

KING FAISAL OF SAUDI ARABIA, HIS AWARDS AND THE SAUDI ORDER OF KING FAISAL

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Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz ibn Abdul Rahaman al Saud was born in about 1906, the son of King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, the founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In his youth he fully participated in the campaigns which led to the formation of the kingdom. In 1925, with the abdication of King Ali of Hijaz, Faisal became the Governor of Hijaz, which became part of the Kingdom of Nejd and Hijaz. The Hijaz became the Western Province of Saudi Arabia upon its proclamation as a Kingdom in 1932, and in that year Faisal became Foreign Minister.

Upon the death of his father in 1953 and the accession of his brother King Saud, Faisal became Crown Prince and Premier. Following an economic crisis in 1958 he assumed executive power and while resigning in 1960, he resumed office in 1962 and became king upon the abdication of his brother in 1964. During his reign he was seen as a moderate reformer; indeed one of his first acts as king was the final abolition of slavery in Saudi Arabia. He also inaugurated many economic and social welfare projects. King Faisal supported and provided much moral and financial support to the countries of the Middle East, and the wealth upon which the kingdom was based brought with it much political influence. After the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 he especially concerned himself with Arab unity. This was notably so with his support of the Arab oil embargo of 1973. This embargo, while largely

psychological, (at the time the United States imported less than 10% of its oil from Saudi Arabia) insured that the West could no longer take Saudi acquiescence to their political will for granted. His assassination by his nephew, Prince Faisal ibn Masaid, was a severe blow to the Arab world.

After his death the King Faisal Foundation was established, with its general aim being that of service to Islam and philanthropy, especially in the provision of aid through the form of grants to research scientists, writers, and scholars. Prizes are awarded on an annual basis and consist of a certificate outlining the recipient's work, a commemorative 22 karat gold medallion manufactured by Bertoni of Milan, and a cash award of SR750,000 (approximately US\$200,000). Prizes are awarded in five categories, and the recipients for 1998 are as follows:

Service to Islam

President Abdou Diouf of the Senegal Republic, for his outstanding support for Islamic causes and for his role as President of the Permanent Committee of Culture and Information of the Organization of Islamic Conferences since 1981.

Islamic Studies

Shared between Professor Yahya Mahmood of Saudi Arabia for his studies in Islamic Libraries and Professor Abd As-Sattar A. A. Al-Halwaji of Egypt for his research into the



Common Obverse to the Medallion of the King Faisal Foundation





development of Islamic Publishing.

Arabic Literature - Not Awarded

Medicine

Shared between Professor John L. Gerin and Professor Robert H. Purcell, both of Maryland, USA, for research leading to the development of the Hepatitis A vaccine which is now in use around the world.

Science

Professor Andrew John Wiles of Great Britain for his work in solving Fermat's Last Theorem - a 350 year old mathematical

riddle - which has allowed the development of public key cryptography enabling communication on public computer networks such as the internet without compromising privacy.

Since its inception in 1979, the King Faisal Foundation has presented the award to 118 researchers, scholars, and political figures from 32 countries.

The Foundation in 1983 established the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh, with the aim of promoting scientific research and cultural activities beneficial to Islam. Exhibitions have been held on "Arabic Calligraphy in Manuscripts," (1986) and on "Swords and Armor -



Weapons of the Islamic World,” (1991). The center has also developed a special memorial gallery to the late King, which emphasizes his status as a pioneer of Islamic solidarity. During his life King Faisal was the recipient of many honors. These honors and awards are on display in the gallery, which is open to the public and provides a fascinating insight into his life. The awards also provide an excellent introduction to the honors, decorations, and medals of the Middle East. The awards presented to the late King which are on display are as follows:

Afghanistan	Order of the Sun and Collar Order of Independence
Belgium	Order of Leopold
Chad	National Order of Chad
China	Order of the Brilliant Star Order of the Brilliant Jade
Egypt	Order of Ismial (Kingdom) Order of the Nile Collar (Kingdom) Order of the Nile Collar (Republic)
France	Legion of Honor, First and Second Class
Greece	Order of George I
Great Britain	Royal Victorian Chain Order of the British Empire Order of St. Michael and St. George (2nd Class)
Guinea	The National Order
Indonesia	Order of the Republic
Iran	Order of Pahlavi and Collar Order of Taj
Iraq	Order of El-Rafidain Order of Faisal I
Italy	Order of the Crown
Japan	Order of the Chrysanthemum - Collar only
Jordan	Order of Al Hussein - Collar only Order of Al Nahda (twice)
Korea	Order of Distinguished Diplomatic Service
Lebanon	Order of the Cedar
Liberia	Order of the Pioneers of Liberia
Libya	Order of Idris I
Malaysia	Order of the Crown
Mauritania	Order of Mauritania
Morocco	Order of Mohammed - Collar only
Netherlands	Order of Orange-Nassau
Niger	National Order of Niger Order of Merit of Niger
Oman	Order of Oman - Military and Collar
Poland	Order of Polonia Restituta
Pakistan	Order of Imtiaz Order of Pakistan
Senegal	Order of Merit of Senegal
Somalia	Order of the Somali Star and Collar
Spain	Order of Civil Merit and Collar
Sudan	Collar of Honor
Syria	Order of Omayyad

Tunisia	Order of Iftikhar Order of Independence and Collar
Turkey	Gold Red Crescent Medal
Uganda	Order of the Nile
Zaire	Order of the Leopard

Interestingly, there are no Saudi awards on display. Prior to King Faisal’s death the Saudi honors system was still in its infancy. A number of awards had been instituted early in the reign of King Saud, circa 1955. Bichay of Cairo manufactured limited numbers of the Order of King Abdul Aziz and the National Militancy Decoration. The hallmark 1955/56 appears on an example of the Order of King Abdul Aziz. It is not believed that any other awards were ever manufactured. With the accession of King Faisal in 1964 it would appear that these awards became obsolete and were eventually replaced by the current Saudi awards system in 1971.

The award system consisted of the following:

- Great Badr Collar
- Collar of the Order of Abdul Aziz Al Saud
- Order of Abdul Aziz Al Saud
- Medal of Merit
- Military Appreciation Medal
- Air Falcon Medal
- Naval Forces Medal

This limited number of awards, manufactured by Bertrand of Paris, has been expanded on in recent years, and the most prominent addition is that of the Order of King Faisal. This order was instituted by King Faisal’s successor, King Khalid and by Crown Prince Fahad. The terms of this award are as follows:

Royal Decree #M/6 Dated 4 Rabea I 1397 (1976)

By the grace of Almighty God

We, Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, after looking at Royal Decree #M/53 dated 12/02/1397 and after review of Items 19 and 20 of the Regulations of the Council of Ministers issued by Royal Decree #38 dated 22/10/1377 and after review of Royal Decree #M/23 dated 06/09/1389 related to the structure of Saudi awards and on Royal Decree #M/41 dated 14/09/1391 which creates the Order of Abdul Aziz Second Degree and after review of Royal Decree #M/4 dated 25/01/1391 that created civilian and military medals and after review of the decision of the Council of Ministers #206 dated 27/02/1397, We have decreed as follows:

First

Creating a new sash called the Sash of King Faisal and a new award of five degrees called the Order of King Faisal.