

# Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and His Economic Ideas

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In an attempt to investigate Muslim economic thinking in the 12<sup>th</sup> century Hijrah, corresponding 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, the present paper explores economic ideas of one of the greatest Muslim personalities of the period, Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab (1115-1206/1703-1792), who is commonly known as revivalist and renovator of religious beliefs and practices. The paper discovers that he had deep insights in financial matters who managed the public finance of the first Saudi State.<sup>1</sup> At the outset, to provide a background knowledge of the personality of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the paper sheds light on time and environment in which he lived, his life and work, and his impact. The paper is an initiative that aims to fillip research into unexplored areas. There is need to carry out thorough research into economic ideas of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and his contemporaries.

## Time and Environment

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was born in the centre of the Najd at al-Uyaynah, an oasis which at that time was enjoying some prosperity. It was the time when the Islamic World had reached its extreme decline, degradation and utter fall. The atmosphere was very gloomy and darkness had covered all its regions. Moral degradation and corruption was rampant everywhere. Especially the condition of the Arabian Peninsula was highly terrible. Ibn Bishr (1391 AH, pp. 19-20) presents the sad picture of Arabian Peninsula. There was no law and order, economy was spoiled, opium and wine were common and religiosity deplorable. Pagan innovations and superstitions cropped up and vastly mushroomed. The people went back to their old practices of idolatry. They started paying homage to shrines and graves, so much so that they even directed their devotional prayers and supplications towards the graves to the exclusion of Allah. They gave precedence to the philosophical views and *taqlid* (blind following) over the Sunnah.<sup>2</sup> According to Natana DeLong-Bas (1994, p. 8), 'one of the major signs of the deterioration of Islam was the adoption of rituals and beliefs from other religions, like praying to saints and believing that saints could grant blessings or perform miracles. In some cases, people had adopted superstitious practices, like spitting in a particular way or wearing charms to ward off evil spirits'. Thus, pure and austere monotheism (*tawhid*) had become corrupted with the growing superstition and mysticism. The mosques stood empty, unfrequented and even deserted. The ignorant multitude decorated amulet, charms and rosaries listened to and blindly followed foul saints and ecstatic dervishes.

In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the Najd was infested with corrupt beliefs and religious practices repugnant

to the fundamentals of the True Religion. For example: In Jubailah, people visited the grave of Zayd b. al- Khattab and sought relief for their needs. In Manfuhah, people sought mediation through a male palm-tree believing that a spinster, who pays a visit to it, soon gets married. In Dar`iyah there was a cave which people frequented. Ibn Bishr (1391 AH, pp. 22-23). The same story was prevalent in other parts of Arabia. These conditions were demanding for a reformer and renovator.

## **Life and Works**

**Early life and education.** Shaykh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab b. Sulayman al-Tamimi belonged to a family which had produced several scholars of Hanbali school of jurisprudence. His grand father, Sulayman b. Muhmmad had been *mufti* of the Najd. His father Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1153/1740) was *qadi* at Uyaynah. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's education began under his learned father's guidance. He studied the Hanbali jurisprudence, *tafsir* and *hadith* from him. He performed *hajj* in 1128/1715 and stayed there about four years to return in 1132/1719. At that time Shaykh Abdullah bin Ibrahim b. Saif al-Najdi was chief of the scholars of Madinah. Shaykh Muhammad acquired a good deal of knowledge from him. Al-Najdi introduced him to another great scholar of Madinah Muhammad Hayat al-Sindi (d. 1165/1751) (Ibn Bishr, 1391 AH, p. 21).

Their strong stand on *tawhid* (unicity of Allah) and their deep concern over false beliefs and evil deeds brought about a strong bond between the Shaykh and his teachers. During this time he came to know and benefited from the knowledge of other scholars such as Ali Afendi Daghistani, Isma`il al-`Ajluni and others. Then he moved on to Najd and Basrah. He wanted to travel to Syria for the purpose of acquiring further knowledge but due to lack of resources, he had to give up the idea (Ibn Bishr, 1391 AH, vol.1, p. 21). He stayed for a long time in Basrah, where he pursued his studies under a number of renowned scholars, among whom Shaykh Muhammad al-Majmu`i was most prominent (Ibn Bishr, 1391 AH, p. 21).

