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## The Mid-Century Model of Critical Thinking: Shah Wali Allah Al-Dihlawi

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### ABSTRACT

*Muslims are very proud of the emergence of scholars of the past who have made tremendous contributions both to the Islamic and Western worlds. However, such glory and pride are undervalued as no serious efforts have been made to refine and apply to the tee all the contributions by past scholars in the efforts to rebuild the superior Islamic civilization. Hence, this article aims to introduce an authoritative figure in the Middle Ages who applied critical thinking especially in the field of Islamic knowledge that has greatly impacted Muslims worldwide. He is Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi who was an influential and prominent Indian Islamic scholar in the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD. This study is qualitative library research, using inductive, deductive and comparative methods in analyzing data related to the biography and intellectuality of Shah Wali Allah in the field of critical thinking. The findings found that Shah Wali Allah can be used as an example or model of medieval critical thinking that has brought about major changes in the field of Islamic science. He also prepared a critical thinking manhaj that is in line with the revelations thus making him comparable to other scholars of the past.*

**Keywords:** Model, Critical Thinking, Middle Ages, Shah Wali Allah

In this contemporary world which witnesses the wave of Islamic revival around the world, Muslims need a role model who can provide a source of inspiration and encouragement for them to succeed. The role model is the Shah of God who represents a medieval model of critical thinking. According to Noor Hisham (2014), the need to highlight this role model is to give a clear picture of how the Islamic

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critical thinking applied by certain individuals have significantly impacted the Muslims, in particular, and the rest of world, in general. Role models are very important to bring people closer to the true reality of Islamic critical thinking.

However, only a few researchers conducted in-depth research on Islamic critical thinkers. Among the figures named as Islamic critical thinking figures are Imam al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldan who represent classical critical thinking figures (Machouche & Bensaïd 2015; Noor Hisham 2014; Solihu, 2010) and Syed Naquib Muhammad al-Attas, representing contemporary Islamic critical thinkers (Noor Hisham 2014). Hence, there is a critical need for a medieval critical thinker who will be the link between the critical thinkers of the classical era and the modern era, as in the link between the previous sufis and modern sufis as well as the link between previous scholars and modern scholars.

The selection of Shah Wali Allah as a figure of Islamic critical thinking is due to the fulfillment of seven main characteristics and three additional features outlined by Noor Hisham (2014). All the seven main features are in relation to the principles of model thinking are accurately abiding to the Islamic world, adhering to the three main components of Islam, faith, sharia and morality, combining the potential of reason (think) and heart (zikir), applying all theories through practice and action, applying ijthihad based on expertise in the field, and closely following the divine revelation. While the three additional features that complement the main principles in relation to his thinking that have a great influence at the national and international level, help to solve the problems of the people of his time and are always consistent with the teachings of Islam, both in terms of faith, sharia and morality. Muhammad Khairil, Fadhliah & Raisa Alatas (2017) stated that scholars play an important role in disseminating religious knowledge to strengthen the community. The scholars have a great influence in transforming society's thinking to be line with the teachings of Islam.

Thus, the greatness and sincerity of Shah Wali Allah's thinking as a scholar and critical thinker can be traced and felt in every piece of writing. His book *Hujjah Allah al-Balighah* in both the Arabic version and its translation evidently testifies why Shah Wali Allah can be called as a model of critical thinking of his time. Writing about a great thinker and scholar like Shah Wali Allah is a difficult and challenging task. Here, the author will not try to study the thoughts and contributions of Shah Wali Allah from all angles in detail given how great the influence of his thinking in various aspects of life is on society and the people.

### Biography of Shah Wali Allah

His name is Ahmad bin 'Abd al-Rahim bin Wajih al-Din al-'Umari al-Hanafi al-Dihlawi and is called Qutb al-Din (al-Dihlawi 1999:13) or Qutb al-Din Ahmad Abu al-Fayyad (Mahyuddin Yahaya, Sheikh Wali Allah as given by his father. This title was given by his father after seeing his talents and abilities from an early age (Qureshi 1973:107-108). He was born at dawn on Wednesday 4 Syawal 1114H equivalent to 21 February 1703M in Phulat (*Pulth*), a town in Muzaffarnagar (North India) and later he settled in Delhi, India (al-Dihlawi, 1999; Islahi, 2011). Shah Wali Allah is the heir of the noble Qurasy lineage. His father was the thirty-second generation of the descendants of Sayidina 'Umar al-Khattab RA next to his father. While his mother is from Ahl al-Bayt, a member of the family of the Prophet through Imam Musa al-Kazim (Jalbani 1993; al-Siyalkuti 1999; Baljon 1986). The heir of Syah Wali Allah's descendants, Shaykh Shams al-Din, arrived in India at the beginning of the reign of the Sultans of Delhi (602-962/1206-1555) and settled in Rohtak about 30 miles or 40 kilometers from the city of Delhi, India (Abdul Salam 2007).

