



The Fiqh of *Hisab-Rukyat* of Modernist Mass Organizations: A Study of Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah Thought on the Hijri Calendar

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the differences in the epistemology of rukyat hisab fiqh between two modernist Islamic organizations in Indonesia, namely Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah, in determining the beginning of the Hijri month. Both start from the same legal sources, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, but produce different methods and decisions. Muhammadiyah uses the hisab imkanurrukyat method with the Single Global Hijri Calendar (KHGT) model as a representation of contextual ijtihad that emphasizes rationality and global welfare. In contrast, Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah adheres to the rukyat method with hisab guidance as technical support, representing textual ijtihad that emphasizes literal adherence to the text. This study uses a qualitative method, focusing on the intellectual and social history of Islamic law. Data were obtained through analysis of documents, fatwas, and decisions of mass organizations related to rukyat hisab. The research results show that these differences are rooted in the epistemological paradigms of each organization: Muhammadiyah tends toward a contextual-rational approach, while Al-Irsyad tends toward a textual-normative approach. Despite their differing approaches, both share the same goal: to establish certainty about prayer times and maintain the community's unity. This finding confirms that epistemological plurality in determining the Hijri calendar is inevitable in the dynamics of modern Islamic thought.

Keywords: Hisab rukyat, Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah, Hijri calendar, ijtihad.

1. Introduction

The concept of contemporary Islamic reform is closely related to modernism, as reformers reject authority grounded in irrationality. They view sharia provisions as contextual, shaped by

the historical, social, and political conditions at the time they were enacted. For reformers, these provisions must be examined rationally and incorporated into a modern system of thought. Thus, reformers are also modernists who view Islam as compatible with modern rational inquiry.¹

The ideas and development of Islamic modernism in Indonesia were a direct reaction to the decline of Islam as a religion, the backwardness of its followers, the wave of Western intellectual, cultural, and political invasion, and the influx of ideas of Islamic modernism from abroad.² Western influence was not the sole driving force behind the emergence of reform movements within Islam. Since the earliest times, Muslims have been familiar with internal renewal movements as part of efforts to understand and practice Islamic teachings correctly. Thus, while Western influence played a role, the internal dynamism of Islam itself has been the primary factor driving reform in response to heretical practices that deviate from fundamental Islamic values.³

Modernism is a school of religious thought that interprets Islam through a rational approach, adapting it to current developments. Modernism can also be defined as a school of religious thought that interprets religious doctrine so that it does not conflict with the spirit of the times. Modernism is a school of thought that aims to purify Islam by inviting Muslims to return to the Qur'an and Sunnah and encouraging freedom of thought as long as it does not contradict the authentic texts of the Qur'an and Hadith.⁴

A group of modernist Indonesian Muslims seeks to purify Islam of inauthentic elements and free it from the rigidity of sectarianism to meet the demands of the modern era. They believe the solution lies in returning to the Quran and Hadith as sources of true teachings, replacing deviant religious practices with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. This movement reflects Islamic revivalism or puritanism, while also aiming to free the Muslim community from centuries-old imitation of sectarianism.

The movement to reform Islamic thought in Indonesia emerged as a result of the mixed purity of Islamic teachings, the weakness of religious educational institutions, the influence of Christian missions, intellectual apathy toward Islam, and the political, economic, and social conditions resulting from colonialism. The movement's goals were to purify Islam from external influences, reformulate doctrine in line with modern thought, reform Islamic education, protect Islam from external attacks, and liberate Indonesia from colonialism.⁵

The Islamic thought renewal movement in Indonesia gave birth to various modern organizations during the national movement, when national consciousness and nationalism began to grow, especially among educated people. They recognized the nation's backwardness due to Dutch colonialism. Despite differing orientations, all these organizations shared a common goal: to improve

¹ Ahmad Yani Anshori and Landy Trisna Abdurrahman, "History of the Development of Mazhab, Fiqh and Uşul Al-Fiqh: Reasoning Methodology in Islamic Law," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v9i1.25355>; Thoha Hamim and Imron Rosyidi, *Paham Keagamaan Kaum Reformasi: Studi Kasus Pemikiran Moenawar Chalil* (Tiara Wacana, 2000).