**Reformative endeavors.** During his stay in Basrah, he authored his most famous work *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Essays on the Unicity of Allah or The Book of Monotheism). The supporters of falsehood defamed, tortured and turned him out of Basrah. They also persecuted his teacher Shaykh al-Majmu`i. After leaving Basrah he came to the town al-Zubayr, then to al-Ahsa, and then finally to Huraymila. In all these places he faced much suffering at the hands of the wicked persons who did not like his enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. So he decided to move to Uyaynah, which was then governed by Uthman Ibn Muhammad b. Muammar. Uthman welcomed the Shaykh with hospitality and promised him all support and help in calling people to the true and pure Islam (ibid. p. 22).

The Shaykh urged the people to return to the worship of Allah only and a strict adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet. The Shaykh managed to cut down trees that were being worshipped in the area. He succeeded with the help of Uthman, in bringing down the dome over the grave of Zayd b. al-Khattab. He also carried out the prescribed punishment for adultery on a woman who had confessed to it (ibid. pp. 22, 23).

**Use of Economic weapon against the Shaykh.** Sulayman b. Muhammad of the Shi'ite tribe Banu Khalid, the chief of al-Ahsa and Qatif, became afraid of the Shaykh's growing influence and number of supporters. He used the economic weapon to put an end to the Shaykh's reformation

endeavors.

Uthman b. Muhammad b. Muammar, the ruler of Uyaynah in whose region the Shaykh was carrying on his reforms, had many economic connections with the ruler of al-Ahsa such as:

- He used to draw an annual stipend from the treasury of al-Ahsa
- He enjoyed trading priority in the port of al-Ahsa
- He enjoyed exception from taxes on his agriculture estates in al-Ahsa, and
- His traders of Uyaynah used to receive many concessions in al-Ahsa

Using his influence Sulayman, the chief of al-Ahsa and Qatif, pressurized the *amir* of Uyaynah, Uthman b. Mu`ammar to kill the Shaykh or handover him. Otherwise he would stop all concessions, and attack him. However, Uthman who could not refuse his demand advised the Shaykh to leave Uyaynah clandestinely. Thus, he left for Dar`iyah (ibid. p. 23).

***In Dar`iyah.*** The Shaykh left the town on foot escorted by a horseman through the desert in the scorching sun, with only the thought of Allah, until he reached Dar`iyah as the guest of Abd al-Rahman b. Suwaylim, who introduced him to most of the prominent people of Dar`iyah. They visited him in secret and he explained to them the real meaning and the significance of *tawhid*. Two brothers of *Amir* Muhammad b. Saud (d. 1178/1765), the chief of Dar`iyah, Mashari and Thunayyan became supporters of the Shaykh. They convinced their brother Muhammad to see the Shaykh and listen to his call. It is reported that the wife of Muhammad b. Sa`ud, who was a pious and wise lady, played important role in persuasion of her husband to welcome the Shaykh (Ibid. p. 24).

Prince Muhammad accepted the suggestion and met the Shaykh. He invited the *amir* to *tawhid* saying that it was the message, with which all the Messengers were sent by Allah. He also drew the attention of the Prince to the polytheistic practices and notions prevalent among the people of the Najd. He wished that the Prince should assume leadership of the Muslims. The prince acceded to the wish of the Shaykh and offered him all help and assistance to carry out his task.

However, *amir* Muhammad b. Saud put two conditions to the Shaykh:

1. When his movements would spread, he should not leave him.
2. He collected taxes on fruits from his territory that he should not oppose.

The Shaykh said: “As for the first condition is concerned, I vow, my blood will be with yours; my destruction will be with your destruction. As for the second condition is concerned, I hope the Almighty Allah will bestow upon you conquest and compensate you with spoils of war, and *zakah* which will be much better than what you are exacting from them” (Ibid. p. 25. Amir Muhammad convincingly accepted the Shaykh’s assurance.

