



The Fiqh of *Hisab-Ru'ya* in the Twentieth Century Indonesia: Study on the Thoughts of Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, and Moenawar Chalil about the Unification of Hijri Calendar

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Abstract: Fiqh discourses regarding differences in methods and criteria (*hisab* and *ru'ya*) for determining the beginning of the Hijri months are still being debated among Muslims in Indonesia. Until now, there is no Hijri calendar that applies globally. The existing Islamic calendar is a local or regional calendar. The absence of a unified Hijri calendar often causes confusion in setting dates in Muslim society, and this makes Muslim intellectuals continue to study it. The idea of creating a unified Hijri calendar in Indonesia was originally raised by Hamka, Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, and Moenawar Chalil. This research explores how the Hijri calendar is unified according to their opinions. This study is a qualitative research with a socio-historical and hermeneutic approach. Data collection uses the documentation method with the content analysis model. The results of this study indicate that Hamka believes that there needs to be a unified result between the *hisab* and the *ru'ya* methods, so that the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, can become a fixed date. Meanwhile, Hasbi offers the idea that to overcome the differences in the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal one must use the *ru'yat* method with global *matla'*. Meanwhile, Moenawar Chalil believes that the preparation of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia can only use the *hisab* method. These three ideas can be a solution in an effort to achieve uniformity of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia.

Keywords: The Fiqh of *Hisab-Ru'yat*, Hijri Calendar, Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, Moenawar Chalil.

Abstrak: Diskursus di bidang fiqh hisab rukyat tentang perbedaan metode dan kriteria penentuan awal bulan Hijriah di Indonesia terus terjadi. Sampai sekarang belum ada kalender Hijriah yang berlaku secara global. Kalender yang ada hanya kalender lokal atau regional. Ketiadaan kalender Hijriah yang seragam menyebabkan sering terjadi berbagai kekacauan pengorganisasian waktu di masyarakat muslim Indonesia dan membuat para tokoh cendekiawan muslim terus melakukan kajian. Pemikiran untuk mewujudkan kalender Hijriah yang seragam disampaikan oleh Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, serta Moenawar Chalil. Penelitian ini menggali bagaimana pemikiran mereka tentang kalender Hijriah. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan soio-historis dan hermeneutika. Penggalan data melalui dokumentasi dengan model analisis

konten. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Hamka berpendapat perlu dicari titik temu antara hisab dan rukyat agar kalender Hijriah dapat seragam melalui lembaga otoritatif negara yang mengabungkan dua metode hisab dan rukyat yang menjadi sumber perbedaan. Hasbi menawarkan ide bahwa untuk mengatasi perbedaan dalam awal Ramadan dan Syawal, harus menggunakan metode rukyat dengan matlak global. Monawar Chalil berpendapat bahwa hisab dapat digunakan untuk menyusun kalender Hijriah di Indonesia. Ketiga pemikiran ini dapat menjadi solusi alternatif dalam usaha mewujudkan keseragaman kalender Hijriah di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Fiqh Hisab Rukyat, Kalender Hijriah, Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, Moenawar Chalil.

Introduction

The discourse on determining the beginning of the months in the Hijri calendar is part of the fiqh regarding *hisab* (the method of calculation based on astronomical and mathematical principles) and *ru'ya* (the direct vision of the crescent method).¹ The calendar is a system of dates that reflects the strength and advancement of a civilization.² Currently, there are two calendar systems commonly used by Muslims, the Gregorian calendar and the Hijri calendar. In Indonesia, these two types of calendar are used together. The Gregorian calendar is for general purposes, while the Hijri calendar is for the purposes of Muslim worship.³ The Hijri calendar was officially made during the time of Caliph Umar bin Khatab, to be precise in the 17th year of the Hijrah event or 638 AD. At that time, it was agreed that the beginning of the Hijri calendar starts from the event of the Prophet's migration from Mecca to Medina.⁴

Until now, there is no single Hijri calendar that applies globally. The calendars currently available are only local or regional, such as the Saudi Arabian, Indian, British, American, Libyan, Indian, and Iranian Islamic calendars. There are still differences between these calendars.⁵ The absence of a unified Hijri calendar among Muslims causes frequent confusion in setting the dates for the months of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhulhijjah. The cause of the difference in determining the beginning of a new month in the Hijri calendar in Indonesia is the difference in the method and criteria for the start of the month. In general, there are two methods used in determining the Hijri calendar, *hisab* and *ru'ya*. The arguments used in using these methods are the same, but only one group says that the Hijri calendar must be determined by *ru'ya*, while the other groups allow it by the *hisab* method.⁶

The absence of a unified Hijri calendar makes Muslim intellectuals continue to conduct studies to make it happen. The idea to create a unified international Hijri calendar was initiated by

¹ Ahmad Izzuddin, *Fiqh Hisab Rukyat Di Indonesia: Upaya Penyatuan Mazhab Rukyat Dengan Mazhab Hisab* (Yogyakarta: Logung Pelajar, 2003), 2.

