

Yusuf al-Qardawi and Hybrid Methods in Determination Beginning of the Months in Islamic Calendar

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Abstract:

Based on the opinion of the majority of scholars, both from the *mutaqaddimin* and *mutaakhirin* circles, they agree that determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar must be based on the results of observations of the new moon or better known as *ru'yat al-hilal*. Yusuf Qardawi is one of the scholars who agree with the above opinion, but what is interesting is that on another occasion he was of the opinion that *Hisab falaki* can also be used as the basis for determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar. It is Yusuf al-Qardawi, one of the scholars and thinkers of contemporary Islamic law who contributed his thoughts and views on this issue. As an adherent of moderate ideology, he tried to combine reckoning and *rukyah* in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar. The conclusion from his view is to keep *ru'yah* as the first and main reference in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar and use *hisab* when in certain cases (cloudy) and make it a tool to deny the existence of impossible *ru'yah* claims based on considerations of *imkan al-ru'yah* (visibility of the moon) agreed upon by astronomers

Keywords: Islamic calendar; astronomy; hybrid method.

Introduction

The importance of *hisab-rukyat* activities for Muslims is increasingly felt, especially when it is associated with the implementation of Worship. For example, to get the accuracy of the times of entering and leaving prayer times, determining the direction of the Qibla, the beginning of the calendar of Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah. Where in these calendars, Muslims perform the obligation of fasting Ramadan, celebrating Eid al-Fitr, and celebrate Eid al-Adha, even with *falakiah* activities it can be predicted when an eclipse will occur to perform eclipse prayers.

Meanwhile, the reality on the ground, regarding issues related to differences in the initial determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, especially the three important months in Islam; Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijah are problems of accuracy and data calculations that need to be carried out simultaneously with scientific and shari'ah approaches.

It can be said that the problem of determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar is a classic problem that has not been resolved until now. Previously in the era of the 70-80s the debate on the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar only occurred in the two largest religious organizations in Indonesia, namely NU and Muhammadiyah where the difference in the determination of first day of the month Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah was usually only one day apart, but now the difference in the determination of the beginning of these months has become more than 3 different days. This is because there are many schools and religious organizations in Indonesia that have different methods and criteria for determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar and each claiming and believing that their method is the most correct and in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Hadith.

Indonesia is a country that is rich in diversity, including in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, especially three important months in Islam; Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah which are different. On the one hand, this difference may be an indication that the development of astronomy or *hisab-ru'yat* in Indonesia is experiencing development and progress because there is a scientific dialogue that has been built in society, but on the other hand it could be an indication that people who understand astronomy are also fiqh or Islamic law, especially fiqh *hisab-rukyat* is rarely found in Indonesia.

Based on the opinion of the majority of scholars, both from the *mutaqaddimin* and *mutaakhirin* circles, they agree that the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar must be based on the results of observations of the new moon or better known as *ru'yat al-hilal*. Yusuf Qardawi is one of the scholars who agree with the above opinion, but what is interesting is that on another occasion he was of the opinion that *Hisab falaki* can also be used as the basis for determining the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar. This is what attracted researchers to conduct research on Yusuf Qardawi's views on the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, which according to the initial assumptions of the researchers was moderate and took the middle way by combining *hisab* and *ru'yat*. And this is what is then expected to be a solution for the unification of the early Islamic calendar in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Two Approaches to the Unification of the Beginning of The Months in Islamic Calendar

Efforts to unify the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar there are at least two approaches that can be taken: First, the method formulation approach. In the context of efforts to unify the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, especially Ramadan, Syawal and Dhulhijjah, actually since the birth of these differences, compromises have been made and the formulation of methods that can be agreed upon by all parties, whether from the reckoning group, *rukyah*, global region or *wilayat al-hukmi*, but until At this moment there is no agreement on the method used. As long as each party continues to prioritize their ego, it is difficult to find them in a method that can be agreed upon or it will not even be possible to find a single agreement until now.