The allegiance that took place in the year 1157/1744 between the two Muhammads – Shaykh Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab and *amir* Muhammad b. Saud proved turning point in the history of

Arabian peninsula. They integrated and strengthened each other. According to Lothrop Stoddard (1925, p. 28), 'Saudi always considered himself responsible to public opinion and never encroached upon the legitimate freedom of his subjects. His government though stern, was able and just. The Wahhabi<sup>3</sup> judges were competent and honest. Robbery became almost unknown, so well was the public peace maintained'.

The Shaykh's movement passed through four stages – first in Basrah, second in al-Ahsa and third in Huraymila, and fourth in al-Dar`iyah (Ibid. p. 21). Before he passed away in 1206/1792, he saw the success of his movement and its extension in major part of the peninsula.

In the opinion of al-Faruqi (1994, p. xvii), in the movement of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 'what was indeed extraordinary was the coincidence of the `alim and the prince'. 'The movement was hatched and grew to full maturity before Napoleon landed in Egypt, Dar`iyah became the greatest capital of Islamic modernism without undergoing any modernist influence' (ibid).

At the time when the Shaykh migrated to Dar`iyah, the number of houses there did not cross seventy. Their economy was simple and subsistence level. Trading was very scarce and for necessities of life only (al-Uqayli, p. 69). After his arrival, the number of inhabitants increased and so the economic activities. Extensive farming, reclamation of land, and plantation were seen everywhere. Commercial activities also expanded. With the establishment of peace and security domestic trade received a boost. Literacy enhanced (ibid, 70).

***His Campaign of Renovation and Purification.*** The Shaykh never claimed the rank of *mujtahid*. The oneness of God (*Tawhid*) was the basic point of call for return to original Islam (*Salafiyah*) (al-Uqayli, 1984, p. 79). Ibn Abd al-Wahhab felt that 'the devotional of the Muslim masses, as well as their religious consciousness, had been infiltrated with Sufi views and practices compromising *tawhid*. A reversal of the tide of history, .... would not be possible without reform of popular Muslim religiosity' (al-Faruqi, 1994, p. xvi). Shaykh Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab focused on *tawhid* and fought innovations and deviations in religion, which prevailed in Arabia. He considered his movement an effort to purify Islam by returning Muslims to the original principles of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and rejecting all un-Islamic beliefs and practices. Natana DeLong-Bas (1994, p. 8) observes: 'the major distinctive doctrine of Islam is belief in absolute monotheism (*tawhid*). ... It was for this reason that the revival and reform movements of the eighteenth century adamantly insisted that a "return" to monotheism was the necessary first step in reforming Islam. This meant getting rid of foreign and superstitious beliefs and practices. Wahhabism shared this common concern and goal, becoming famous for its strict adherence to absolute monotheism (*tawhid*)'.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was right in diagnosis of the basic evil of his society and the cure. It was through the faith in *tawhid* that the Prophet Muhammad, be peace upon him, used to rectify pre-Islamic ignorance (*jahiliyah*), and now his follower Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab also used the same to correct the corrupt society of his time. His fight against the other evils has already been noted above.

***Opposition:*** Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did not face opposition from commoners and ignorant people only. Certain so-called scholars also tried to malign his reform through their works. 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn

Ahamad Barakat al-Shafe'i al-Azhari al-Tantawi from Egypt, Zayni Dahlan from Makkah, 'Ali al-Shafi'i al-Basri al-Qabbani from Iraq authored books in refutation of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's reforms. These oppositions were based on ignorance, rivalry, and suspicions. A major factor was misunderstanding created by defaming forces motivated by political objectives. Even his brother Sulaiman and his father, 'Abd al-Wahhab, had initially repudiated him for his ideas. Eventually a good majority of his people accepted his views. His father and brother Sulaiman too were convinced after prolonged discussions.

**Works.** *Kitab al-Tawhid* is the most important work of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab. It is, no doubt, 'the ideational spearhead' of his mighty movement (al-Faruqi, 1994, p. xv). This movement spread within a century like wildfire throughout the Muslim World.

There is no doubt that *tawhid* is the most basic and key concept in Islam. According to Siddiqi (1980, p. 17), 'It sums up the Islamic way of life and presents, in a nutshell, the essence of the Islamic civilization.' He rightly considers 'a lapse from *tawhid*' the main cause behind the Muslims' decline – 'their loss of political power, of their economic backwardness, intellectual stagnation, and social degeneration' (ibid).