² Syamsul Anwar, *Hari Raya Dan Problematika Hisab Rukyat* (Yogyakarta: Suara Muhammadiyah, 2008), 116-117.

³ Susiknan Azhari, "Problematika Imkanurrukyat Sebagai Acuan Penyusunan Kalender Islam Nasional," in *Muhammadiyah Dan Reformasi*, ed. Nurhadi M. Musawir (Yogyakarta: Aditya Media, 2000), 229.

⁴ Arwin Juli Rahmadi Butar-butur, *Kalender: Sejarah Dan Arti Pentingnya Dalam Kehidupan* (Semarang: CV Bisnis Mulia Konsultama, 2014), 55.

⁵ Rupi'i Amri, "Efforts to Unify the Islamic Calendar in Indonesia (Study on the Thought of Thomas Djamaluddin)," *Ishraqi* 10, no. 1 (2012), 2-3.

⁶ Susiknan Azhari, *Hisab & Rukyat: Wacana Untuk Membangun Kebersamaan Di Tengah Perbedaan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2007), 69-70.

Mohammad Ilyas,⁷ Mohammad Syawkat Audah,⁸ and Jamaluddin Abd ar-Raziq.⁹ In addition to the thoughts of these scholars, in Indonesia there are also thoughts from Muslim scholars regarding the Hijri calendar using *hisab* and *ru'ya* methods that can be applied in Indonesia. This idea came from Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah, also known as Hamka (1908-1981), Muhamad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy (1904-1975), and Moenawar Chalil (1908-1961). They are Muslim figures who lived in the 20th century.¹⁰ Hamka believes that it is necessary to find common ground between the *hisab* method and the *ru'ya* method, so that the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, can be unified.¹¹ Hasbi also had the idea that to overcome the difference in calendars at the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, one must eliminate the difference in *matla'* as a reference for the start of the day.¹² Likewise, Chalil argues that the *hisab* method can be used to determine the Hijri calendar in Indonesia.¹³

The three opinions hope for the realization of a unified Hijri calendar in Indonesia. The thoughts they convey are of course based on arguments, which according to them are in line with religious teachings and the development of science. This study answers questions about how the thoughts of Hamka, Hasbi, and Chalil are related to the fiqh regarding *hisab* and *ru'ya* in the preparation of the Hijri calendar, and whether their ideas contribute to the unification of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia.

Hamka's Thoughts on the Unification of Hijri Calendar

According to Hamka, starting worship such as fasting for Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha must use the Hijri calendar.¹⁴ Hamka based his opinion on the Qur'anic verse: "They ask thee concerning the new moons. Say: they are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for pilgrimage".¹⁵ Determination of the beginning of the month in the Hijriyah calendar is the *ru'ya* method. *Ru'ya* is to see firsthand the crescent moon at the beginning of the month on the western horizon after sunset. The results of the *ru'ya* are then reported to the authorities and notified to the public to start fasting or Eid al-Fitr.¹⁶

According to Hamka, determining the start of the month in this way is in accordance with the Prophet tradition or sunna.¹⁷ Hamka based it on the hadith of Ibn Abbas, as narrated by Abu Dawud who said from Ibn 'Abbas r.a. that an Arab Bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah and said: 'Indeed I

⁷ Susiknan Azhari, "Mohammad Ilyas and His Ideas on the International Islamic Calendar," *Al-Jami'ah* 39, no. 2 (2001), 414-435.

⁸ Muh. Nashirudin, "Tinjauan Fikih Dan Astronomis Penyatuan Matla': Menelusuri Pemikiran M. S. Odeh Tentang Ragam Penyatuan Matla'," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 12, no. 2 (2012), 179-192.

⁹ Anwar, *Hari Raya Dan Problematika Hisab Rukyat*. Rahmadi Wibowo Suwarno, "The Global Islamic Calendar: A Study of the Thought of Muhammad Syawkat 'Audah and Jamaluddin Abd Ar-Raziq Its Influence on the Day of Arafah" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2013).

¹⁰ M. Yunan Yusuf, *Corak Pemikiran Kalam Tafsir Al-Azhar: Sebuah Telaah Pemikiran Hamka Dalam Teologi Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1990), 23-55. Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, *Fiqh Indonesia: Penggagas Dan Gagasannya: Biografi, Perjuangan Dan Pemikiran Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash Siddieqy* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1997), 3-61. Thoha Hamim, *Paham Keagamaan Kaum Reformis: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Moenawar Chalil* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2000), 31-67.

¹¹ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1983), 310-322.

¹² Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Awal Dan Akhir Ramadhan Mengapa Harus Berbeda* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2005), 27-29.

¹³ Moenawar Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970), 22.

¹⁴ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam*, 313.

¹⁵ Muhammad Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an Complete Translation with Selected Notes* (United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 2009), Q.S. 2: 189.