However, even so, efforts to find the right method and criteria to be accepted by all parties and remain in the corridor of *syar'iyah* (religious guidance) and scientific must still be carried out. One of the efforts made by the government in this case, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through the BHR (Badan Hisab Ru'yah) to bridge these differences is to create a criterion called *Imkan al-Ru'yah* (Hilal visibility). In the calendar of Zulqadah 1418 coinciding with March 1998 the scholars of *hisab* and *rukyah* and representatives of Islamic community organizations held a meeting on the criteria for *imkan al-rukyah* for Indonesia where the decision of the deliberation was determined on Monday 7 Jumadil Akhir 1418 H/ 28 September 1998.¹ The results of the decision are as follows:² (a) Determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar is based on the essential reckoning system of *tahkiki* and or *rukyah*, (b) Determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar related to the implementation of *mahdhah* worship, namely the beginning of Ramadan, Syawal and the beginning of Zulhijah is determined by taking into account the *hisab* the essence of *tahkiki* and *rukyah*, (c) *rukyah* testimony can be accepted if the height of the new moon is 2 degrees and the distance of *ijtima* to the sun set or the age of the new moon is at least 8 hours, (d) the witness of the *rukyah* of the new moon cannot be accepted if the height of the new moon is less than two degrees then the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar is determined based on *istikmal*, (e) If the height of the new moon is two degrees or more, the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar can be determined, (f) the criteria for *Imkan al-Rukyah* mentioned above will be carried out further research. Calling on all leaders of Islamic community organizations to socialize this decision, (g) In carrying out the *isbat* session, the government listens to the opinions of Islamic community organizations and experts.

The existence of the *Imkan al-Rukyah* criteria in Indonesia was actually adopted from the decision of the MABIMS Alignment of *Rukyah* and Islamic Taqwim committee (Ministers of Religion of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore). The criteria for *Imkan al-Rukyah* is an offer from the Government in order to unite differences of opinion in *hisab rukyah* in Indonesia (in this case the Determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar specifically of Ramadan, Syawal Zulhijah).

The need for the *Imkan al-ru'yah* criteria aims, among others, to:³ First, for *rukyah* experts, to eliminate the possibility of seeing the *Hilal* incorrectly. As in the 1998/1418 case: Based on the MABIMS criteria, PBNU rejected the testimony of Cakung and Bawean whose *hilal* was too low (calendar height 54', age ~ 3 hours). Case 2006/1427: Based on the criteria of *imkan ru'yah* Lajnah Falakiyah NU did not take Cakung and Madura because the *hilal* was too low of 1 degree.⁴

¹Murtadho, *Imkân al-Rukyât Dalam Penentuan awal Bulan Qamariyah: Perspektif Syariah dan Astronomi Manhaj Nahdlatul Ulama*, *El-Qisth Jurnal Hukum*, (2007), 293-294

²Ahmad Izzuddin, *Problematika Hisab Rukyât di Indonesia*, makalah dipresentasikan pada Pendidikan keterampilan Khusus Bidang Hisab Rukyât, Ditjen Pendis Departemen Agama RI 2007

³T. Djamaluddin, *Menuju Kreteria Hisab Rukyât Indonesia*. Presentasi dalam Seminar Nasional HISSI 15 Januari 2010

⁴Thomas Djamaludin, *Astronomi Memberi Solusi Penyatuan Umat*, (Lembaga Penerbangan dan Antariksa Nasional: 2001), 11. Thomas Djamaluddin, *Astronomi Memberi Solusi Penyatuan Ummat (Indonesia: Lembaga Penerbangan dan Antariksa Nasional (LAPAN), 2011), 18, dan*

Second, for the reckoning expert, to be able to determine whether to enter the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar or not from the results of the calculation of the position of the new moon. Such as the 1998/1418 case: Muhammadiyah based on the criteria for form of hilal stipulates Eid al-Fitr on January 29, 1998. Exactly following the MABIMS criteria for establishing Eid al-Fitr on January 30, 1998. Case 2006/1427: Muhammadiyah based on the criteria for manifesting the hilal on Eid al-Fitr on October 23, 2006. Exactly on the basis of the criteria for manifesting the hilal The new moon throughout Indonesia set Eid al-Fitr 24 October 2006. Although this decision has been made jointly, there are still differences in Determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar. This approach does require a long process and time and it should be noted that the main factor of success through this approach is mutual openness and understanding of the thoughts and opinions of all parties by putting aside the egoism of each group.