Since *Kitab al-Tawhid* 'was meant to be an instrument for reform, the author was more concerned to expose the misunderstanding and misapplications of the principle than to project its desirable consequences' (al-Faruqi, 1994, p. xix). He gave the book the appearance of a student's notes rather than a systematically laid-out treatise'.... 'Every chapter in this book opens a vista of breathtaking vision'.

His some other works are as follows:

- *Adab al-Mashy Ila al-Salah* (Manners of Walking to the Prayer)
- *Usul al-Iman* (Foundations of Faith)
- *Fada'il al-Islam* (Excellent Virtues of Islam)
- *Fada'il al-Qur'an* (Excellent Virtues of the Qur'an)
- *Kitab Kashf al-Shubuhah* (The Book of Clarification of Uncertainties)
- *Majmu'at al-Hadith 'Ala Abwab al-Fiqh* (Compendium of the Hadith on the Main Topics of the *Fiqh*).

For the benefits of students and those who could not read voluminous works, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab prepared abridged edition of many significant works of earlier writers. For example:

- *Mukhtasar al-Iman* (Abridgement of Ibn Taymiya's *Kitab al-Iman* (the Faith))
- *Mukhtasar al-Insaf wa'l-Sharh al-Kabir* (Abridgement of the two works, *al-Insaf* and *al-Sharh al-Kabir*)
- *Mukhtasar Sirat al-Rasul* (Summarized Biography of the Prophet)
- *Mukhtasar al-Sawa'iq* (Literally Summary of the Lightning bolt, it is a summary of a criticism of Shi'as written in Palestine by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani).
- *Mukhtasar Fath al-Bari* (*Fath al-Bari* is a commentary on the *Sahih al-Bukhari* by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani).

- *-Mukhtasar al-Minhaj* (Summary of the Path, most likely referring to *Minhaj al-Sunnah* by Ibn Taymiyah)

### **His impact**

Refuting the charges that the movement of Shaykh Muhammad b. Abd al Wahhab, was retrograde or conservative Abdul Hamid Siddiqi says: (1983, p. 1448), ‘It is progressive in the sense that it not only awakened the Arabs to the most urgent need of heart-searching and broke the complacency to which they had been accustomed for years, but also gave the reform a definite line of action’. ‘The Shaykh made an elaborate programme of fostering education amongst the masses and teachers who could both teach and preach...’ (ibid. p. 1448-49).... ‘The puritan beginnings of Islamic revival were combined with an elaborate programme of mass education and a recreation against *taqlid* (blind following) broadened along more conservative lines’.

In spite of the ignoble and false propaganda mounted by his adversaries against the reformatory movement of Shaykh Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab and the derogatory use of the word ‘*Wahhabi*’ for the movement and its followers, his impact on the modern development of Muslim mind has been profound. This has been admitted by a number of 20<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals. Henri Laoust (1971, p. 679) observes “Although Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab’s doctrine was condemned or rejected by an important section of Muslim opinion, it was nevertheless to make a powerful contribution not only to a more profound Islamization of Arabia, but also to a general renewal of the Islamic conscience immediately before the modern period of intrusion from the West”. Taha Husayn (d. 1973) says that the movement of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab has influenced not only the Arabian Peninsula, but also its relation with European nations (Sa’id, 1963, p. 201). To him, his movement was new and old at the same time. It was new as compared to his time but it was the same old call which was given by the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). It had great impact on literary and intellectual life of Arabs (ibid. pp. 202-203).

Stressing upon the influence of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab on modern generation, our contemporary scholar DeLong-Bas (2004) remarks: “Many of the themes he discussed in his writings are hallmarks of the 18th century Islamic thought. These include his emphasis on a return to the Qur'an and *hadith*, the eradication of erroneous popular religious practices, like tomb and saint veneration, rejection of *taqlid* (blind following) in favor of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), authentication of *hadith* (prophetic traditions) on the basis of their content, rather than their *asnad* (chains of transmission), focus on the intent behind actions, rather than ritual perfection”. She further says: "It would be more appropriate to look at early 20th century reformist movements, particularly the Salafiyya movement in Egypt led by Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, for Sheikh Muhammad's intellectual influence. Sheikh Muhammad's legal thought is also apparent in many contemporary legal reforms, ironically those pertaining to women gender."