² Martin Van Bruinessen, "In the Tradition or Outside? Reflections on Teachers and Influences," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, no. 1 (June 17, 2015): 53, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2015.531.53-103>; Alfian and M Din Syamsuddin, *Politik Kaum Modernis: Perlawanan Muhammadiyah Terhadap Kolonialisme Belanda* (Al-Wasath, 2010).

³ Akh Minhaji, A. Hassan: *Sang Ideologi Reformasi Fikih Di Indonesia 1887-1958* (Garut: Pembela Islam Media, 2015).

⁴ Yusril Ihza Mahendra, "Modernisme Dan Fundamentalisme Dalam Politik Islam: Perbandingan Partai Masyumi (Indonesia) Dan Partai Jama'at-i-Islami (Pakistan)," (No Title), 1999.

⁵ Jajang Jahroni, *The Political Economy of Knowledge: Salafism in Post-Soeharto Urban Indonesia* (Boston University, 2015); Burhanuddin Daya and Gerakan Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam, "Kasus Sumatera Thawalib," *Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana*, 1990, 10-11.

the nation's fate and bring it on par with other nations. Initially, this movement was not intended to fight colonialism, but rather to improve the welfare of the people suffering from its effects.⁶

During this period, elite Muslim figures emerged with a spirit of religious renewal, inspired by reform movements in the Middle East that called for a return to the purity of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Islam in Indonesia, particularly in Java, faced significant challenges from the strong influence of Hindu culture. This situation encouraged the emergence of young reformist figures who emphasized pure faith, thus triggering the growth of modern Islamic thought and the establishment of reformist organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah.⁷ Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah are among the influential modernist Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia.⁸

Both organizations adhere to the ideology of Islamic reform, with Muhammadiyah adhering to the Quran and Sunnah and calling on the community to abandon heresy and superstition. The goal is for the community to practice Islam correctly, in accordance with its sources.⁹ Al-Irsyad is also an Islamic organization with a mission to purify Islamic monotheism, worship, and practice.

The ideology of modernist mass organizations influences the epistemology of *ijtihad* used. Muhammadiyah formulates its religious teachings directly from the Quran and Hadith, not from Islamic jurisprudence or religious hierarchies. Therefore, every Islamic belief and obligation must be clearly grounded in these two sources, and understanding of Islamic teachings must always be based on them.¹⁰ Al-Irsyad also advocates purifying Islamic teachings, returning all religious practices to the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Religious epistemology based on the Qur'an and Hadith serves as the basis for the fatwas issued by Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad, including those concerning the *rukyat* (calculation) method for determining the beginning of the Hijri month. Although both use the same basis, in practice they differ in their decisions regarding the *rukyat* (calculation) method. Regarding the method for determining the beginning of the Hijri month, Muhammadiyah uses the Istanbul criteria method, known as the Unification Global Hijri Calendar¹¹, while Al-Irsyad uses the neo-MABIM criteria *rukyat* methods.¹² The different decisions of modernist Islamic organizations in the same case demonstrate the importance of this research.

2. Literature Review

Several studies have explored the thinking of modernist Islamic organizations. The first is Deliar Noer's work, which focuses on the birth of the modernist movement in Indonesia between 1900 and 1942.¹³ M.B. Hooker examined the fatwas of Persis, Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI from 1920 to

⁶ Zainal Muttaqin, "Formalization of Islamic Law in Indonesia in the Framework of Social Engineering Theory by Roscoe Pound," *El-Mashlahah* 11, no. 2 (December 23, 2021): 97-115, <https://doi.org/10.23971/elma.v11i2.2825>; Syamsul Arifin, "Perjuangan Kebangsaan Dan Pendidikan Al Irsyad," 2020.

⁷ Ormas-ormas Islam Khalimi, "Sejarah, Akar Teologi Dan Politik" (Cet, 2010).

⁸ Deliar Noer, "Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia, 1900-1942," (No Title), 1980.

⁹ Yon Machmudi, "Sejarah Dan Profil Ormas-Ormas Islam Di Indonesia," 2013.

¹⁰ M Mukhsin Jamil, Abdul Djamil, and Ali Romdhoni, "Nalar Islam Nusantara: Studi Islam Ala Muhammadiyah, Al Irsyad, Persis, Dan NU," (No Title), 2008.