Shah Wali Allah mastered various branches of knowledge (al-Siyalkuti 1999). More than 50 books were produced in various fields by him such as akidah, al-Quran and al-Sunnah, *usul al-fiqh*, tasawuf and philosophy, politics, and economics. After returning from Hijaz, he was fully devoted to writing and teaching (Jalbani 1993). Among the great and high-quality writings by him is the book *Hujjah Allah al-Balighah*. It is a book comparable to the book *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din* by Imam al-Ghazali.

Among the advantages and uniqueness of Shah Wali Allah over other scholars is that he combined the arguments of *'aqli* and *naqli* in each of the problems discussed in his various works.

Shah Wali Allah's strength in the field of critical thinking can be seen through his critical efforts to revitalize Islamic thinking and intellect as well as his mastery in various fields of knowledge. In this regard, he was recognized by various scholars until he was given the title of *Imam*, *'Allamah*, *'Alim Rabbani* and others, among them the tahqiq of the book *Hujjah Allah*, Sayyid Sabiq (al-Dihlawi 1999). He also earned the title of *muhaddith*, *mufaqqih*, *mutakallim*, *mufassir*, sufi and philosopher due to his skills and expertise in various fields especially al-Quran, tafsir, Hadith, kalam, tasawuf, *fiqh*, philosophy and many others. These titles merit his great contributions in the Islamic intellectual fields in various fields.

The field of Islamic critical thinking was developed systematically in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. Prior to the century, the field of critical thinking had not been discussed by Islamic scholars including Shah Wali Allah. However, when analysing his works, especially *Hujjah Allah*, Shah Wali Allah had cultivated his ideas of thinking whether in the field of faith, philosophy, tasawuf or other fields critically and dynamically. The aspects of his critical thinking can also be seen through his contribution in developing the Muslims of his time.

In general, Shah Wali Allah's contribution in the field of critical thinking can be seen in some of the efforts he has undertaken to ensure that the teachings of Islam continue to flourish and thrive in an increasingly challenging environment. Among his greatest and impactful efforts in the world of Islamic thought are making a thorough criticism, renew various fields of knowledge, and creating his own *manhaj*.

### **Criticism and Investigation**

Shah Wali Allah is not a person who likes to judge or look at things blindly, but he studies first every matter from the point of view of its causes, problems and solutions. Woods & Walton (1974) stated that critical thinking does not mean to insult, tear down, be negative or unproductive skills but the development of skills in relation to constructive criticism of a thought. Hence, the criticism carried out by Shah Wali Allah is aimed at improving and renewing his knowledge and field of study.

In terms of criticism and research, al-Mawdudi (1988) stated that the first thing that was criticized and critically evaluated by Shah Wali Allah is about the history of Islam. He studied the history of Muslims through the spectacle of Islamic history and sought to ensure exactly the condition of the Muslims at different times. This is a matter that requires very complex research and is still unclear to this day. According to al-Mawdudi (1988), Shah Wali Allah was the first historian to distinguish between the history of Islam and the history of Muslims. This has been explained by Shah Wali Allah in his book *Izalah al-Khifa*. It displays properties from several eras along with their uniqueness. Shah Wali Allah also quoted and elaborated on the Prophet's report which contains clear pictures for that time.

Shah Wali Allah put forward his sharp approach and criticism of the history of Muslims with the aim of revealing to the public how Islam has run through the past century whether the Muslim community is truly sensitive to the teaching of Islam or vice versa. They are still largely confused by the non-Muslim way of life and teaching (Abdul Hayei 1993).

This critical study exposed almost all the elements of disobedience and elements of absurdity that mix and stain the beliefs and morals of Muslims, thoughts and knowledge, civilization and political thinking of Islam according to different historical stages. Then, Shah Wali Allah tried to find the causes of all the disobedience which he finally concluded that there are two main causes which are the transfer of political power from the caliphate to the monarchy (government) and the loss of *ijtihad* spirit due to the rampant of *taqlid* (Abbott 1968). These two causes were discussed in detail in his book *Izalah al-Khafa*, based on the historical facts of past Muslims.

