
Biography Of Shaykh-ul-Islaam Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab 1115H-1206H

He was the Imaam, the Shaykh, the Mujaddid (reformer), Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab Ibn Sulaymaan Ibn 'Alee Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ahmed Ibn Raashid Ibn Burayd Ibn Muhammad Ibn Mushrif Ibn 'Umar, from a branch of the tribe of Banoo Tameem.

His Birth and Lineage:

Shaykh-ul-Islaam, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab, was born in 1115H in the city of Uyainah, seventy kilometers northwest of Riyaadh, the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He belonged to a highly respectable and scholarly family; his father Shaykh 'Abdul Wahhaab Ibn Sulaymaan, characterized by his profound scholarship and righteousness, inherited an exalted status from his ancestor Shaykh Sulaymaan Ibn 'Alee, the chief of scholars and well versed in teaching, writing and giving verdict.

His Education:

Shaykh-ul-Islaam acquired his primary education from his esteemed father at his native place and was nurtured under his guidance. He was intelligent enough to memorize the Qur'aan by heart at the very tender age of ten only. He read the books on Tafseer, Hadeeth, and Fiqh. From the outset, he was greatly interested in studying the works of early scholars, particularly those of Shaykh-ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah, and his noble student Imaam Ibnul-Qayyim. He went through all those books and well grasped the contents.

On attaining the age of maturity, he set out to perform Hajj at Makkah and derived benefits from the scholars there. He then proceeded to al-Madeenah and studied under the scholars there. From them was the great scholar Shaykh 'Abdullaah Ibn Ibraaheem ash-Shammaree. He also studied under his son who was well versed in the laws in inheritance (al-Faraa'id), Ibraaheem ash-Shammaree, the author of al-'Adhbul-Faa'id fee Sharh Alfiyyatil Faraa'id. It was they who introduced him to the famous scholar of Hadeeth, Shaykh Muhammad Hayaat as-Sindhee. With him he studies to sciences of Hadeeth and sciences related to its narrators. He also granted him permission (jjaazah) to narrate the source books of Hadeeth. And hence, the Shaykh adopted the studentship of two renowned erudite, Shaykh 'Abdullaah Ibn Ibraaheem Ibn Sa'id Najdee and Shaykh Muhammad Hayaat Sindhee for a long period. And out of curiosity for higher education, he also took the journey to Iraaq and Basrah and got himself benefited there.

Condition of Najd:

In those days, the people of Najd were badly indulged in polytheistic deeds and un-Islamic practices. They were completely overwhelmed with shirk. The graves, trees, stones, caves, evil spirits and insane person were regarded as deities. The baseless stories and tales were ascribed to them to manifest their excellence. The worldly 'Ullema too had misguided them for the fulfillment of their materialistic lust. The soothsayers and the magicians were having their influence over the society.

None could dare challenge their holds on the commoners. Same condition was prevailing in both Makkah and al-Madeenah also. Yemen was also in the same line. Shirk, erection of structures on the graves, seeking refuge and assistance of the dead, saints and jinns were the common religious features.

Mission of Da'wah:

Having studied this pitiable condition of the nation, the Shaykh was highly moved. More pitiable was the situation that no one was ready to take trouble to guide the people to the Right Path. It is obvious that to take this task meant to challenge those evildoers who had their provisions through these practices. It meant to make oneself prepared to face every torture and atrocities from these selfish misguiders and their followers. But the Shaykh resolved to make every effort to fight against the circumstances up to the extent of Jihaad.

The Shaykh started his mission. He invited the people to Tawheed and guided them to the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. He urged the 'Ullema to strictly follow the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and derive issues directly from them. He forcibly contradicted the blind following of any scholar of the Ummah in preference to the Qur'aan and the Hadeeth.

The Shaykh was a man of courage and enthusiasm. He started his preaching, made correspondence with religious scholars, inviting them to lend helping hands in the abolition of the prevailing absurdities and defilements in the religious matters.

A number of scholars from Makkah, al-Madeenah, and Yemen accepted his invitation, and supported him. But apart from them, there were also such ignorant and selfish scholars who criticized him and kept themselves aloof.

The so-called learned ones rose against the Shaykh, as they were being affected by his Da'wah in terms of their worldly gains. Even then he took journey to different places to convey his message to the people given to error. Traveling through Zabeer, Ahsa, Huraymala, he reached Uyainah.

Arrival at Uyainah:

That was the period when the ruler of Uyainah was 'Uthmaan Ibn Hamd Ibn Ma'mar. He welcomed the Shaykh gladly, and assured him every help in this mission of Islaamic Da'wah. The Shaykh devoted himself to this great work of reformation for the sake of Allaah. He gained popularity far and wide. People started resorting to him in large numbers. He became engaged in their guidance and teachings.