¹¹ Muhamad Sidik Pramono, "Studi Analisis Keputusan Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah Nomor 734/Kep/I. 0/B/2021 Tentang Tanfidz Keputusan Musyawarah Nasional XXXI Tarjih Muhammadiyah Tentang Kriteria Awal Waktu Subuh," n.d.

¹² Ahmad Fadholi, "Pandangan Ormas Islam Terhadap Draf Kriteria Baru Penentuan Kalender Hijriah Di Indonesia," *Istinbath* 17, no. 1 (2018): 198-220, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.20414/ijhi.v17i1.41>.

¹³ Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia 1900-1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1996).

1990. Hooker stated that fatwas in Indonesia demonstrate a variety of responses to the challenges of modernity.¹⁴

The research by M. Mukhsin Jamil et al. examines the characteristics of Indonesian Islamic movements and thought as reflected in Islamic organizations. The characteristics of Islamic thought within these organizations in Indonesia result from a dialectic between the understanding of religious texts and social, political, and cultural realities, bridged by a specific set of epistemological frameworks.¹⁵ Khalimi's research¹⁶ and Yon Machmudi's research¹⁷ a general overview of various mass organizations in Indonesia. Both describe the history of the birth of these organizations, their figures, ideas, fields of work, characteristics, and contributions to the nation.

Another research is a book edited by Muhammad Wildan¹⁸ which describes the existence and role of many mass organizations in Indonesia, both those active in the socio-religious and political fields. Ahmad's research on how Islamic mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah, NU, Persis, Al-Irsyad, and Al-Jamiyatul Washliyah responded to the draft criteria for determining the beginning of the Hijri month resulting from the MABIMS agreement.¹⁹ Marwadi's article is a study that examines the thinking of Islamic organizations namely, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) on the methods and criteria for determining the beginning of the Hijri month. The results show that all organizations have implemented updates to their methods and criteria.²⁰ Of the several studies mentioned above, none have focused on the epistemology of rukyat hisab from modernist Islamic organizations in Indonesia such as Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah.

3. Method

This type of research is qualitative research, namely research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects.²¹ In this context, the research aims to understand the phenomena and factors influencing mass organizations in issuing fatwas or rulings on hisab rukyat. This research uses an intellectual history and social history approach to Islamic law.²² An intellectual history approach is used because fatwas or decisions of mass organizations are intellectual products influenced by the intellectual climate and by all phenomena encompassing ideology, politics, social, cultural, and economic factors. Social history is also used because fatwas are scholars' reflections on social structure, social mobility, and relations among different groups within society. The nature of this research is descriptive-analytical, namely research that provides as precise data as possible on humans, conditions, or other symptoms.²³ The descriptive aspect of this research is an elaboration of how the diversity of hisab rukyat fatwas occurs in modernist mass organizations. The analytical aspect is the epistemology that gives rise to the diversity of fatwas and differing decisions. The data

¹⁴ M Barry Hooker, *Indonesian Islam: Social Change through Contemporary Fatawa* (University of Hawaii Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Jamil, Djamil, and Romdhoni, "Nalar Islam Nusantara: Studi Islam Ala Muhammadiyah, Al Irsyad, Persis, Dan NU."

¹⁶ Khalimi, "Sejarah, Akar Teologi Dan Politik."

¹⁷ Machmudi, "Sejarah Dan Profil Ormas-Ormas Islam Di Indonesia."

¹⁸ Muhammad Wildan and Zuhroh Lathifah, *Gerakan-Gerakan Islam Indonesia Kontemporer* (Adab Press, 2020).

¹⁹ Fadholi, "Pandangan Ormas Islam Terhadap Draf Kriteria Baru Penentuan Kalender Hijriah Di Indonesia."

²⁰ Marwadi Marwadi, "Renewing the Thoughts of the Hijri Calendar of Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama and Persatuan Islam and Its Implications for Realization of National Hijri Calendar," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 15, no. 1 (June 14, 2021): 19–36, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v15i1.4870>.

²¹ Lexy J Moelong, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif," *Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya*, 2007.

²² Akh. Minhaji, *Sejarah Sosial Pemikiran Hukum Islam Dalam Antologi Hukum Islam* (Yogyakarta: Program Studi Hukum Islam Program Pascasarjana UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2010).