In researching the first cause, Shah Wali Allah illustrated the difference between the doctrine and the concepts of the caliphate and the system of government through traditions in a situation

quite well known in his early Islamic literature. The same goes for the elaboration of the effects of the revolution which was unique and incomparable (al-Mawdudi 1988).

In terms of the problem of taklid, it can be found in almost all his works such as *Izalah al-Khafa*, *Hujjah Allah*, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyyah* and others. In the fourth debate of the book of *Hujjah Allah*, Shah Wali Allah (1999) fully revealed the history and background of taklid and the wrong practices that emerged from it. In this regard, Shah Wali Allah denounced the attitude of scholars who were not eager to have ijthid, as well as the spread of blind taklid symptoms among them. This attitude is one of the causes of the setbacks of Muslims today.

Shah Wali Allah (1970) also openly displayed the defects and irregularities of every member of the community who has responsibility. This is due to three things that have been mixed in the community which are misguided way of thinking, worship of intuition (sense of heart) and obedience to Allah. Thus, he regretted the attitude of some Muslims while mentioning the names of the group one by one among them the rulers, the military, the working class and all Muslims in general (al-Mawdudi 1988; Abdul Hayei 1998; Singh 2001).

From the above explanation, it illustrates that Shah Wali Allah is very diligent in studying the situation of past and present Muslims and how meticulous he is in criticizing their ideas and institutions. The direct impact of the criticism has produced a generation of righteous people as well as elements of the sanctity of society that bring true faith to life and can distinguish between goodness and disobedience is very encouraging and encouraging due to the unhappiness and unhealthy conditions that existed around them at that time (al-Mawdudi 1988). The arguments on the weakness of Muslims has been gradually accepted which progressively creates awareness for Muslims to change towards the true teachings of Islam. The criticisms given by him have shaped the people's thinking towards a better direction and Shah Wali Allah has been the catalyst for the construction of new critical thinking in Islam.

### Renewing Various Fields of Knowledge

After criticism and research, Shah Wali Allah put forward reform policies in various fields of knowledge to further strengthen the understanding of Muslims towards the true teachings of Islam. Generally, scholars of the past have expertise in various fields of knowledge, especially religious sciences. Among the greatest contributions of Shah Wali Allah are in the fields of faith, knowledge, tasawuf, philosophy, Quran, tafsir, Hadith, *'Ulum al-Hadith*, fiqh and *usul al-fiqh*. In this debate, the researcher will only briefly touch on the three areas that are the main expertise of Shah Wali Allah as the basis of the debate in the aspect of critical thinking, namely tasawuf, Hadith and *fiqh*.

In the field of tasawuf, Shah Wali Allah's experience and learning especially during his journey to Hijaz had made him proficient in tasawuf knowledge including *ta'awwuf falsafi* which is famous for the theory of wahah al-wujud by Ibn Arabi and the theory of *wahdah al-shuhud* by Imam al-Sirhindi (Wan Mohd Azam 2007). He was not just a sufi and philosopher but was a reformer in the field of tasawuf and philosophy. He sought to redevelop the discipline to suit the Quran and al-Sunnah.

In his day, Greek philosophy was so widespread and influenced the Muslim community, especially the young, that they did not want to think deeply and observe the vast realm of creation. While the purpose of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH's arrival is to bring progress to the Muslims by urging his ummah to study and understand the world as well as to practice the teachings conveyed. Therefore, Shah Wali Allah called for everyone to return to the Quran and Hadith. As a philosopher, he did his best to cleanse the philosophy of all the mixtures and impurities and expose the weaknesses of Greek philosophy that had become widespread in his time (Jalbani 1973; Islahi 2011). This shows that he unequivocally rejected the Greek philosophy especially those who speak of the substance and nature of Allah. For him, the explanation of Greek philosophy on the problem is rather weak and does not give a real explanation so as to confuse the understanding of Muslims. In this regard, Shah Wali Allah (1999) did not reject Greek philosophy in absolute terms, but he explained

that the knowledge and wisdom presented by the Greek philosopher is only a small part of the knowledge and wisdom given to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Zainuddin 2007). This means that whoever masters the whole knowledge contained in the Quran and al-Sunnah, then he can also master various knowledge, whether in the form of *naqli* or *'aqli*.