¹⁶ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam*.

¹⁷ Hamka.

have seen the crescent moon, then he asked him, 'do you testify that God is only Allah?', he testified, yes, he asked again, 'do you testify that Muhammad is Messenger of Allah?' he replied, yes. He said, 'Tell the people, O Bilal, that they are fasting tomorrow'.¹⁸ Hamka also based his opinion on another hadith which states that "Two Arabs came and tested the Prophet Muhammad that they both saw the moon yesterday afternoon. Then the Prophet ordered everyone to break their fast that day, and because it is noon, he recommended to pray the next day".¹⁹ When explaining Q.S. Al-Baqarah, which states "Whoever witnesses the coming of the moon then fast", Hamka said that whoever witnesses or knows that the month of Ramadan has arrived, and that person is at that location at that time, then fasts.²⁰

Hamka believes that even if only one or two people in a village can witness the crescent moon, and the government believes this person's information, then news about the beginning of the month can be announced to the public. At this time, announcements can be made through intermediary telecommunications equipment. If the government has announced the entry of the beginning of the month, then everyone is obliged to comply with the order, not to deny it anymore.

Hamka's opinion is based on the hadith of the Prophet narrated by Abu Hurairah which states that "The Prophet SAW said: fast on the day they fast, and break the fast on the day they break their fast, Eid al-Adha on the day they slaughter the sacrifice". In another hadith, Aisyah's narration also explains that "Fasting is the day you all fast, Eid is the day you break your fast, Eid al-Adha is the day you all sacrifice".²¹ Hamka quoted the opinion of Ibn Taimiyah in his fatwa that some hadith scholars disguised the meaning of these hadiths that whether fasting or breaking the fast must be with the congregation, the largest group of people.²² Therefore, Imam ash-Shafi'i is of the opinion that someone who has witnessed the crescent moon alone, but he has not had time to convey it to the government, may fast or break his fast in secret, so as not to disturb other people. It is a must for people who witness clearly the crescent moon to convey it to the government. If the government does not believe the statement, while he is sure that he has witnessed the new moon, then he may fast or break his fast in secret.²³

When the Prophet died, caliphs succeeded him and took care of religious affairs. However, after most Islamic countries were colonized by Western nations, such as Indonesia, Islamic countries became secular and the issue of determining the beginning of the Hijri month was managed by the Muslims themselves. In countries ruled by sultans, even when they were under colonial rule, it was the sultan who determined the start of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhul Hijjah. With the authority to determine the beginning of the month by each sultan, as has been the case in Sumatra, it is not impossible that the start and end of Ramadan differ between regions. Especially after the development of the science of *hisab* (calculation), many people started fasting, celebrating Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha according to the *hisab* method alone. Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah issue an announcement of the Hijri calendar every year, which becomes a guideline for its members.²⁴

¹⁸ Abu Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadis, 1999), vol. 2, p. 1011, hadith no. 2341.

¹⁹ Dawud, vol.2, p. 1010, hadith no. 2339.

²⁰ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional Pte. Ltd., 2001), vol.1, p. 424.

²¹ Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Koleksi Hadits-Hadits Hukum* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2011), 599.

²² Ibn Taimiyyah, *Majmu' Al-Fatawa* (Cairo: Dār al-Wafa, 2005), vol. 25, p. 114.

²³ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam*, 315.

²⁴ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam*, 316.

According to Hamka, due to differences in determining the beginning of the months in the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah, the Ministry of Religion, which was formed after Indonesia's independence, becomes an institution that tried to determine the beginning of the months of Hijri calendar, such as the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul Hijjah, and the beginning of Muharram, the first month in the Hijri calendar. However, unifying opinions about the beginning of Hijri months does not seem easy, Each Islamic group has made its own Hijri calendar for many years. Some are based on the results of *ru'ya*, some are based on the results of *hisab*. Each group encourages its members to start fasting, celebrate Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha based on the decision of the group.²⁵

After A. Mukti Ali became Minister of Religion, he issued a policy by forming a Committee of *Ru'ya* and *Hisab* Experts. Included in the committee are representatives of groups using the *hisab* method and representatives of groups using the *ru'ya* method. The aim of the committee is to carry out calculations of *hisab* and *ru'ya* every year between the two groups to complement each other. Indeed, at that time, to maintain the brotherhood and unity of the Muslim community, the government tried to bring together the experts of *hisab* and *ru'ya* by holding deliberations.²⁶

Regarding Eid al-Adha, Hamka argues that each country determines the start of the month of Dhul Hijjah according to the results of the *ru'yat* (direct vision of the crescent) from that country. According to Hamka, this is in accordance with the hadith of the Prophet "You fast on the day you all fast, and break your fast on the day you all break your fast and Eid al-Adha on the day you all slaughter *qurban*." Therefore, Indonesian Muslims are not obliged to equate Eid al-Adha in Mecca because the Indonesian Minister of Religion announced the results of the *hisab* and *ru'ya* according to calculations carried out in their own region.²⁷