²³ Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji, "Soerjono Soekanto, Pengantar Penelitian Hukum" (UI Press, Jakarta, 2000).

sources in this study consist of primary sources in the form of fatwas and decisions of the modernist mass organizations Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah, and secondary sources in the form of other documents related to this research topic. The data collection technique used documentation, which was carried out by tracing fatwas and hisab rukyat decisions from Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah, as well as other documents related to this theme. The data analysis in this study used content analysis. The analysis was carried out on the legal decisions (fatwas) of each modernist Islamic mass organization regarding the determination of the beginning of the Hijri calendar month.

4. Results and Discussion

The Thought of Muhammadiyah's Hisab Rukyat Jurisprudence on the Hijri Calendar

In responding to the problem of differences in the calculation of the rukyat of the beginning of the Hijri month, the jurists have different opinions. This disagreement stems from the fact that the legal basis advanced by hisab experts cannot be accepted by rukyat experts, and the legal basis put forward by rukyat experts is considered by hisab experts to be insufficient to support this method of determining the start of the Hijriah month. Some jurists state that it is not permissible to use reckoning to determine the start of fasting for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.²⁴

For Muhammadiyah, the hisab and rukyat methods are essentially equal and represent a choice, based on whichever is closer to the truth and easier. In this regard, Muhammadiyah believes that hisab is closer to the truth and more practical, making it easier for the congregation to carry out their religious obligations, which are the basic principles of Islamic teachings.²⁵ Apart from that, some scholars argue that the determination of the Hijri month is based on reckoning. Muhammadiyah uses verses from the Koran and also the hadith of the Prophet SAW. to support the ability to use reckoning. Among them are the words of Allah in surah al-Rahman verse 5 and Surah Yunus verse 5.

The basis for reckoning as a method for determining the beginning of the Hijri month is the Koran and the hadith of the Prophet SAW. including Q.S. al-Baqarah verses 185 and 189, Q.S. Yunus verse 5, Q.S. al-Nahl verse 16, Q.S. al-Hijr verse 16, Q.S. al-Anbiya verse 33, Q.S. al-An'am 96-97, Q.S. al-Rahman verses 5 and 33, Q.S. Yasin 38, and the hadith of the Prophet Bukhari-Muslim.

Muhammadiyah uses hisab as a method for determining the beginning of the Hijri month for several reasons, namely: 1) Rukyat is not the sharia objective of the rukyat hilal texts. Rukyat was the only tool available in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to determine the beginning of the Hijri months, especially Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah. 2) Rukyat is not an act of worship, but only a tool available at that time. Because it is only a tool, rukyat can undergo changes over the course of the era. 3) The use of hisab as an alternative to rukyat is clearly easier, cheaper, can predict dates far into the future, provides more certainty, can provide an accurate calendar, and can unify calendars even for the entire world. 4) Hisab is based on verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). 5) The command to rukyat contained in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) according to scholars is a command that contains

²⁴ Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Reg and Nasr Abû Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.5117/9789053568286>; Tim Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid PP Muhammadiyah, *Pedoman Hisab Muhammadiyah* (Yogyakarta: Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid PP Muhammadiyah, 2009).

²⁵ Alimuddin Alimuddin, "Hijriyah Months and The Construction of Religious Moderation in The Sombaopu Community of Gowa, South Sulawesi," *Al-Adalah* 20, no. 1 (June 25, 2023): 137, <https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v20i1.16818>; Majelis Tarjih P P Muhammadiyah, "Penggunaan Hisab Dalam Penetapan Bulan Baru Hijriyah/Qomariyah," *Hisab Rukyat Dan Perbedaannya*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama Dan Diklat Keagamaan Departemen Agama RI, 2004.

a reason or illat in the form of the people's condition of being illiterate in writing and arithmetic. 6) The command to observe the night of Rukyat was actually temporary, namely when the people were still in a simple state with some limitations in the field of astronomy. 7) There is a recommendation from the Prophet (peace be upon him) to search for the Night of Qadr on the nights of the ten odd days of Ramadan. The Night of Qadr is of course only one day for the entire world. It can't occur more than once. When using Rukyat to start the month, it certainly creates different nights in certain regions because Rukyat cannot create a single date. Only hisab can unify the date for the entire world so that it is in accordance with the recommendation of the Prophet (peace be upon him).²⁶