The Shaykh, however, continued his struggle to free the environment from all the defilements and pollutions. There were numerous tombs, graves, caves, trees, etc. which were worshipped by the Muslims. With the help of Ameer 'Uthmaan Ibn Ma'mar, most of them were destroyed by the Shaykh. He became engaged in purifying the people from shirk and heretic rituals in Uyainah and its surroundings.

In the mean time, a woman came to him for her purification from the sin of committing adultery. Investigations were made as to whether she was mentally sound or not, and also that whether she had choiced for the punishment under some pressure or voluntarily. When it was confirmed that she was doing that voluntarily out of repentance, the Shaykh ordered for the Rajm (to kill by throwing stones, which is the punishment for adultery). Owing to these events – dismantling of tombs, self-surrendering of the woman for punishment and migration of the people to Uyainah to seek guidance from the Shaykh – the reputation of the Shaykh spread far and wide.

Exit from Uyainah and Entrance to Dar'iyah:

When the ruler of Al-Ahsa and its surroundings, Sulaymaan Ibn Uray'ar, came to know about the personality of the Shaykh among the people, he became afraid of the growing strength of the Shaykh and resolved to crush him at the very outset, lest he should overthrow him from power. So he threatened Ameer 'Uthmaan, with whom the Shaykh was living, and asked him to kill the Shaykh. Ameer 'Uthmaan was not in a position to withstand Sulaymaan, hence he became panicky. Apprehending that if he disobeyed his order, he would punish him and overpower him, he made the Shaykh acquainted with the whole situation and submitted him to migrate to any other place. And the Shaykh migrated from Uyainah to Dar'iyah.

The people of Dar'iyah knew the Shaykh very well and they were also aware of his mission. When the ruler of Dar'yah, Ameer Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood, came to know about the arrival of the Shaykh in his territory, he was much pleased and visited him at his place. Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood belonged to a pious family and himself was a practical Muslim. He exchanged his views with the Shaykh and was rejoiced to know that his mission aimed to revive the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and the Islaamic teachings in its original form. The Shaykh desired to promote firm belief in the Oneness of Allaah and true guidance of Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

Pledge to Propagate the Teachings of Islaam:

The Shaykh described to Ameer Muhammad the accounts of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions, as to how they strove for the cause of Allaah, enduring all the difficulties and making their best efforts with all the sacrifices. The Shaykh persuaded Ameer Muhammad also to the same and assured him of Allaah's Pleasure in the Hereafter, and His favour and victory in this world. Ibn Sa'ood, being convinced by the Shaykh, agreed with him and promised his full support to him and to his mission, provided when Allaah would bless him with victory, he would not leave him. The Shaykh also gave his words to this effect, and thus Ibn Sa'ood gave the Shaykh pledge to propagate the teachings of Islaam (especially Tawheed), mobilize Muslims for Jihaad (fighting for the cause of Allaah), emphasize adherence to the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam), enjoin good deeds and forbid evils. The Shaykh invoked Allaah to be his Guide and bless him to be firm in his determination, and to give him every success in this life and the Hereafter.

Dar'iyah, the Center of Da'wah:

At this time, the Shaykh found himself in a peaceful environment, most suitable for his work of Da'wah. He seized the golden opportunity and started to educate the masses. People of Dar'iyah and its surroundings resorted to him for the lessons in Islaam. Ameer Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood presented himself before the Shaykh as one of his students of Islaam along with the members of his family. Dar'iyah was crowded with the people visiting for learning. The Shaykh started teaching, preaching, and inviting people to Allaah. He undertook the task of delivering lectures on different branches of knowledge, namely Tawheed, exposition of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, knowledge of Fiqh and 'Arabic language, etc.

Thus Dar'iyah turned into a center of learning and Da'wah, and people started migrating to it in a large number.

The assembly of people and the far-reaching effects of his mission made him far-famed, which rendered his enemies into jealousy. They started false propaganda against the Shaykh and even blamed him of blasphemy, and branded him a Zindeeq and a sorcerer. However, the Shaykh was a man of courage. He did not care for these blames and continued his mission with full enthusiasm. He even debated his opponents in the best manner and in a polite way. This attitude proved very effective and rendered his opponents to be his supporters.

The Shaykh, along with his work of Da'wah, planned for Jihaad against overwhelming shirk and heretic ideas and practices, and invited people of all ranks to join in this mission. Delegates from every corner of the 'Arab Peninsula visited Dar'iyah to pledge their support to the Shaykh and to take lesson of true Tawheed of Islaam. Then they would return back to their areas to teach the same to their people and educate them.