Several of the sons and students of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab carried on his mission. His four sons, Husayn, Ali, Abd-Allah and Ibrahim were great scholars and authors who continued his mission after him (al-Nadwi, 1984, p. 182). His movement resulted into development of human resources for the young Saudi state. For example: Some for the students who benefited from his knowledge

and rose to the position of *Qadis* and *Muftis* are as follows:

Shaykh Abd al Aziz b. Abdullah al-Nasim, a Judge in the territory of al-Washm, Shaykh Sa'id b. Hijji, a Judge of Hawtah of Bani Tamim, Shaykh Abd al-Rahman b. Nami, who became Judge of Uyaynah, and Shaykh Ahmad b. Rashid al-Urayni the Qadi of Sudair. The most notable student was Shaykh Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abd al-Latif b. Abd al-Rahman b. Hassan who was the grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia.

Some of the authors think that eighteenth century reformative movements led by Shah Wali-Allah al-Dihlawi in India and Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio in the West Africa were influenced by the Movement of Shaykh Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab. But this is not correct. When al-Dihlawi visited Hijaz in the year 1143 AH, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was engaged in Basrah. His movement was not stabilized even in the areas of al-Najd. Uthman Dan Fodio's any visit of Arabia is not reported in the sources dealing with his life and work.<sup>4</sup> However, he was trained by some teachers who had been in the Holy places of Islam. But they were too seniors to be aware of and affected by the movement of Shaykh Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab. In fact, all these reformers were influenced by the same original sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the intellectual and religious network of Madinah, the city of the Prophet.

### **Economic Ideas**

Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab was fully aware of the importance of economic factor in man's life. It was lack of economic support that he had to drop his plan of pursuing education in Syria (Ibn Bishr, 1391 AH, p. 21). He also realized that it was economic dependence of Ibn Mu'ammara upon al-Khalidi that the former was forced to expel Ibn Abd al-Wahhab from Huraymila (ibid. p. 23). Again, it was necessity of economic means to perform ones religious and social obligations that he paid attention to revival and reclamation of lands and development of agriculture and trade after reaching Dar'iyah (Uqayli, p.70). Paying homage to the Shaykh's efforts to promote the economy of his people, Fazlur-Rahman (1970, p. 638) says: 'The Wahhabis, however, have done good work by bringing into relief the principles of Islamic egalitarianism and co-operation, and actually founded cooperative farm villages'.

It is reported that some of his followers used to work in night to attend his lectures in the day. Most probably this might have been on his advice and he would not like idleness. As the job opportunities were not enough in Dar'iyah, he used to help his poor followers financially, those who could not get a job or unable to work, through borrowing from others. He repaid such loans from the booty obtained from the conquest of Riyadh (Ibn Bishr, 1: 22, 25). This shows that he favours the idea of unemployment allowance provided that it is not voluntary.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was a man of action and conviction. He called people to return to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. These two sources contain a number of economic principles and teachings. They were sufficient to solve the simple problems facing the economy of the Najd region, the center of his reformative endeavors. Thus, he did not need to deal with economic ideas in his works. By his

action he practically showed how to solve economic problems of his society. When Ibn Saud asked him at the time of *bay`ah*, not to object and oppose the taxes he would collect from the fruit products of his territory, the Shaykh's answer was: "I hope the Almighty Allah will bestow upon you conquest and compensate you through war booty, and *zakah* which will be much better than what you exact from them (al-Uqayli, 1984, pp. 67-68). Clearly, this shows that like Ibn Taymiyah<sup>5</sup> he believed that if non-Shar`iah taxes are cancelled, the Shar`iah taxes will be enough to take care of the genuine public expenditure of the state. By his administration of public revenue he practically proved and showed how Shari`ah-sanctioned sources could take care of the need of the government and people.