Second, the Single Authority Approach. The easiest and fastest solution for the realization of the unification of the determination of the first 3 calendars is to use a single authority approach or the existence of a single authority agreement in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar specifically 3 important months. In this case, the government is considered and can have the authority to determine the first 3 calendars through the Ministry of Religion. Without limiting the space of thought and opinion of each group, the government must not be authoritarian in its decision to determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar specifically 3 important months, so there needs to be a procedure that must be passed, namely an open session attended by all elements and Islamic groups in Indonesia which results in mutually agreed decisions. , this has actually been done by the government by holding an *Istbat* session before setting 1 Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah. It was from the results of the *Istbat* trial that the government determined of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, but it became strange when not all groups obeyed and implemented the decision. This is what needs to be understood by all, especially astronomers and astronomers and especially the general public, that when a dispute or difference occurs, the government has the authority to resolve it in accordance with fiqh rules, which means that the ruler's decision can eliminate disputes.⁵ So that people are not confused by differences, there needs to be an agreement that the only one who has the right to determine 1 Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah is the Government and the only one who must be followed. People will feel more calm and solemn when carrying out worship when the realization of unity and unity in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar and this is what is expected. This calm and humility is a *masalahah* that should be embraced and realized rather than putting forward opinions: differences are grace (*ikhtilaf ummati rahmah*). And it would be better to unite than to be different because getting out of differences is loved or sunnah in accordance with the rules of fiqh, which means that getting out

Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia tentang Pembentukan Pengurus Badan Hisab dan Rukyah Kementerian Agama (Nomor 56 Tahun 2010), Muchtar Ali et al., Buku Saku Hisab Rukyah, (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama RI, 2013), 396

⁵Ali ibn Muhammad al-Amidiy, al-Ihkam fi Ushul al-Ahkam, Juz.4, (Beirut : Dar al-Kitab al-Arabiyy, 1404 H), 313. Lihat juga Lihat Wahbah Zuhaili, Al-Fiqh al-Islamiyy wa Adillatuh, juz 3 (Damaskus: Dar alFikr, tt), 39

of disputes takes precedence.⁶ Therefore, in this case the concept of *masalah* will be more appropriate when put forward in resolving this polemic.

Yusuf al-Qardawiy's views on *Rukyat* and *Hisab*

Islami has made it easy for its people to carry out various rituals of worship and intermediary according to the level and context.⁷ Included in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar as intermediary to know when to start and end Ramadan fasting⁸ and the time of performing *wukuf* in Arafah for pilgrims. In this case, Islam provides the easiest and contextual way, namely by using *rukyyat al-hilal*⁹ by seeing the sighting of the new moon directly, as a way to find out the end of the calendar of Syaban and the entry and end of the month of Ramadan and when it is time to perform *wukuf* in Arafah.¹⁰

If Islam at that time dictated reckoning as a way of knowing and determining the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar related to the implementation of the worship of the people, it would certainly be burdensome because of the context that the people at the beginning of Islam at that time did not know the science of astronomy or reckoning. Even astronomy at that time was better known as astrology, which in society had a negative connotation because it was related to predictions that had mystical and non-logical nuances. One of the lessons of *tasyri'* in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar with *rukyyat al-hilal* according to Yusuf al-Qardawiy is a form of mercy for the people so that the people at that time are not given demands that are beyond their ability to *mafhum mukhalafah* when they are given a burden that they cannot control. It is feared that they will flee from Islam and return to the religious beliefs of their ancestors.¹¹

Along with the changing times, science and technology also develops and progresses, including in the field of astronomy or astronomy where astronomy has become an independent scientific discipline. With a long course of time, people make observations or *ru'yat*, of course, then people can make conclusions and concepts or theories related to the results of their observations. Analysis and predictions about the movement of celestial bodies in the next tens or even hundreds of years can be obtained easily and have a very high level of precision. So that reckoning experts consider it sufficient to use reckoning as a determinant of the entry of the new moon, because if it is proven then the reckoning results are very accurate and almost close to or even the same as the empirical reality resulting from the observation or *ru'yah* process.