The ruler of Uyainah and the elites took journey to pay visit and requested him to turn back Uyainah. But the Shaykh rejected the proposal. They also pledged to fight for the cause of Islaam till the last. The Shaykh also sent his disciples to the different regions and countries to preach the teachings of Islaam based only on the Qur'aan and the authentic Ahaadeeth of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Correspondence with Rulers:

The Shaykh drew the attention of the rulers and the scholars of each region towards the shirk and heresy in which the people were indulged and invited them for their eradication. For the purpose, he stepped into correspondence. He wrote letters to the rulers, elites and scholars of Najd, Riyaadh, Karj, towns of the southern region, Qaseem, Hayel, Washm, Sudayr, etc.

He also wrote to the outstanding 'Ulema of Ahsa, Makkah, and al-Madeenah. Outside the 'Arab Peninsula, he made correspondence to the learned figures of Syria, Iraaq, India, Yemen as well. He maintained his communication with them, explained them the aims and objects of his mission, substantiated the points with the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, and invited their attention towards the eradication of absurd and heretical beliefs and practices in the masses.

And thus, the Shaykh's mission spread far and wide. A large number of scholars and other people throughout India, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Iraaq, etc. got influenced and attracted towards his Da'wah. They also stood up in their own regions, with a great zeal and enthusiasm, to invite the people towards Allaah and to the pure and basic teachings of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah, free from all heresies and misinterpretations.

Death:

The Shaykh dedicated his whole life for this Da'wah and Jihaad with his utmost sincerity and with the help of Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood and his son 'Abdul-Azeez, the rulers of Dar'iyah. He breathed his last on the last day of the month of Dhul-Qa'dah in 1206H (1792 CE). May Allaah cover him in mercy and reward him well for his services to Islaam and the Muslims. Indeed Allaah is the One who hears and responds to supplications.

Impact of Da'wah:

As a result of the continued Da'wah, vigorous struggle and Jihaad in the way of Allaah for a long period of about fifty years from 1158H to 1206H, a complete victory over the entire Najd was gained. People abandoned worshipping graves, tombs, shrines, trees, etc. and all the more they deserted all of them and practiced the pure faith of Islaam. Blind following of the forefathers, ancestors, and traditions in vogue was abandoned; and Sharee'ah was revived and established. Obligatory duties were being observed in the light of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah.

A framework for enjoining good deeds and forbidding bad ones was instituted. Masaajid began to be visited by people in abundance for performing as-Salaat.

Peace and tranquility prevailed everywhere, in towns as well as in villages. People became safe even in deserts and on lonely ways. The ignorant and notorious bedouins moulded their conduct. The preachers and preceptors were sent to every corner to teach and educate the common people.

Thus a thorough revival of the complete religion came into existence.

After the death of the Shaykh, his sons, grandsons, students and supporters continued the work of Da'wah and Jihaad in the way of Allaah. Among his sons, the most ardent in these activities were: Shaykh Imaam 'Abdullaah Ibn Muhammad, Shaykh Husayn Ibn Muhammad, Shaykh 'Alee Ibn Muhammad, and Shaykh Ibraaheem Ibn Muhammad; and among his grandsons were: Shaykh 'Abdur-Rahmaan Ibn Hasan, Shaykh 'Alee Ibn Husayn, Shaykh Sulaymaan Ibn 'Abdullaah. Apart from them, a large group of his students including Shaykh Hamd Ibn Naasir, scholars from Dar'iyah and others remained continuously engaged in inviting people towards Allaah's true religion by writing and publishing books, fighting for the cause of Allaah and making correspondence in this regard.

Some of his Works:

Despite the fact that Shaykh-ul-Islam Muhammad Ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab was a mujaddid (reformer) and a man of Da'wah, he still engaged in writing also. Some of his famous works are as follows:

1. Kitaab at-Tawheed, which has been printed many times; every time an edition is sold out it is reprinted.
2. Kitaab al-Kabaa'ir
3. Kashf ash-Shubuhaat
4. Mukhtasar Seerat ar-Rasool
5. Masa'il al-Jahiliyyah
6. Usool al-'Eemaan
7. Fadaa'il al-Qur'aan
8. Fadaa'il al-Islam
9. Majmoo' al-Ahaadeeth
10. Mukhtasar al-Insaaf
11. ash-Sharh al-Kabeer
12. al-Usool ath-Thalaatha
13. Aadab al-Mashhi ila as-Salaat
14. Mukhtasar Zaad al-Ma'aad
15. And he has a large number of Fataawaa and treatises, which have been collected under the title: Majmoo'ah Muallafaat al-Imaam Muhammad Ibn 'Abdil Wahhaab, under the supervision of Imaam Muhammad Ibn Sa'ood University, Riyaadh.

And others.

Taken From **Kitaab ut-Tawheed**, by Shaykhul-Islam Ibn 'Abdul Wahhaab.