The historian Ibn Bishr (1391 AH, 1: 27) states: 'the fifth parts (booty), *zakah* and whatever minor or major items were brought to al-Dar`iyah, they were handed over to the Shaykh who disposed them as he saw them fit. No one, even *amir* Abd al-Aziz (d. 1215/1801), took anything without his permission. But after Riyadh was conquered, the Shaykh handed over all these matters to Abd al-Aziz'. Through a report of Ibn Ghannam, al-Uthaymin (1979, p. 71) infers that the administration of public finance was entrusted to the Shaykh up to the end of his life. Thus, he might be rightly called the first finance administrator of the first Saudi state. It is not known what the budget of the government at that time was. Data of some later years are reported by al-Riki (2005, p. 272) as: during early period of Saudi rule, the authorities collected each year from the subject cash and kind in the name of *zakah*. People of Najd paid 400,000 Riyals. People living in the direction of Syria, Yemen Tihamah, and Oman paid annually about 500,000 Riyals. Their income from al-Ahsa was 400,000 Riyals, from Qatif 200,000 Riyals, from Bahrain 400,000 Riyal from the Bedouins of Hijaz and surrounding areas annually 200,000 Riyal and the annual income generated from Ras al-Khimah in the year was 120,000 Riyal from booty excluding gifts. Since a number of wars were fought and won, spoil of war was also an important source of public income. Gifts presented to government officials were deposited in the *bayt al-mal*.

*Zakah* collected from the cities of Oman, which were under the Saudi rule, is estimated to 150,000 Riyal excluding the salaries and government *awqaf* dedicated to the military. Saud family had some other sources of income which were not regular, such as gifts from kings, spoils of war and their own properties in Najd. From al-Ahsa such incomes reached to an annual amount of 300,000 Riyals (ibid.). It seems that the Shaykh did not permit any tax except *zakah* which he collected from both hidden and open assets. The historian al-Riki (2005, p. 308) writes: "He (Ibn Abd al-Wahhab) made it obligatory for people to pay *zakah* from their non-apparent assets that can easily be hidden away by the owner such as money and merchandise to imam, that is, the ruler of Muslims, and he will distribute it among its beneficiaries".<sup>6</sup> Perhaps Ibn Abd al-Wahhab did not mention this in his books. It is possible that al-Riki has come to know this from the practice of Muhammad b. Abd al-Wahhab and the history of the period or some other reports. It may be noted that what the Shaykh did was the original practice of early rightly guided caliphs. When wealth and prosperity increased it was third Caliph Uthman b. Affan who allowed the *zakah* payers to disburse the *zakah* of non-apparent assets themselves.<sup>7</sup> Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's action in this regard is one more example of his endeavor to return to the original practices of Islam.

Out of various economic institutions of Islam, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab especially paid attention to *waqf*, as it was misused by some persons, so he thought to present the correct Islamic position regarding the *waqf*. He notes three stands on *waqf* creation: A *waqf* created for poor and down trodden with good intention to win the pleasure of Allah in which his inheritors are not included. This kind of *waqf* is valid to majority of jurists but Qadi Shurayh and scholars from Kufah reject it which is the



second stand. A third stand is to create *waqf* at the cost of inheritors, apparently for the pleasure of Allah but intentionally to dispose the property arbitrarily, depriving some of inheritors and rewarding more to some others. Although some *muftis* consider it valid, in his opinion it is a corrupt practice, and an interference in the inheritance system provided in the Qur'an. He supports his stand with the primary sources of Islam – the Qur'an and Sunnah – that shows his vast knowledge of these sources and power to infer rules (Sa'id, 1963, pp. 96-104).

Dallal (1993, p. 348) is correct when he says that 'Ibn Abd al-Wahhab even distinguishes between what may be termed as injustice because of social and economic inequities and creedal injustice (*zulum al-amwal* and *zulm al-shirk*)'. But he is not correct when he says that 'Wahhabi thought is focused on the second kind, whereas the first is tolerable as long as it is accompanied by *tawhid*' (ibid.).

As an administrator of public finance the Shaykh had to manage the public expenditure as well. In addition to expenditure on maintenance of armed forces, and stipend on deserving people, he must have included the development of the economy as a whole, because this was inevitable in that particular situation. However, sources are silent about the details of his scheme of expenditure. Most probably he had adopted the policy of spending on various heads according to their importance in those existing circumstances.