⁶Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr al-Suyuthi, *Al-Asybah wa al-Nadha'ir*, (Beirut : Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1403H), 136

⁷Yusuf al-Qardawi, *Kaif Nata'amal Ma'a al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah: Ma'alim wa Dawabit*, (Virginia: IIIT, 1990) 146. lihat juga Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Sunnah: Sumber Ilmu dan Peradaban*, terj. Muhammad Firdaus, (Selagor Darul Ehsan: International Institute of Islamic Thought dengan Thinker's Library SDN.BHD., 2000), 32

⁸Yusuf al-Qardawi, *Kaif Nata'amal Ma'a al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*, 146-154

⁹Muhammad ibn Ismail Abu Abd Allah al-Bukhariy, *Sahih al-Bukhariy*, Vol. 2 (tt: Dar Tauq al-Najah, tt), 27. Hadith Nomor 1909

¹⁰Yusuf al-Qardawi, *al-Hisab al-Falaky wa Ithbat Awa'il al-Shuhur*, makalah diambil dari situs Yusuf al-Qardawi www.qaradawi.net. Yusuf al-Qardawi, *Siyasah Al-Shari'iyah*, (Mesir: Maktabah Wahbah, 1419 H), 56

¹¹Yusuf al-Qardawi, *al-Hisab al-Falaky wa Ithbat Awa'il al-Shuhur*

And the existence of reckoning is actually the result of a process that begins with observation. With the discovery of the Spherical Trigonometry formula in mathematics, it is easier for people to be able to accurately predict when the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar will enter. Supported by advances in computing technology, it is easier for people to know and determine the entry of the new moon. This then makes people think practically to determine when the date change will occur so that they (read: reckoning experts) are content with the results of their calculations.

According to Yusuf al-Qardawi, because of the extraordinary development of astronomy, Muslims certainly cannot turn a blind eye. Therefore it is appropriate to consider the reckoning in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar. The hadith previously stated was very contextual where at that time the people were still unfamiliar with the science of astronomy or reckoning.¹² The context, it used to be different from now where not a few people who understand and understand the science of reckoning. The question is whether it is not permissible to use reckoning in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar.

On the one hand al-Qardawi provides a great opportunity for reckoning in determining the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar on the pretext of contextual interpretation of hadith, but on the other hand al-Qardawi argues that *hisab* can be used only in certain cases, for example in cloudy conditions, on the basis of the hadith narrated by Abu Dawud.¹³ This opinion actually follows the opinion of Mutarrif ibn al-Shikhkhir, one of the leaders of the Tabi'in.¹⁴ Or *hisab* can be used only to the extent of denying the recognition or claim of ru'yat al-hilal where astronomically or the celestial moon is impossible or impossible to see.¹⁵

The first impression from the reading of al-Qardawi's view on the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, it appears that Yusuf al-Qardawi is inconsistent with his own opinion. It can be seen from the efforts to interpret the hadith contextually where reckoning should be prioritized in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar for today, but on the other hand he remains on the *jumhur* opinion regarding the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar with *rukyat al-hilal*.

However, according to the researcher's analysis, al-Qardawi actually wants to accommodate *hisab* in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar even though in certain limits and cases there are clouds or fog by practicing other hadiths whose stressing point is on *faqduru* which he understands with *hisab*. And also *hisab* is used as a supporter of *rukyat* activities whose function is to deny the existence of ru'yat claims when according to astronomy or astronomy it is impossible to see the new moon. More firmly he said that reckoning was used only to deny the impossible claim of *rukyat* and not to establish (*ithbat*) the

¹²Yusuf al-Qardawi, al-Hisab al-Falaky wa Ithbat Awa'il al-Shuhur

¹³Stresing point pada lafaz faqduru dimaknai dengan hisab, lihat Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn Dawud ibn al-Jarud al-Tayalisy al-Basriy, Musnad Abi Dawud al-Tayalisy, Vol.3 (Mesir : Dar Hijr, 1999), 351

¹⁴Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd al-Qurtuby, Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid, (Kairo : Dar al-Hadith, tt), 46-47

¹⁵Yusuf al-Qardawi, al-Hisab al-Falaky wa Ithbat Awa'il al-Shuhur

beginning of the months in Islamic calendar.¹⁶ From here again Yusuf al-Qardawi is inconsistent with his statement where previously in the case of cloudy conditions, he agreed with Muttarif's opinion that reckoning could be a determinant of determining (*Ithbat*) of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar by considering *imkan al-rukyah* (*hilar* visibility). Apart from the controversy above, according to the researcher, Yusuf al-Qardawi's view deserves attention and appreciation from all parties because basically what he expresses is in an effort to find a middle way¹⁷ and synergize or combine *hisab* and *rukyat* in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar.