His life as a sufi is not as alienated from the audience as other sufis but brings about a change in the system and practice of sufiness. He was outspoken in criticizing the practices of sufis affected by the practices of Hindus who are contrary to the pure teachings of Islam (al-Dihlawi, 1983; Jalbani, 1973). He also emphasizes the practice of perfect *sharia*, and every human being is bound by the commandment of the Shari'a which is revealed by Allah even among the sufis. This is because Shah Wali Allah is of the opinion that sharia is a natural requirement for all human groups. To prevent people from being afflicted by torment, then with His generosity and love, Allah sent the Messengers to deliver the Shari'a to the human race (Jalbani 1973). Thus, all human beings need to perform the Shari'a to reach the real divine fact.

This tasawuf stance of Shah Wali Allah is widespread in his works such as *al-Qawl al-Jamil fi Bayan Sawa' al-Sabil*, *al-Khayr al-Kathir*, *al-Budur al-Bazighah*, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyyah*, *Sata'at* and *Lamahat*. Although in the field of philosophy, his work is not written systematically in an essay, but his two pamphlets entitled *Sata'at* and *Lamahat* have continuity in discussing the problem of existence, especially in relation to *wahdah al-wujud* and *wahdah al-shuhud*. Thus, Shah Wali Allah is known as a reformer not only in the field of tasawuf but also in the field of philosophy.

While in the field of Hadith, he was appointed as a *muhaddith* who has opened a new veil in the knowledge of Hadith especially in India. Uniquely, he has released the secrets of Hadith knowledge through a clear and well-established explanation. With this, he has been a pioneer to India's superiority in achieving the highest dignity in Hadith knowledge from the 13th century until now (al-Nadwi 1992; al-Hasani 1983; al-Ghawri 2007). Throughout the history of Muslims in India to the time of Shah Wali Allah, there were no Indian scholars focusing on studying the knowledge of Hadith in detail. They focused more on Greek philosophy and the problems of *khilafiyah* (al-Mawdudi, 1988). If they know the knowledge of the Hadith deeply, then they will not waste time on the problems of *khilafiyah* and Greek philosophy (al-Nadwi 1992). Scholars are also interested in the sciences of fiqh and *usul al-fiqh* using the Greek philosophical approach (al-Hasani 1983).

For 30 years Shah Wali Allah taught Hadith in *Dar al-Hadith*. Many Hadith scholars have emerged and some of them have written important Hadith books, among which are his own children (al-Nadwi 1992). The books of Hadith especially the *poles of the sittah* were translated and given a long review in Arabic and were then given a solid summary of the review. Such a methodology had never been done by the authors before them. This is also what has crowned India as the famous centre of Hadith studies until now (al-Nadwi 1992; al-Hasani 1983; al-Ghawri 2007). Their emergence coloured the knowledge of the Hadith with masterpieces especially after the decline of this knowledge in the 10th century in countries such as Egypt, Syam and Hijaz. All the sweat points and blessings bestowed by Allah cause the knowledge of the Hadith to continue to thrive in the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere to this day (Abdul Hayei 1993).

Thus, Shah Wali Allah is an important individual who is responsible for the development of Hadith knowledge due to his great service in the development of this knowledge. He carried out his services to this knowledge by teaching, educating, and composing. For Shah Wali Allah (1999), the knowledge of Hadith is the basis for all branches of religious knowledge and occupies a very high place among other sciences. Without a narration from the Prophet, it is not possible for Muslims to know the Shari'a and how to perform the Shari'a (Jalbani, 1982). According to Shah Wali Allah (1999), there are two types of sunnah, or knowledge derived from the Prophet: (i) the sunnah which is conveyed by the Prophet as a pamphlet in his condition as the messenger of Allah. Among them are the knowledge of the hereafter and its wonders, various miracles, the provisions of worship, the policy of practice (*hikam mursalah*) and the absolute sanctity (*masalih mutlaqah*) and the priority of various acts and special attributes possessed by those who do good. It is the duty of the Muslims to

perform the Sunnah. (ii) the sunnah is not in the condition of the Prophet as the bearer of the pamphlet or covers everything that is not included in the matter of dissemination of pamphlets (tabligh). This type of knowledge is knowledge based on experience. For example, medical knowledge or day-to-day activities which are not included in the context of worship and are related to the problem of sharia (*tashri*). Thus, he is not obliged to follow it but is encouraged to do so.