Some of the reasons why Muhammadiyah uses hisab are explained further below. In Q.S. al-Rahman verse 2 and Q.S. Yunus verse 10, it is shown that the moon and sun are in a regular orbital system that has been determined by Allah and can therefore be calculated. The information that the orbits of the sun and moon can be calculated certainly serves as a signal for use in determining the number of years and calculating time in general. Interpretations of the Qur'an or hadith certainly have a purpose behind this information. Exploring the purpose behind this information is crucial because the above verses indicate that humans perform calculations for the benefit of life, including creating a calendar system. Therefore, the above two verses contain a signal for the use of hisab in determining the Islamic time system, including determining the entry of the Hijri month.

Before Muharram 1447 H, Muhammadiyah had long used the sighting of the crescent moon to determine the beginning of its Islamic month. The theory of the true hisab of the crescent moon was initiated by Muhammad Wardan, a Muhammadiyah figure who served as chairman of the Tarjih Council. Muhammad Wardan felt it was important to change the community's habit at that time of routinely determining Eid al-Fitr using traditional hisab, namely hisab urfi, so that the month of Ramadan always lasted 30 days. In fact, both using rukyat and hisab, the month of Ramadan sometimes lasted 30 days, 29 days. Therefore, Muhammad Wardan conducted ijthid by offering a new model for determining the beginning of the Islamic month, which he called the true hisab of the crescent moon.²⁷

Muhammad Wardan explained that determining the first day of a new Hijri month based on the crescent-moon sighting theory is a matter of calculation, without any specific limitations. The main point is that the crescent moon is visible. Furthermore, the crescent moon is visible if the sun sets before the moon, even if the difference is only 1 minute or less.²⁸

In the calculation of the crescent moon, the first step in determining the first day of the new Hijri month is to position the sun at sunset, then determine the moon's position whether it is above the horizon or still below it. If it is already above the horizon, it means it is east of the horizon line and also east of the sun. In this situation, the new Hijri moon has already occurred or the crescent moon has been seen. Second, in calculating the beginning of the Hijri month, what must be done is not to determine the moon's height above the horizon, but to determine whether, at the change from day to night, the moon is already positioned to the east of the sun.²⁹

²⁶ Syamsul Anwar, Oman Fathurrahman, and Muhammad Rofiq, "Paham Hisab Muhammadiyah Dan Tuntunan Ibadah Bulan Ramadhan" (Yogyakarta: Majelis Tarjih dan Tajdid Pimpinan Pusat Muhammadiyah (MTT PP ..., 2016).

²⁷ Susiknan Azhari, "Hisab Hakiki Model Muhammad Wardan: Penelusuran Awal", *Hisab Rukyat Dan Perbedaannya*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama Dan Diklat Keagamaan Departemen Agama RI, 2004.

²⁸ Suhar AM et al., "Collective Ijthid Practice in Indonesia: The Role of Isbat Sessions in Addressing Legal Paradigm Differences Between Hisab-Rukyat," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 24, no. 2 (December 30, 2024): 105-23, <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v24i2.1537>; Muhammad Wardan, "Hisab Urfi Dan Hakiki," *Jogjakarta: Siaran*, 1957.

²⁹ Anwar, Fathurrahman, and Rofiq, "Paham Hisab Muhammadiyah Dan Tuntunan Ibadah Bulan Ramadhan."

The reason why Muhammadiyah chose to use the true crescent moon sighting method to determine the beginning of the Hijri month is that the accuracy of the results has been empirically proven, as seen in the solar eclipse at the end of Sha'ban. With the true crescent moon sighting method, the "H" day for worship can be determined well in advance of the "H" day. In implementing the obligatory five daily prayers, Muslims have practiced them in the field, based on hisab. Hisab and rukyat actually have the same status and are a choice, which is closer to the truth and easier. In this case, hisab is closer to the truth, more practical, and makes it easier for the community to carry out worship, which is a basic principle of Islamic teachings. Determining the beginning of the Hijri month is closely related to worship because much of worship in Islam is related to the dates of the Hijri month, such as the obligatory fast of Ramadan, the Eid prayer, the Hajj, the voluntary fast of Ashura, the voluntary prayer of the solar eclipse and the lunar eclipse.³⁰

The true calculation of the existence of the crescent moon referred to and used to determine the beginning of the new Hijri month in Muhammadiyah circles is when three criteria have been met: *ijtimak* (conjunction) has occurred, *ijtimak* (conjunction) occurs before sunset, and at sunset the upper disk of the moon is above the horizon (the new moon has appeared). These three criteria are used cumulatively, meaning they must be met simultaneously. If one is not met, then the new month has not begun.