Regarding the opinion and views of Yusuf al-Qardawi regarding the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar or *hisab rukyat*, according to the researcher, the absolute validity of *hisab* as a determinant in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar is very possible so that views on the interpretation of the hadith regarding the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar need to be studied in accordance with the context of the times and the situation. This is according to the researcher with the consideration that: first, there is the dynamics of the development of science and technology. Along with the changing times, science and technology also develops and progresses, including in the field of astronomy or astronomy where astronomy has become an independent scientific discipline. With a long journey of time, people make observations or *ru'yah*, of course, then people can make conclusions and concepts or theories related to the results of their observations. So that reckoning experts consider it sufficient to use *hisab* as a determinant of the entry of the new moon, because if it is proven then the reckoning results are very accurate and almost close to or even the same as the empirical reality resulting from the observation or *rukyat* process. And the existence of *hisab* is actually the result of a process that begins with observation. With the discovery of the Spherical Trigonometry formula in mathematics, it is easier for people to be able to accurately predict when the beginning of the months in Islamic calendar will enter. Supported by advances in computing technology, it is easier for people to know and determine the entry of the new moon. This then makes people think practically to determine when the date change will occur so that they (read: reckoning experts) are content with the results of their calculations. So it is not impossible that theoretical scientific data will be the same and in accordance with empirical facts in the field and even difficult to distinguish between one another.

Second, the existence of scientific facts about changes in natural conditions. Based on scientific facts that the movement of celestial bodies in their trajectory or orbit changes. Including the moon which is the object of determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, where the moon turns out to be getting further away from the earth by $\pm 2-3$ cm. If it is then accumulated from centuries of calculations, it will certainly be seen that the moon's journey away from our earth is significant. With such conditions, it will be difficult for people to make observations or *rukyat al-hilar* because the position of the new moon is getting further away from

¹⁶Yusuf al-Qardawi, *al-Hisab al-Falaky wa Ithbat Awa'il al-Shuhur*

¹⁷Where he is known as an adherent of the moderate manhaj or the middle way, bringing together two opposing things as long as they can still be synergized, see Al-Qardawy, *Fatawa Mu'asyirah*, (al-Qaherah: Dar al-Qalam, 2000), 19-20.

the earth. Coupled with the fact that the pollution on earth and in outer space is getting worse, so that observations of celestial bodies from the earth are not as clear as before the amount of pollution. Whereas in the success of *rukyyat al-hilal*, one of the determining factors is natural or weather conditions. The *hilal* on the first day is so thin that it is very difficult for ordinary people to see (the naked eye), let alone the height of the *hilal* is less than two degrees. In addition, when the sun sets (sunset) on the western horizon, it still emits light in the form of a red light (*al-shafaq al-ahmar*). red light is what makes it difficult to see the moon itself in a new moon condition. The brightness or strength of the first phase of the new moon is less than 1% compared to the light of a full moon. The light of the new moon is very weak compared to sunlight and evening light, so it is very difficult to be able to observe the new moon whose light strength is less than that. In the air there are many particles that can block the sight of the new moon, such as fog, rain, dust, and smoke from urban lights. These disturbances have an impact on the view of the new moon, including reducing light, blurring the image and blurring the light of the new moon. Thus weather conditions are the dominant factor influencing the success of *rukyyat al-hilal*. If the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar is based on continuous ru'yah, then it is not impossible that the number of days for all calendars is istikmal 30 including Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) for 10 years fasted Ramadan for 30 days only 1 or 2 times, the rest he carried out 29 days.

Conclusion

The problem of differences in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar, especially Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijah, has not yet been completed and has ended. Various kinds of efforts and methods have been carried out by various groups, especially Islamic scholars and thinkers from time immemorial until now. It is Yusuf al-Qardawi, one of the scholars and thinkers of contemporary Islamic law who contributed his thoughts and views on this issue. As an adherent of moderate ideology, he tried to combine *hisab* and *rukyyat* in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar. The conclusion from his view is to keep ru'yah as the first and main reference in determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar and use *hisab* when in certain cases (cloudy) and make it a tool to deny the existence of impossible ru'yah claims based on considerations of *imkan al-rukyyah* (visibility of the moon) agreed upon by astronomers and astronomers.

Recomendation

Yusuf Qardawi's views as described in this study, although not fixed and actually still debatable, should be taken into consideration in resolving differences in the determination of the entry of the new month in the Islamic calendar for the time being at this time. It would be right and wise that Yusuf al-Qardawiy's views could be accepted by all groups so that the unity and unity that became the symbols of Islam were getting stronger which in the end the religious rites performed by Muslims were more valuable and weighty (*khusyu*).

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