This thought of categorizing Hadith based on the role of Prophet has influenced Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898 AD), Rasyid Rida (d. 1935 AD), Al-Tahir Ibn Assyria (d. 1973 AD) and Mahmud Shaltut (d. 1963M). In this regard, Shah Wali Allah was not the first to categorize the Sunnah as it had previously been stated by Ibn Qutaibah (d. 890 AD) and Imam al-Qarafi (d. 1285 AD). Nevertheless, the position of Shah Wali Allah is almost modern (17th century) and has placed him in a position different from the two scholars.

In relation to *the* field of *fiqh*, Shah Wali Allah is a *mufaqiqh* (fikh scholar) who is a follower Mazhab Hanafi but highly respected Imam al-Shafi'i (al-Nadawi 2002). His father and uncle were followers of Madhhab Hanafi, and Syeikh Abu Tahir and his father Syeikh Ibrahim Kurdi followed Mazhab Syafi'i. Shah Wali Allah benefited from both and after doing a detailed study he found that both mazhabs are fundamentally the same. In his practice, he sected Hanafi but his theory and teaching were in both sects (Jalbani 1973). Shah Wali Allah prioritized mazhab Hanafi because it has much in common with other sects. In terms of *fiqh* opinion, in determining the legal or not of a problem, it is more suitable than others (Jalbani 1973).

After the Quran and the Hadith, the main source of explanation on the teachings of Islam is the knowledge of *fiqh*. It sheds light on matters of worship, duties and obligations, morals and manners, human relations, domestic affairs, and government politics. However, this knowledge did not exist during the time of the Prophet. All the books of *fiqh* were born in the later centuries. In the third century of hijrah, it became a necessity for Muslims to follow certain sects. However, at the beginning of the fifth century of hijrah, differences of opinion in relation to certain matters in *fiqh* increased due to current developments. Many performed taklid to certain imams, causing disagreements among *fiqh* members and religious leaders themselves. Muslims had no longer trust each other and they no longer want to think and study religious questions in detail and objectively (Jalbani 1973).

Looking at the atmosphere, Shah Wali Allah strived to bring about change by encouraging Muslims to perform *ijtihad*. This is the only way solve problems in this rapidly changing and interchangeable state of modern times. Shah Wali Allah also hates blind taklid and he does not want to be bound to a scholar. He thinks deeply and makes his own opinions and interpretations. Hence, he urged Muslims to do research and research and in-depth in the field of al-Quran and Hadith which is the main source of reference for *fiqh* knowledge (Jalbani 1973).

However, Shah Wali Allah did not reject taklid as a whole, he simply did not like to taklid blindly. Any opinions of scholars that correspond to the Quran and the Hadith would be accepted by him. According to him, for the good of the public, it is better for them to follow the four madhhab and should reject the misguided and evil scholars (*ulama' su'*) especially in times where most of them do not care about the pure teachings of Islam. A pious person should not reject the truth in other madhhabs for the sole reason of sticking to the imam in his sect because it means rejecting the truth (Jalbani 1973).

Hence, he tried to harmonize the problems that arose between the followers of madhhab Hanafi and al-Shafi'i which was so dominant at that time in India. To resolve this dispute, he argued that in time madhhab Shafi'i and Hanafi were the two most famous madhhabs. The works in these sects are numerous and they have many followers. Therefore, the best way is to combine the two opinions of the sect. After that, anything that is appropriate or closest to the Hadith of the Prophet PBUH should be accepted and those who are not sure of its origin should be rejected. According to him, *Muwatta'* Imam Malik can be a peacemaker as it provides the basis for removing all differences

and disputes that occur. The hadiths written in it are the most sahih and if *Muwatta'* is not referred to, then the door of ijtihad will be closed (Jalbani 1973).

Shah Wali Allah not only harmonized between the two sects but also wanted to eliminate all the differences and quarrels between the other four madhhabs. In the matter of fiqh, the rules that he also followed are as much as possible to coordinate and adjust the opinions of the four sects. If it was difficult to find a fit, he would take a stronger opinion of the sect in terms of evidence and a clearer hadith. In this regard, he was blessed by Allah with rich knowledge, and it enabled him to distinguish the strong and weak reason (*dalil*), and was able to answer any questions according to any sect (Aziz Ahmad 1964; Jalbani 1973).