Hamka said that Indonesian Muslims are only obliged to follow all decisions from Mecca if there has been an agreement by all Muslims in the world, for example the Islamic Cooperation Organization stipulates that the starting time for Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha must be according to Mecca. Thus, the results of *hisab* and *ru'ya* by the Indonesian government are no longer needed. If there is no such agreement in the Islamic world, according to Hamka, there is nothing wrong with Muslims adhering to the results of *hisab* and *ru'ya* in their own country. Hamka's opinion about the difference in *matla'* (a region where and when the new moon rises) that allows for the difference in the start of the months in the Hijri calendar is a hadith narrated by Muslim from Kuraib.²⁸

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Hamka believes that in worship activities, calendar system used is the Hijri calendar. Determination of the new date of the months in the Hijri calendar is by *ru'ya* method. To unify the differences in determining the start of the month in the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah, all must follow the government decision.

Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy's Thoughts on the Unification of Hijri Calendar

Hasbi's thoughts on the problem of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia are motivated by the condition of Indonesian Muslims, who are in a dichotomy between the *hisab* and the *ru'ya* paradigms

²⁵ Hamka.

²⁶ Rohadi Abdul Fatah, *Almanak Hisab Rukyat* (Jakarta: Dirjen Bimas Islam Kemenag R.I., 2010), 74-76.

²⁷ Hamka, *Hamka Membahas Soa-Soal Islam*, 319.

²⁸ Muslim ibn Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim* (Cairo: Dār al-Hadis, 1997), vol. 2, p. 195, hadith no. 1087.

in determining the beginning of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah. Indeed, both of these paradigms are based on the hadith “Fast when you witness the new moon and celebrate Eid when you witness it; If it is cloudy, the month of Sha’ban will be completed to thirty days”. However, they differ in interpreting *ru’ya* (seeing the new moon). One interprets the *ru’ya* by seeing the moon crescent with the eyes and the other interprets the *ru’ya* by understanding it with knowledge.²⁹

This situation causes Muslims in Indonesia to be different in starting the days of fasting of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. This can damage the social togetherness of Muslims. Almost every year, this problem always occurs. In 1389 H/1969 AD, Hasbi witnessed Indonesian Muslims split into two in celebrating Eid al-Fitr, precisely because of a dispute between those who followed the opinion of the *hisab* method from Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and the *hisab* method from Muhammadiyah Jakarta.³⁰

According to Hasbi, there are three ways to determine the beginning of the months in the Hijri calendar, such as Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah. These ways are by *ru’yat*, completing Sha’ban and Ramadan to 30 days, and *hisab* methods. The first and the second ways were taught directly by the Prophet.³¹ This opinion is based on the hadith of the Prophet which states “Fast when you see the new moon (of Ramadan) and break your fast when you see the new moon (of Shawwal.) If clouds prevent you from seeing it, complete thirty days in the month of Shaban (the one that precedes Ramadan)”,³² and the hadith “That one month is 29 days, so do not fast until you see the new moon and do not break your fast (Eid al-Fitr) until you see the new moon. If the clouds prevent you from seeing it, then calculate/estimate (*fa uqduru*) the month”.³³

According to Hasbi, if the command contained in the hadith is understood in its original sense, namely *li al-ijab* (pointing to obligatory), likewise, if the command contained in “*fa akmilu sya’bana salasina*” is understood in its original sense, of course the third way of determining the beginning of the month using calculations does not apply. The word in the hadith “*fa uqduru lahu*” must be interpreted as “*fa akmilu*” or “*fa atimmu*”, because as it is known that interpreting a hadith is with the hadith itself and other hadiths whose words are different, so that each hadith does not cause contradictions with each other.³⁴

Furthermore, Hasbi also explained that the problem of differences in the Hijri calendar is due to differences in the use of *matla’* (a region where the new moon rises) as the basis for determining the beginning of the month. Hasbi explains that in fact the journey of the moon and the sun, the change of day and night, causes differences in the time of rising of the crescent moon in each region. It is not impossible that this raises a difference when we want to determine the implementation of worship matters, such as fasting, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and other worship activities.³⁵

The scholars agree that determining the time related to the rising and setting of the sun must use *matla’*. Each country adheres to its own *matla’*. The Qur’anic verses explaining the times of prayer

²⁹ Shiddiqi, *Fiqh Indonesia: Penggagas Dan Gagasannya: Biografi, Perjuangan Dan Pemikiran Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash Siddieqy*, 192-193.

³⁰ Shiddiqi.

³¹ Ash-Shiddieqy, *Awal Dan Akhir Ramadhan Mengapa Harus Berbeda*.

³² Muhammad ibn Ismail Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), vol. 2, p. 281, hadith no. 1909.

³³ Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 189, hadith no. 1080.

³⁴ Ash-Shiddieqy, *Awal Dan Akhir Ramadhan Mengapa Harus Berbeda*.

