolerant in disposition. There followed internal strife within the Saudi family. Enmity between ‘Abd Allah and Sa’ud developed and the kingdom began to break up. Northern Najd came under the Rashidis of Hail completely. The only parts remaining completely loyal to the Saudis were Riyadh, Abha and some of the southern

-------------------
63. For a detailed estimate of Faisal’s reign see Salah al-Din Mukhtar, op. cit., pp. 318 - 359.
65. For details of the House of Rashid see R.B. Winder, op. cit., pp. 239ff.
distances. Sa'ud left Riyadh and began collecting support for himself. Eventually Sa'ud defeated ‘Abd Allah and captured Riyadh in 1871. ‘Abd Allah fled and, through the Amir of Kuwait, sought the support of the Ottomans who were the nominal suzerains of Najd, to help him. Midhat Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Iraq, took advantage of the situation and conquered Hasa in July 1871. ‘Abd Allah, who went to welcome the Ottomans, was arrested. In the meantime ‘Abd Allah ibn Turki, a brother of Faisal ibn Turki, captured Riyadh from Sa'ud. ‘Abd Allah ibn Faisal, after escaping from his captors, joined his uncle.

While the struggle for power between the brothers was on, the Ottomans took Asir under their control. The Buraimi oasis was captured by the Omanis in alliance with Sa'ud, the Oasim and Jabal Shammar ceased their contributions to Riyadh and declared their independence.

In 1873, Sa'ud again captured Riyadh. His brother was able to escape but his uncle was seized and put into jail where he died soon. In 1875 Sa'ud himself died and ‘Abd al-Rahman, the youngest of the brothers, who was in Riyadh, took over the charge. But his other two brothers—

66. The struggle between ‘Abd Allah and Sa'ud for power are best described by Hafiz Wahba, Jazirat al-Arab, pp. 264-9.
challenged him. ‘Abd al-Rahman was able to drive them away but then he was challenged by Sa‘ud’s sons and was made to flee from Riyadh. He joined with his brothers ‘Abd Allah and Muhammad and together the three of them drove their nephews out of Riyadh and ‘Abd Allah was re-installed for the second time.

‘Abd Allah thereafter reached an agreement with the nephews which lasted till 1885. In the meantime he tried to strengthen his authority in Najd and for the first time felt positive resistance from the Rashidis of Ha’il. Doughty has painted a grim picture of the imams position at that time.

68. Ibid., p. 263. Hafiz Wahba, Arabian Days, p. 121, writes that ‘after Sa‘ud’s death the people of Riyadh acclaimed Abdur Rahman ibn Faisal as ruler and Imam, but a year later, Abdulla, then with the ‘Utaiba, set out for Riyadh finding it impossible to remain as an outlaw while his youngest brother ruled. The people of Riyadh rallied to him, and Abdur Rahman thought it better, in the interests of peace and to avoid any further bloodshed to abdicate in his favour.’

69. It was the eighth change in the supreme authority that Riyadh had witnessed since the death of Faisal only eleven years before. Cf. Philby, Saudi Arabia, p. 226.


71. The town of er-Riath with her suburbs, the next village country about, is all that now remains of the Wahaby dominion which is become a small and weak principality, -- such as Boreyda. Their great clay town, lately the metropolis of high Arabia, is silent; and the vast guest-hall is forsaken: Ibn Saud’s servants abandon his unfortunate stars and go to hire themselves to Mohammed Ibn Rashid. No Beduins now obey the Wahaby: the great villages of East Nejd have sent back Abdullah’s tax-gatherers; but they all cleave inseparably to the reformed religion. Cf. Ibid., p. 455.
In a bid to stem the Rashidi tide 'Abd Allah once again clashed with Muhammad Ibn Rashid in 1884 but was decisively beaten. Ibn Rashid refrained from taking Riyadh. In 1887 Sa'ud’s sons marched on Riyadh and took 'Abd Allah prisoner. On 'Abd Allah’s request Ibn Rashid came to his rescue and liberated 'Abd Allah from prison and took him to Ha'il. He left behind Salim ibn Subhan as Rashidi governor of Riyadh. In 1888 Ibn Subhan, learning of a plot being hatched against him by Faisal’s sons, marched against them in Ihraj and decisively defeated them. Ibn Rashid on hearing the news, dismissed Ibn Subhan. 'Abd Allah was allowed to return to Riyadh and retain the title of imam. 'Abd Allah died in 1889.

'Abd al-Rahman ibn Faisal:

On the death of 'Abd Allah, Faisal’s youngest son 'Abd al-Rahman was installed as the Rashidi governor of Riyadh in 1889. Ibn Subhan was sent back to Riyadh as Rashidi garrison commander. In the middle of 1890 'Abd al-Rahman, suspecting a plot against the Sa’udis, surprised and captured Ibn Subhan. When Ibn Rashid came to know of this incident he besieged Riyadh and an agreement was reached.

whereby 'Abd al-Rahman was confirmed as governor of Riyadh under Rashidi suzerainty. In 1891 some tribes revolted against Ibn Rashid with the backing of 'Abd al-Rahman. Ibn Rashid met the rebels in the battle of Mulayda. This battle proved to be 'the last twitch of the dying Wahhabi state'. Ibn Rashid got the better of the rebels and eventually 'Abd al-Rahman went into exile in Kuwait where he was joined by his family members which included his son 'Abd al-'Aziz (b. 1880).