From the efforts made by Shah Wali Allah, it has not only strengthened the diversity of madhhab *fiqh*, but also has reduced the conflict between the Sunni and Shia groups by emphasizing on the similarities that exist in both streams. This shows that Shah Wali Allah is a truly authoritative *muhaddith* and *mufaqqih*. It is true that the opinion of 'Ubaydillah Sindhi is equivalent to Imam Malik and Imam Abu Hanifah (Jalbani 1973). As a scholar who always performs critical thinking, he has brought about a great change in various fields of knowledge, especially the knowledge of Hadith and *fiqh* which is the basic knowledge for problem solvers that arise among Muslims. The harmonization effort is not easy, but it is necessary to go through a disciplined, active, and skillful intellectual process in conceptualizing, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluating information based on observation, experience, contemplation, argument or communication as the basis of thinking and acting. It was these elements that Meyers (1986) emphasized to be a critically minded person.

### Method of Critical Thinking

From the renewal carried out by Shah Wali Allah in various fields of science, it can be seen that some of the main methodologies used by him, including introducing the method of harmony (*tatbiq*) and promoting ijtihad. The strength of Shah Wali Allah in the field of Islamic critical thinking can be seen in his approach to harmonizing or integrating various fields of knowledge and trends or madhhabs in Islam. Shah Wali Allah (1970) refers to as *tatbiq* (Wan Mohd Azam 2007; Hermansen, 1988; Rizvi, 1980). Hermansen (1986) and Fazlur Rahman (1956) also admired Shah Wali Allah's ability to achieve the methodology. In the aspect of critical thinking, *tatbiq* is one of the main elements of critical thinking that can be adapted to the term synthesis, that is, the process of uniting various elements, parts, materials and so on into a complex union or whole, consolidation, merger, unifying. This process also requires the skill of analyzing arguments, interpreting ideas, and evaluating all information objectively. According to Bloom (1956), critical thinking involves mental activities such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The *tatbiq* method is used in bringing together the various views and trends that existed during the time of Shah Wali Allah (1970) (Wan Mohd Azam 2007; Hermansen, 1988; Rizvi, 1980). According to Hermansen (1986), no one had previously tried to integrate the entire structure of Islam other than him. This is also certified by Fazlur Rahman (1956) where Shah Wali Allah applied his own method of connecting the various thought streams of his time. The formula is based on the fundamentals and principles of al-Quran and al-Sunnah. The method performed by Shah Wali Allah is inspired by the method of coordination of the Hadiths which are contradicted by the scholars of the Hadith.

With his breadth of knowledge in the field of Hadith, Shah Wali Allah (1999) was very wise and adept at adapting the conflicting Hadiths. The methods used were also not much different from other scholars such as *al-jam'u*, *tarjih*, *nasikh-mansukh* and *tawaquf*. For example, there is a difference among the four Imams about the obligation to close the thighs or not. Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Shafi'i said it is obligatory. While Imam Malik's opinion is the opposite. Of course, the opinions presented are based on the sources from the various hadiths of the Prophet. However, in terms of the chain of Hadith narrators, Imam Malik's view is stronger (Jalbani, 1982). The methodology used in

the field of Hadith has also been the basis for him in harmonizing various fields of knowledge to the contrary. In this regard, Fazlur Rahman (2009: 190) stated:

Shah Wali Allah uses and adjusts data from all directions simultaneously to produce a comprehensive and unified system even if it is difficult. Shah Wali Allah has produced a synthesis of all traditional Islamic sciences produced by Muslims such as philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, law, sufism and history.

In addition, he diligently sought to entrench the sufis and kalam, Sunni and Shia, the theory of Ibn 'Arabi and al-Sirhindi, various streams of madhhab especially Hanafi and Syafi'i. In this regard he has managed to solve several important problems regarding the concept of 'khilafah' and reconcile the conflict between theologians and tasawuf until it is considered the founder of the flow of modernism in Islam. He sought to combine the fields of social sciences, economics, and religion in Islam (Aziz Ahmad 1964; Mahayudin Yahaya 1986).