³⁵ Ash-Shiddieqy.

use the sun's *matla'* as reference for each region. Scholars have different opinions regarding the difference in the *matla'* of the new moon (*hilal*), in determining the beginning of the month. Some scholars argue that the population of each country is based on its own *matla'*. Other scholars argue that there is no difference in *matla'*. Someone in a country who witnesses a new moon with absolute certainty, then his testimony applies to everyone, including those who come from faraway regions.³⁶

According to Hasbi, there is no data at the time of the Prophet that there were differences in the community regarding the beginning of Ramadan (fasting) and the beginning of Shawwal (Eid al-Fitr). However, during the time when Muawiyah became caliph in Damascus and Ibn Abbas became governor in Medina, there was a difference in the initial determination of the months. This happened because of differences in political views, due to the lack of good relations between the central government and local governments at that time. These differences are not theological or legal differences. Therefore, it is necessary to realize the unity of Muslims worldwide, by using the principle of one *matla'* to determine the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah.³⁷

Hasbi offers a solution to the difference in the beginning of the month in the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah, by using one *matla'*. According to Hasbi, differences in countries do not have a significant effect on determining the start of the months, so it is very possible to determine one *matla'*, so that it can enable the people of the Islamic world to unify the start of Ramadan for fasting, by using the results of *ru'ya* witnessed by the people of other countries.³⁸

Hasbi interpreted the verse which reads “*fa man shahida minkum ash-shahra fa al-yasumhu*” (Q.S. 2: 185) with whoever among you is present (in the country where he lives) in that month, then he should fast in that month. This verse does not contradict the idea of uniting the first days of the fast because the word *syuhud* in this verse does not mean *ru'ya*, but it is *hudur* or being in a place.³⁹ According to Hasbi, the problem of differences in geographical location is a problem of *ijtihad*, not a problem of texts. So, a person is not wrong if he chooses or takes an opinion on a single *matla'* or a different *matla'* (*ikhtilaful matali'*).⁴⁰ In using a *matla'* to determine the beginning of the Hijri months (especially Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah), Hasbi took the opinion of Abu Zahrah who suggested that the city of Makkah be used as the center of *matla'*. The reason is because in Mecca there is the Kaaba, which is the prayer direction for Muslims around the world.⁴¹

Hasbi is of the opinion that the results of *ru'ya* in Mecca can be used as a reference for entering the beginning of the months in the Hijri calendar on the grounds that the Indonesian people know the Mecca's *ru'ya* not at 6 pm after sunset, but at 10 pm in the evening and that is not considered a problem. If by chance the country to the west of Mecca witnesses the new moon, then their testimony must be conveyed to other areas. The Prophet did not determine the start of Ramadan by obliging Muslims to follow the Mecca's *ru'ya*.⁴²

³⁶ Ash-Shiddieqy.

³⁷ Ash-Shiddieqy.

³⁸ Ash-Shiddieqy.

³⁹ Teungku Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy, *Tafsir Al-Qur'anul Majid An-Nuur* (Semarang: Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2000), vol. 1, p. 298.

⁴⁰ Ash-Shiddieqy, *Awal Dan Akhir Ramadhan Mengapa Harus Berbeda*.

⁴¹ Ash-Shiddieqy.

⁴² Ash-Shiddieqy.

Hasbi hopes that one day the time will come for Muslims to agree on a way for the benefit of religion and Muslims, whether by the *ru'ya* or *hisab* methods to start Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah.⁴³ According to Hasbi, the Indonesian government must not allow Muslims to use their own way to determine the beginning of Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah, because the method adopted does not absolutely have to be one, so this problem must be resolved by the government as the authority on public affairs. If the government that has authority and has the ability to unite Muslims in determining the beginning of the months does not try to do so, of course the difference between the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah will continue to occur.⁴⁴ Hasbi suggested, if Muslims have not agreed to use Mecca's *ru'ya* as a valid center for the entire Islamic world, they should at least take *ru'ya* from their respective capital cities.⁴⁵

Moenawar Chalil's Thoughts on the Unification of Hijri Calendar

According to Moenawar Chalil, the problem of *hisab* and *ru'ya* is always discussed by Indonesian Muslims before the arrival of the month of Ramadan. There are always differences between *hisab* experts and *ru'ya* experts. Therefore, Muslims start fasting on different days, as well as when they celebrate Eid al-Fitr. There are Islamic communities who follow the decisions of the *hisab* experts and there are those who follow the decisions of the *ru'ya* experts.⁴⁶ The controversy over determining the beginning of the Hijri month involves debate about the method of determining it. Reformist Muslims use *hisab* to calculate the appearance of the new moon and traditionalists use *ru'ya* (moon sightings). The debate about *hisab* and *ru'ya* occurs every year before the month of Ramadan.⁴⁷