Concept like public interest has great implications in economic decision making. The Shaykh has dealt it extensively. While analyzing his methodology for interpreting Islamic law, Natana DeLong-Bas (2004) highlighted his attention to concepts like *maslahah* (public interest) in order to interpret law for the benefit of society. She remarks: "He gives great attention to the issues of social justice and social welfare" (ibid). She has devoted two chapters of her thesis to the most controversial issues of his writings for Westerners - his treatment of women and gender and an analysis of his treatise on *jihad*.

The Shaykh also paid attention to the empowerment of woman. To quote DeLong-Bas (2004) again: "One of the most remarkable aspects of his writings is his consistent respect for and protection of women. The most important themes of Shaykh Muhammad's writings with respect to women were those upholding their rights, providing justice for them, and insisting upon a balance of rights and responsibilities between men and women" (ibid). This is an important proof from a lady on Shaykh's recognition of women's role and right in the society and the economy.

From the foregoing it is clear that to him, the economic teaching and principles found in the Qur'an and Sunnah and the Islamic heritage were enough to deal with the economic problems faced by his simple society. Economics being a behavioral science, the Shaykh paid attention to application of economics rather than theorization of it. His reformative efforts blocked the foreign economic and cultural influence on Arabia. Stating the effect of the Shaykh's movement on Christian world Zwemer (1901, p. 326), the zealous missionary and preacher of Christianity, remarks: "The most unfavourable result has been in Arabia itself, by practically building a wall of fanaticism around the old Wahabi state and postponing the opening of doors to commerce and Christianity in that part of peninsula".

The present study is a first attempt to explore economic thinking of this great revolutionary scholar

of 12<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century. In spite of our numerous findings, it is still an initiative. Therefore, there is need to carry out more comprehensive research in his economic ideas.

## Endnotes

1. First Saudi State was founded in 1744 and continued till 1818. In this period following four *imams* headed the government:

Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud 1744–1765; Abdul Aziz b. Muhammad Ibn Saud 1765–1803; Saud b. Abdul Aziz b. Muhammad Ibn Saud 1803–1814; and Abdullah b. Saud b. Abdul Aziz 1814–1818.

2. Many western travelers of Arabia have highlighted the bad and sad moral and religious condition of the region. See Zwemer (1901, p. 312).
3. The term "wahhabi" is an outsider's designation for the religious reformist movement within Islam founded by Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792). This term is given to them by their opponents and is now used by both European scholars and most Arabs. Members of the movement describe themselves as *muwahhidun*, the term is an Arabic word which means 'Unitarians'. The movement calls for renewal of Muslim spirit, the return to the original sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and the refutation of all pagan innovations in the religion.
4. Ibn Taymiyah (n.d. p. 281), in his work *Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, remarks: "Had the authority collected what was just and put it to its proper use, they would never have needed to impose illegal taxes and duties".
5. Only Zwemer (1901, p. 325) reports with reference to Arnold that Uthman Dan Fodio made 'a pilgrimage to Makka at the time of Wahabi occupation', 'converted to their views and returned to Sudan to inaugurate reform'. The story seems to be based on speculation.
6. On this al-Uthaymin raised an objection that the author did not mention where Ibn Abd al-Wahhab had said that the zakah of merchandise should be paid to the ruler (al-Riki, 2005, p.308n). It may be noted that almost all schools of fiqh hold that it is on the discretion of the ruler to assume collection responsibility of zakah of such assets and distribute it, or leave it to the owners to disburse it themselves among its beneficiaries. However, they differed on the question whether it is obligatory for imam to do so and to enforce people to pay him and punish those who deny it. For details one may refer to al-Qaradawi, Yusuf, 1986, 2: 765-781.
7. Al-Kasani (1327, 2: 7) says: "The Prophet, peace be upon him, Abu Bakr and Umar used to collect it (zakah of non-apparent assets) till the period of Utman. When wealth increased in his time, he thought it appropriate to entrust it to the owners which was done in the wake of the consensus of the Companions (May Allah bless all of them).

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