In harmonizing *the fiqh streams*, Shah Wali Allah studied the principles and methods of making formulations produced and performed by each sect of thought and formed an independent opinion on the value and usefulness of the sect. If in certain circumstances he allowed the opinion of a sect, he also opposed it and not because he wants to defend the sect. And if he opposed those opinions, he would do on the basis of reason and not out of personal reasons. It is for these reasons that he sometimes sided with Imam Hanafi, sometimes Imam Syafi'i or Imam Maliki or Imam Hanbali. He sharply criticized and opposed those who swear upon themselves to follow only one particular sect in all matters of life and those who argue that they should always oppose the founders of a particular sect as if it were a virtue to them. This is described in the book of Insaf and *Musaffa*.

Through this manhaj *tatbiq*, Shah Wali Allah reconciled among the sufis who contradicted each other and made the concept of *wahdah al-existing* acceptable among *the mutakallimun*. Generally, most of the *mutakallimmunes* are unable to accept the concept of *wahdah al-wujud* presented by Ibn 'Arabi. The emergence of the concept of *wahdah al-shuhud* al-Sirhindi further added to the new polemic for the Muslim metaphysicists, sparking criticism from each other. The presence of Shah Wali Allah who was neutral and provided a solution between the two had eased the tensions between the circles. He resolved the conflict with through harmonization as well as rational explanation (Fazlur Rahman 2009). In this regard, Shah Wali Allah tried to harmonize between the views of Ibn Arabi and Sirhindi on the concept of God, which is there is an absolute existence. The discrepancy was due to the emphasis on *different maudu'*, as well as the different interpretations carried out by the pupils and the followers of the figures. Shah Wali Allah harmonized these two theories in his own way and terms. The concepts and terms introduced above are an alternative to harmonizing the two theories. Most of the terms used are taken from the terms in the Quran and the Hadith. It was these terms that became the basis of the philosophical explanation that is different from other philosophers.

The harmonization efforts made by Shah Wali Allah show that he has deep and critical thinking with sound arguments. If one observes the works of Shah Wali Allah, it can be seen that when he discussed a problem, he would elaborate it reasonably and use the Quran and al-Sunnah as the main reference. He also took into account traditional methods and made spirituality his reference (Jalbani 1973). Shah Wali Allah is not only a *'alim* but also a person with perceptivity (*zawq*). He did not accept recklessly any opinion as long as it was not proven through revelations and traditions (al-Quran and al-Sunnah). He clearly placed the various fields of knowledge in the right place and removed all doubts and confusions that arise in all such disciplines. This method is in line with the objective thinking method found in critical thinking methods. Objective thinking is a thinking that is based on actual statements and facts without being dominated or influenced by one's own feelings or prejudices (Jamal & Mustapha 2009). In other words, thinking objectively is not using elements of emotions, feelings, prejudices, or values.



In the context of ijtiḥad, almost all of Shah Wali Allah's works emphasize on the need to be jihadist in a jumud and rigid Muslim environment as well as the problems that arise with the changing times (al-Mawdudi 1988). According to Shah Wali Allah (1385H), ijtiḥad from the perspective of scholars is the mobilization of the whole ability in order to obtain a Shari'a ruling from its detailed evidence which are generally derived from four sources which are al-Quran, al-Sunnah, ijmak and qiyas". Shah Wali Allah (1965) also formulated several conditions for performing ijtiḥad, i) mastering the Quran and Hadith as well as the knowledge associated with it; ii) know the knowledge of logic; iii) master the Arabic language and all knowledge related to it because of the Quran and the Arabic Hadith; iv) know the opinions of scholars and the places of *ijma'* of scholars; v) know the types and conditions of *qiyas* (Aziz Ahmad, 1964).

Although Shah Wali Allah (1965) really emphasized on the importance ijtiḥad, he also acknowledged the limitations of ijtiḥad as stated by Imam al-Ghazali (t.t.) whereby the problems that can be used as the object of ijtiḥad are every ruling of *syara'* which does not have a *dalil qat'i* which explains it. He also agreed with 'Izz al-Din 'Abd Salam that a mujtahid should respect the opinions or opinions of other scholars and be responsible for every decision stated. A mujtahid should not force everyone to accept his opinion (al-Dihlawi 1999; Aziz Ahmad 1964).