In explaining the problem of determining the beginning of the month of the Hijri calendar, Chalil quoted the hadith of the Prophet which stated "Fasting because you witness the crescent moon, and breaking your fast because you witness the crescent moon, then the (month of) Sha'ban is sufficient for thirty days".⁴⁸ According to Chalil, *ru'ya* means witnessing, and *hisab* means calculating. He states that *ru'ya* is witnessing the new moon to determine the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal with the eyes, and *hisab* is setting the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal by astronomical calculation.⁴⁹

Chalil mentioned that in determining the beginning of the Hijri month, there are several verses from the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet as guidelines. First, the verse of the Qur'an (2: 185) stipulates that "So whoever sights (the crescent of) the month, let him fast it".⁵⁰ Chalil interpreted the meaning of the verse above that whoever Muslims has witness the month of Ramadan, then he must fast on that day. Then to the words of the Prophet who said "Do not fast until you witness the new moon, and do not break your fast until you witness the new moon; If it is cloudy above you, then use an estimate for it".⁵¹ Chalil interprets that Muslims are not allowed to fast, unless they have witnessed the new moon (the new date) of Ramadan, and they are not allowed to break their

⁴³ Ash-Shiddieqy.

⁴⁴ Ash-Shiddieqy.

⁴⁵ Ash-Shiddieqy.

⁴⁶ Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*, 68.

⁴⁷ Hamim, *Paham Keagamaan Kaum Reformis: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Moenawar Chalil*, 266.

⁴⁸ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, p. 281, hadith no. 1909.

⁴⁹ Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*.

⁵⁰ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an Complete Translation with Selected Notes*.

⁵¹ Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, p. 280, hadith no. 1906.

fast (celebrating Eid al-Fitr), unless they have witnessed the new moon of the Shawwal. Thus, after Muslims witness the beginning of the month of Ramadan, they are obliged to fast, and after they witness the beginning of the month of Shawal, Muslims are obliged to break their fast (Eid al-Fitr), as the meaning of the hadith above. According to Chalil, the sentence structures of the Prophet's hadiths ordering Muslims to fast and breaking their fast by witnessing the new moon (*ru'ya*) is very much different from one another, but the meaning and intent are the same.⁵²

Chalil interprets the verse *wa man shahida minkum al-shahr* as “whoever witnesses the moon”. Such an interpretation is out of context when the verse was revealed. All the classical commentators translate it as “a man who stays at hometown”, in the sense of not traveling and intently looking for the new moon. Therefore, the meaning of the verse should be “Whoever among you stays at hometown during the month, then he must fast during that time”.⁵³

The word “to witness” in verses and hadiths is explained by Chalil. According to him, the word which means “witnessing” in the verse is pronounced with the word “*shahida*”, and what is meant by “witnessing” in the hadiths is the word “*ru'ya*”, which is derived from the word “*ra'a*”. In Arabic, the word “*shahida*” and the word “*ra'a*” can mean “witnessing or seeing”, but not necessarily seeing with the eyes of the head, it may be with the mind and with science. So, the verses and hadiths themselves already contain an understanding to be interpreted broadly, that is, people do not need to “see the new moon” with their eyes alone but with knowledge.⁵⁴

According to Chalil, the verses of the Qur'an and hadith about *ru'ya* above can be interpreted that for people whose level of intelligence “sees the new moon with their eyes”, they should fast or celebrate Eid al-Fitr by looking at the moon with their eyes. For people whose level of intelligence can see the moon with knowledge, then it is also good to fast and celebrate Eid al-Fitr based on seeing with knowledge, namely *hisab*. The Prophet Muhammad SAW ordered and gave an example to Muslims “seeing the new moon” with their eyes when starting fasting and Eid al-Fitr, because the level of society at that time was still at the level of “seeing the new moon with their eyes”, as he himself stated in his hadith “that we are a group of people who are *ummi*, we cannot write and we cannot read; a month is like this and like this, that is sometimes 29 days and sometimes 30 days”.⁵⁵ According to Chalil, this hadith explains that the Arabs at that time were generally “*ummi*”, not good at writing and calculating. With this hadith Chalil concluded that at that time not many Arabs were skilled at writing and calculating just like nowadays, and if it were so, of course, the Prophet determined the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal by *hisab*.⁵⁶

Chalil said that the aim of the Prophet's hadith was in order for Muslims to fast when the month of Ramadan begins and celebrate Eid al-Fitr when the month of Shawwal has entered. So, the purpose of the hadith about *ru'ya* is actually the appearance of a new moon, not witnessing it. Chalil uses the basis of the Prophet's hadith which states: “Do not precede fasting, until you see the date or you complete the calculation, then you fast until you see the date or complete the calculation”.⁵⁷ According to Chalil, Muslims are prohibited from fasting before coming or entering the month of

⁵² Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*.

⁵³ Hamim, *Paham Keagamaan Kaum Reformis: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Moenawar Chalil*, 270.

⁵⁴ Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*.

⁵⁵ Al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 2, p. 191, hadith no. 1080.

