

Shah Wali Ullah – 1703 - 1762

Qutub-ud-Din

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Brief Note

Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddis Dehlvi was born on February 21, 1703 at Delhi, just when the reign of Aurangzeb was nearing its end. He was named Qutb-ud-Din, but is better known by his title of Wali Ullah, given to him by

virtue of his goodness and piety. His father, Shah Abdul Rahim, was a sufi and theologian of great repute. He was the founding member and teacher of the Madrasa-i-Rahimiyah in Delhi. Shah Abdul Rahim was associated with the completion of the famous Islamic legal text, Fatawa-i-Alamgiri. Shah Wali Ullah received his academic and spiritual education from his father. He memorized the Holy Quran and gained knowledge of Tafseer, Hadith, spiritualism, mysticism, metaphysics, logic, and IIm-ul-Kalam while still in his boyhood. After mastering these subjects, he turned his attention to the Sahih Bukhari and Islamic Jurisprudence. He also studied medicine and tibb. After acquiring this knowledge, he taught at his father's Madrasa for 12 years. He left for Arabia in 1730 for higher education. During his stay in Arabia, he was influenced by Sheikh Abu Tahir bin Ibrahim, a renowned scholar of the time. He studied in Medina for 14 years, where he obtained his Sanad in Hadith. It is believed that while Shah Wali Ullah was in Arabia, he was blessed with a vision of the Holy Prophet (SAW), and tidings that he would be influential in organizing the reform of Muslims in India. By the time he returned to Delhi in July 1732, the decline in Mughal fortunes had started. The social, political, economic and religious conditions of the Muslims were very poor. On his return to India, he not only identified the causes for the decline of the Muslims, but also pointed out the remedies. Shah Wali Ullah believed that the various problems Muslims faced were due to their ignorance about Islam and the Holy Quran. He, therefore, personally trained a number of students who were entrusted with the task of spreading Islam. In order to promulgate the teachings of Islam and make the Holy Quran more accessible to the people, he translated the Quran to Persian, the main and common language of the people at that time. He also tried to reduce the various differences of many a sectarian group prevailing at that time.

Shah Wali Ullah was a prolific writer and wrote extensively on Fiqh and Hadith. He eventually wrote 51 books; 23 in Arabic and 28 in Persian. Among his famous works are the Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah and Izalat-ul-Khifa. Shah Wali Ullah also made efforts for the political uplift of Muslims of India. He wrote to Ahmad Shah Abdali to help the Muslims of India in crushing the Marhattas, who were a constant threat to the crumbling Mughal Empire. In 1761, Ahmad Shah Abdali, in response to Shah Wali Ullah's call, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marhattas at Panipat. Shah Wali Ullah was responsible for awakening in the community the desire to regain its moral fervor and maintain its purity. He was laid to rest in 1762. His sons and followers ably continued his work and noble mission.