Starting in 1447 AH (2025 CE), Muhammadiyah will use the calculation and *imkanurrukyat* criteria method developed by the Istanbul, Turkey, Congress under the name "Kalender Hijriah Global Tunggal (KHGT)" or Unified Global Hijri Calendar (UGHC). UGHC is a calendar that uses the lunar synodic cycle, with a global date-per-day principle. In formulating UGHC, principles, conditions, and parameters must be adhered to.

The principles of UGHC include aligning days and dates worldwide. The alignment of days and dates worldwide at the start in each month, meaning one day, one date throughout the world, as in the Gregorian calendar system. The next principle is the use of hisab. The use of hisab in determining the beginning of the Hijri month is valid and in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Rukyat and hisab are means to determine the beginning of the Hijri month, however, hisab is seen as a means of providing more certainty in determining the beginning of the month, so hisab must take precedence over rukyat. The unity of the absolute. The unity of the absolute refers to the concept that the entire surface of the earth is considered as a single calendar zone.

Therefore, the concept of the diversity of the absolute or *ikhtilāf al-maṭāli* becomes impossible to guide. The global application of calendar parameters, however, is sufficient, somewhere on the face of the earth. This means that the calendar parameters (5° Moon altitude + 8° elongation and its correction) that have been met in a specific region of Earth are applied globally. These 5° + 8° parameters are analogous to the visibility criteria (*imkanu rukyat*) for the crescent moon, because with these parameters, the crescent moon can be seen. Acceptance of the International Date Line (IDT). The entire world community, including Muslims, has accepted the current IDT as the boundary line separating two consecutive days/dates. This line is located on the 180° meridian (longitude).

The UGHC must meet the following requirements: it must be a system that can accommodate both religious and worldly affairs. It must be based on the Hijri month, which lasts no more than 30 days and no less than 29 days. It must be a unified calendar with the provision of one day, one date

³⁰ Muhammadiyah, *Pedoman Hisab Muhammadiyah*.

worldwide. It is not permissible for a group of Muslims in a particular region to begin a new month before ensuring that the calendar parameters have been met elsewhere. It is not permissible for a group of Muslims in a particular region to enter the new month while the crescent moon has been clearly visible on the horizon.

The UGHC parameters cover the entire world considered as one absolute unity; the new month begins simultaneously in all regions. The latest month begins if in any part of the world, before 24:00 GMT, the following criteria are met: an elongation of 8° or more and a crescent height above the horizon at sunset of at least 5°. Suppose the above criteria are met after midnight (24:00 GMT). In that case, the new month still begins with the following conditions: 1) If the above parameters have been met anywhere in the world and the *ijtimak* in New Zealand occurs before dawn. 2) The above parameters in point 1) occur in the mainland area of the American Continent.

Muhammadiyah implemented UGHC with the understanding that creating an accurate and orderly calendar system is part of the effort to manage time well, which can be seen as a manifestation of the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. This view is in line with the guidance of the Qur'an, particularly in Surah Al-Hasyr verse 18, Surah Yunus verse 5, and Surah At-Taubah verses 36–37, which emphasize the importance of time management in religious life. Furthermore, the hadith of Abu Hurairah which states that fasting, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha should be performed simultaneously by all Muslims (Narrated by at-Tirmidhi) clearly shows that uniformity of worship times is part of the objectives of sharia (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*). In this context, the physical sighting of the crescent moon is only a *wasilah* (means), not the *maqṣad* (purpose) of the hadith command regarding sighting. The essence or main purpose of this hadith is to guarantee the accuracy and certainty of worship times, especially in determining the start of the Ramadan fast. Thus, the Unified Global Hijri Calendar has a strong basis in the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, both in the Qur'an and the hadith, and can be seen as a modern instrument for realizing *ad-dīn al-qayyim* (straight and orderly religion) in an increasingly connected global era.³¹