⁵⁶ Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*.

⁵⁷ Dawud, *Sunan Abi Dawud*, vol. 2, p. 1003, hadith no. 2326.

Ramadan, and are prohibited from breaking their fast or celebrating Eid al-Fitr before coming or entering the month of Shawwal.

Now many Muslims have mastered the science of astronomical calculations (*hisab*). According to Chalil, they should use this knowledge to determine the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal. Their decision can be said to be in accordance with the provisions of the Shari'a regarding *ru'ya* supported by scientific truth. This is to reduce the difference in determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal.⁵⁸ Thus, according to Chalil, the solution to the problem of differences in the Hijri calendar is *hisab*. *Hisab*, according to Chalil, is part of what the Prophet recommended in determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, because *hisab* is included in the meaning of *ru'ya* in the Prophet's hadiths about the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal.

The Contribution of Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and Moenawar Chalil Thoughts to Unify the Hijri Calendar in Indonesia

In fact, the issue of the Hijriyah calendar in Indonesia is very unique and full of socio-religious and even political dialectics. In the context of modern Indonesia, this issue cannot be separated from Indonesia's history and social culture in the past. Since the pre-independence era of Indonesia, Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia have existed and played their socio-religious role in society, especially Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Traditions of fasting, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and determining the beginning of the month have developed in Indonesian Muslim communities with various methods and criteria.⁵⁹

Efforts to find a meeting point that is acceptable to both *hisab* and *ru'ya* users have often been carried out, in order to create a legal-formal mechanism that can be used to reach an agreement on determining the beginning of the months of Ramadan and Shawwal. The Ministry of Religion has established the *hisab* and *ru'ya* institution since 1972 to accommodate the aspirations of users of the *hisab* and *ru'ya* methods. Through this institution, both groups are involved in the process of determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, so that both groups feel they have a stake in determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal.⁶⁰

The root of the problem in determining the start of Ramadan, Shawwal and Eid al-Adha are the methods and criteria used by the two major mass organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Other mass organizations such as Persis, although slightly different in terms of criteria, are broadly following one of the NU or Muhammadiyah criteria. To achieve unity, it is necessary to understand the similarities and differences in the criteria used by mass organizations and the possibility of unification.⁶¹

Indonesian Muslims have practically used the Hijri calendar since the reigns of Islamic kingdoms in the past. After the Dutch occupation of Indonesia, there was a shift in the use of the government's official calendar. The Gregorian calendar replaced the Hijri calendar, however, Muslims still use the

⁵⁸ Chalil, *Nilai Dan Hikmat Puasa*.

⁵⁹ Arwin Juli Rahmadi Butar-butur, *Esai-Esai Kalender Islam Global* (Medan: Al-Azhar Centre dan OIF UMSU, 2021), 26.

⁶⁰ Thoah Hamim, *Islam Dan NU Di Bawah Tekanan Problematika Kontemporer* (Surabaya: Diantama, 2004), 243-244.

⁶¹ Thomas Djamaluddin, *Menggagas Fiqih Astronomi: Telaah Hisab Rukyat Dan Pencarian Solusi Perbedaan Hari Raya* (Bandung: Kaki Langit, 2005), 58.

Hijri for religious affairs.⁶² At that time, thoughts focused on efforts to find solutions to differences in determining the beginning of months in the Hijriyah calendar were not widely conveyed by scholars.⁶³ Efforts to find a solution to the problem of differences in the Hijri calendar, especially the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal, emerged during the Dutch colonial period in the 19th century. Determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal using the calculation method (*hisab*) was carried out by writing the book *al-Qaul al-Sawab* by Sayyid Usman in 1868, which contains the opinions of the scholars in determining the beginning of Ramadan.⁶⁴

In the 20th century, thoughts about efforts to solve the problem of differences in the early days of Ramadan and Shawwal came back to the fore. This thought arose from Indonesian Muslim scholars, namely Hamka, Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy and Moenawar Chalil. The first two names by Susiknan Azhari are referred to as the first two Indonesian scholars who initiated the unification of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia. According to him, Hamka is a pioneering figure in efforts to unify the national Islamic calendar. Meanwhile, Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy was an early figure who initiated the need for the unification of the global Islamic calendar.⁶⁵

Hamka is of the opinion that the government needs to take over in determining the beginning of the month of the Hijri calendar. According to him, the use of *hisab* and *ru'ya* methods can be carried out simultaneously in determining the beginning of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah. Hamka proposed that the Hisab and Rukyat Institute, which had been formed by the government, become the institution authorized to determine the beginning of the month. Hamka disagrees with the use of *matla'* unification even though it is possible. According to him, the difference in *matla'* so far is still ideal as a guide and reference in determining the beginning of the Hijri months, because there is no agreement among Muslims around the world to start the Hijri months together.