In the context of the implementation of ijtiḥad, Shah Wali Allah (1999) also adopted two approaches, namely the historical approach and *maslahah*. The historical approach is to link the history of the Prophet to Islamic law systematically. The interpretation of a Sharia law should be seen based on the circumstances and the reason for its decline at that time. According to him, the social rules implemented by the Prophet are rationally interpreted according to the needs of the Muslims in their respective eras. This can be seen through worships such as prayer, zakat, fasting, hajj, ablution, akikah and others that have been around since pre-Islamic Arabia. Shah Wali Allah (1999) explained that the worshipping act is a legacy of the ancestors of the Prophet Muhammad, Abraham and Prophet Ismail until the time of Amr bin Lhayy, 300 years before the Prophet Muhammad.

The historical approach is one of the methods of critical thinking used by thinkers in making assessments, analyses and using past information on an issue or current matter (Noraini 2020). Shah Wali Allah's criticisms of the history of Muslims strengthen knowledge in the field of history and are uniquely applied in the ijtiḥad column. The historical method became one of the methods for digging laws based on *dalils* linked to past historical events.

While through the *maslahah* approach, Shah Wali Allah (1999) discussed several principles of *maslahah* which should be used as the basis for every mujtahid. For example, when discussing the *asbab al-taklif*, Shah Wali Allah stated that in taklif there is a knack for human life. In other words, the Shari'a should be adapted to the current constantly changing conditions. According to him, the prayer contains the sanctity so that people remember Allah, fasting can curb the desire and the pilgrimage is to glorify the eminence of Islam. The ruling of qisas is implemented to provide lessons for the perpetrators of evil, the call for jihad to exalt the eminence of Islam and the ruling of muamalah is to uphold justice in the social interaction of humanity.

Shah Wali Allah strongly emphasized on the need for jihad. Without ijtiḥad, it is impossible to discover new knowledge in understanding the Quran, Sunnah and knowing the rulings of Shari'a. He also realized that world history is subject to the laws of change based on changing environmental factors and the cultural dynamism of society. For example, matters relating to the arrangement of a household and the government of a city are never fixed by certain measures and standards (Aziz Ahmad, 1964). Uniquely, the idea of ijtiḥad Shah Wali Allah is not only in the field of Sharia or *fiqh* but covers various other fields such as politics and economics.

The ijtiḥad approach implemented by Shah Wali Allah which was based on rational methodology and argument influenced later Indian thinkers. Based on the methodology of ijtiḥad Shah Wali Allah (1999: 45), he stated in the preamble of *Hujjah Allah*, "*that the religious law of Islam should be brought into the open fully dressed in reason and argument*". This 'reason and argument' methodology impacted Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Shibli Nu'mani, Muhammad Iqbal and Abul Ala Mawdudi

(Jackson 2006; Aziz Ahmad 1964). In this regard, al-Mawdudi (1988) said the ideas presented by Shah Wali Allah clearly show its authenticity. He tried to present a complete picture of the intellectual, moral, religious and cultural system of Islam. His deep and logical approach in presenting Islam as a great system of life (*nizam al-hayah*) is unique and incomparable in the history of Islam.

To conclude, Shah Wali Allah is a superior figure and great scholar who continuously shaped the whole and holistic Islamic mindset. His achievements, contributions, thinking, knowledge, tenacity, persistence, brilliance and sincerity clearly qualified Shah Wali Allah to be recognized as a critical thinker of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (18th). His sincerity in disseminating the teachings and effective implementation of dakwah has been facilitated by Allah. Thus, Shah Wali Allah's thoughts have spread throughout the world. The researchers see that one of the factors for the success and high reputation of Shah Wali Allah is the assistance and inayah of Allah for all his sincerity. This statement is based on a study conducted by Ahmad Farid et al. (2018) which mentioned the aid and intervention of Allah is the main factor in determining the success of a person or a civilization.

His thinking and the appropriateness of ideas have become guides, references and fundamentals for individuals, institutions, governments, and non-governmental organizations as well as the dakwah movement. The renewed thinking offered by him has restored a more comprehensive understanding of Islam. He strived to make a thorough criticism, renew various fields of knowledge, and create his own *manhaj* to ensure that the teachings of Islam continue to flourish and thrive in an increasingly challenging environment. The effort to restore the glory of Islam is far from the success unless it is accompanied by intellectual capacity and collective implementation. In the process of moving towards restoring the glory of Islam, of course, it requires guidance and support especially from the intellectual and knowledge aspects. In this regard, Muslims are fortunate to have the opportunity to refer and enjoy the important works of Shah Wali Allah, a leading critical thinker, competent and sincere scholar fighting for Islam and justice. May his knowledge be the gaze of the people until the end of time.

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