The Thoughts of Al-Irsyad's Hisab Rukyat Jurisprudence on the Hijri Calendar

The thought of hisab rukyat at the beginning of the Hijri month of Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah can be seen from the decision or fatwa of the Al-Irsyad figure, namely Ustad Umar Hubeis. The thought of hisab rukyat at the beginning of the Hijri month was conveyed when answering questions related to hisab and rukyat. Umar Hubeis said that in 1389 H, Muslims inside and outside Indonesia celebrated Eid al-Fitr on three different days: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, December 9, 10, and 11, 1969. This event is a very funny and quite sad oddity, even though the month on which hisab or rukyat is based is only one; its circulation ends at the end and beginning of the month. In Indonesia, the holiday is on Wednesday, December 10, 1969 based on hisab. However, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion determined the Eid al-Fitr holiday and celebration on Thursday, December 11, 1969 without any legal basis for hisab or rukyat, because Islamic law does not allow rukyat experts to establish a thirty-day fast, unless the moon is not visible on the thirtieth night of Ramadan, while the Ministry of Religion had preceded this several days earlier.

According to Hubeis, this difference is due to the use of rukyat in determining the Hijri month, the use of reckoning without rukyat in determining the start of Ramadan, and the understanding of

³¹ Syamsul Anwar, "Tinjauan Maqasid Syariah Terhadap Kalender Islam Global," *Al-Marshad: Jurnal Astronomi Islam Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Berkaitan* 5, no. 2 (December 20, 2019): 205–20, <https://doi.org/10.30596/jam.v5i2.3801>.

matlak. Rasulullah SAW established the beginning of the month of Ramadan and the beginning of the month of Shawwal with rukyat. He said, “We are a people who are not good at writing and not good at calculating (reckoning), one month sometimes has 29 days or 30 days.” Ibnu Hajar explained that what was meant by the word “we” was the Muslims at that time when he said those words. Most of them are illiterate and do not understand calculations. Rasulullah SAW said, “Don’t fast until you see the moon. And don’t break your fast until you see the moon. So if it is blocked (covered by fog), estimate it. Ibnu Hajar explained that what is meant by the word “estimate” is to calculate, calculate the circulation of the month. According to Hubeis, most scholars use rukyat based on the two hadiths of Rasulullah SAW in the base as well as other hadiths. This is the reality that applies to the time of the Prophet.

However, according to Hubeis, some scholars use these two hadiths to encourage knowledge, so they can determine the beginning of the month by reckoning rather than by rukyat, which can sometimes be wrong. On the other hand, reckoning is considered a sure science, qath’i, unlike rukyat, which is zanni. Tajuddin As Subki, from the Syafi’iah ulama, is of the opinion that if the reckoning shows positive signs, with the rukyat not visible because the moon is very close to the sun, then in such circumstances the rukyat will not be possible, even impossible. If someone, or more, brings rukyat news that is likely to be false, then the news must be rejected. As for the reckoning, it is positive, while the matters of witnessing and rukyat news are still conjectural. Of course, guesswork cannot beat certainty.

The Qur’an encourages its people to study the journeys of the moon, sun, and other planets, as in Q.S. Yunus, verse 5: He is the one who makes the sun shine, makes the moon shine, and determines its circulation, so that you know the number of years and know the reckoning. It is only based on the truth that Allah created all that to provide verses (teachings) for those who know. In surah Ar-Rahman verse 5: The circulation of the moon and sun is calculated. Q.S. Yasin verses 39 – 40: And We have given the moon a (certain) circulation until it returns to its original state, like a circle of old dry fronds, the sun cannot catch up with the moon, the night cannot catch up with the day, each circulates according to its orbit. These verses are some of the verses in the Al-Qur’an which mention the existence of reckoning as a driving force and recommendation for the ulama, who no longer consist of people who are illiterate and illiterate as a reason, as a reason for determining the obligation to perform rukyat, in the above-mentioned hadiths of Rasulullah SAW.