Similar to Hamka, Hasbi is of the opinion that the method of determining the beginning of the Hijri months, which is in accordance with Islamic teachings, is *ru'ya al-hilal* (direct witnessing of the crescent moon). Hasbi does not clearly state his attitude towards the use of *hisab* as a method of determining the beginning of the Hijri months. He only expressed his opinion that the disputes between the organizations in determining the beginning of the month should end immediately. The method that according to him is in accordance with the teachings of the Shariah is *ru'ya al-hilal* with the unity of *matla'*. Hasbi agreed with the idea of a *matla'* union. According to him, if the *matla'* unity with Mecca as the main reference has not been realized, then at least every nation's capital city can become its *matla'*.⁶⁶

In contrast to the two figures above, Moenawar Chalil argues that to overcome the problems of Muslims in modern times, *hisab* is the right method to determine the beginning of the Hijri months. *Ru'ya* is no longer sufficient for modern times, as technological developments can support a more consistent establishment of the Hijri calendar.⁶⁷

⁶² Susiknan Azhari, *Pembaharuan Pemikiran Hisab Di Indonesia: Studi Atas Pemikiran Saadoe'ddin Djambek* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2002), 10.

⁶³ Muhyiddin Khazin, *Ilmu Falak Dalam Teori Dan Praktik* (Yogyakarta: Buana Pustaka, 2004), 30-31.

⁶⁴ Nico J.G. Kaptein, *Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherland East Indies: A Biography of Sayyid Usman (1882-1914)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 79.

⁶⁵ Susiknan Azhari, *Penyatuan Kalender Islam: Dari Solidaritas Individual-Sektarian Menuju Solidaritas Kebangsaan-Keumatan* (Yogyakarta: Museum Astronomi Islam, 2020), 96.

⁶⁶ Azhari.

⁶⁷ Abdul Mufid, *Moderasi Beragama Perspektif Yusuf Al-Qaradawi Kajian Interdisipliner Tentang Wacana Penyatuan Hari Raya* (Banyumas: CV. Pena Persada, 2019), 202.

In the context of unifying the national Hijri calendar, Hamka and Hasbi agree to make the government determine the beginning of the Hijri months. The government must unite Muslims. In its development, the the *Hisab* and *Ru'ya* Institutions uses the new criteria for *ru'ya al-hilal*.⁶⁸ In contrast to the two, Chalil did not mention the technical solution to the problem of differences in the beginning of Ramadhan, Shawwal and Dhul Hijjah, whether through the government or letting each organization determine the beginning of the month in their calendar using the *hisab* method.⁶⁹

The development of astronomy shows that the use of *ru'yah fi'liyah* does not allow the creation of a calendar system. Solving the problem of determining the beginning of the Hijri months is not possible unless it is based on the acceptance of *hisab*. The use of *ru'ya fi'liah* has become an obstacle to unify the calendar among Muslims.⁷⁰

By looking at what was initiated by the three figures above, the combination of their three thoughts can be an alternative in efforts to solve the problem of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia. The ideas offered by Hamka, Hasbi and Chalil will not have a significant effect if the mass organizations still use their own methods. Especially if they use it as a tool to highlight their identity.⁷¹

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqy and Moenawar Chalil have ideas to solve fiqh problems for the Hijri calendar, especially regarding the use of *hisab* and *ru'ya* methods. Hamka's opinion in overcoming the problem of differences in the beginning of months in the Hijri calendar emphasizes the government's role by utilizing the *hisab* and *ru'yat* methods. Meanwhile, Hasbi's opinion to overcome this problem follows the *ru'ya* method as a whole with one *matla'*, so that not only Indonesian Muslims can unite but also Muslims throughout the world. Meanwhile, Chalil held the opinion of using the *hisab* method as a way to solve the problem of the difference in the beginning of the Hijri months. The thoughts of the three figures above have relevance to efforts to unify the Hijri calendar in Indonesia. If the thoughts of three figures above are combined, it will be able to provide an alternative offer to solve the problem of the Hijri calendar in Indonesia. Of the three thoughts, the one most likely to be realized is Hamka's opinion that the government's decision plays a role in realizing the unification of the Hijri calendar using both reckoning and rukyat methods.

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⁶⁸ Ahmad Fadholi, "Pandangan Ormas Islam Terhadap Draf Kriteria Baru Penentuan Kalender Hijriah Di Indonesia," *Istinbāth: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (2018), 202.

⁶⁹ Arwin Juli Rahmadi Butar-butur, *Penentuan Awal Bulan Di Mesir Dan Arab Saudi: Konsep, Mekanisme, Dan Problematika* (Surabaya: Media Sahabat Cendekia, 2019), 26.

⁷⁰ Syamsul Anwar, *Studi Hukum Islam Kontemporer Bagian Dua* (Yogyakarta: UAD Press, 2020), 207.

⁷¹ Ridwan Ridwan and Muhammad Fuad Zein, "Religious Symbol on Determining the Beginning and End of Ramadan in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): 8.

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