Islam establishes worship times based on the orbits of the moon and the sun. Scholars now use hisab (calculation) to determine worship times such as prayer, imsak, and iddah (the beginning of Ramadan), except for Ramadan and Shawwal, which still use rukyat (the time of the sun). They understand that the Prophet’s command to use solar observations was contextual, intended for the early, simple community to enable simultaneous worship.³²

Umar Hubeis explained at length the opinions and reasons for the opinions of the hisab experts, so that they would serve as a warning and continue the discussion in a broader and more in-depth

³² Ansori Ansori, “Position of Fatwa in Islamic Law: The Effectiveness of MUI, NU, and Muhammadiyah Fatwas,” *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 22, no. 1 (July 29, 2022): 53–72, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v22i1.53-72>; Ismail Koto et al., “Islamic Holy Days: The Contention of Rukyatul Hillal and Hisab Hakiki Wujudul Hilal Disputes for Muslims in Indonesia,” *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 105(2) (March 2024), <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.105.210>; Muhammad Taufiq, Muhammad Fauzinudin Faiz, and Ziyad Ravaşdeh, “Between Sharia and State: Fatwa Authority and Pandemic Responses in Indonesia, Turkey, and Morocco,” *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syar’iah* 17, no. 1 (June 28, 2025): 377–94, <https://doi.org/10.18860/j-fsh.v17i1.31433>.

manner, in an Islamic forum that is respected and honored by Muslims and has the right to determine the laws to be obeyed.

Umar Hubeis explained the issue of crescent moon sighting (*matlak*), which causes differences in sightings across countries. He cited various opinions of scholars, such as Ibn Hajar, who stated that sightings in one location are also valid for other locations, and others who limit it to the local area. Imam Nawawi even listed six views on the obligation of fasting based on sightings, ranging from those applicable to the entire world to those limited to the area where the crescent moon is sighted or the surrounding area within a certain distance.

Hubeis also cites the opinion of Imam Ash-Syaukani after narrating the differing opinions of scholars, stating his position that the reasonable and applicable view is that the sighting of the moon in one place or region applies to all regions. The beginning of each month, including Ramadan and Shawwal, does not differ in time, because each region has its own absolute differences. When the moon sets after sunset, that month begins. The beginning of each Hijri month is on the same day and at the same time throughout the world, although it may sometimes be visible in one region but not in another.

Hubeis deliberately presents various opinions that favor and permit calculation, and considers the sighting of the crescent moon in one region to be universal, with the understanding that no text from the Quran or the authentic and definitive hadith of the Prophet confirms one opinion or denies another. According to Hubeis, the difference between hisab and rukyat is a matter of *ijtihadiah*, allowing one to choose what satisfies one's reason, is accepted with pleasure, avoids division and conflict, and creates a sense of tolerance between followers of hisab and followers of rukyat.

Umar Hubies proposed that the Ministry of Religious Affairs hold a meeting with scholars from all Islamic sects and organizations who are competent and authorized to make decisions regarding hisab and *matlak*. Before a positive decision is reached using hisab and *matlak*, a committee should be appointed consisting of hisab and rukyat experts. Similarly, for the determination of holidays and major Islamic holidays, the 30th day of Ramadan should be considered, which is most likely the beginning of Shawwal (Eid). The International Islamic Congresses in Kuala Lumpur, Mecca, Karachi, Cairo, and Amman should address these issues to unite the Muslim community and avoid the divisions that often arise over trivial matters due to a lack of understanding.

According to Hubies, to achieve physical and spiritual unity, if the hisab has been confirmed, a calendar should be issued. If not, a city in Islamic countries should be designated as a center to receive rukyat reports from all over the world and then determine the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhul-Hijjah.³³

The Istinbath Method of Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah regarding the Hijri Calendar

Istinbath is the process of exploring and deriving law from the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith through *ijtihad*.³⁴ This term has a meaning almost equivalent to *ijtihad*, namely the earnest effort to discover sharia law from detailed evidence.³⁵ According to Asy-Syaukani, *istinbath* is a form

³³ Umar Hubeis, *Fatawa* (Pustaka Progressif, 1987).

³⁴ Marwadi, Mughni Labib, and Muhammad Fuad Zain, "Reforming the Islamic Calendar and Religious Authority: Dynamics of Hijri Calendar Calculation in Indonesia within Persatuan Islam's Thought," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, June 30, 2025, 149-66, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v19i1.10574>; Satria Efendi, "Ushul Fiqh, Cetakan-5," Jakarta: Kencana, 2014.

³⁵ 'Abd al-Wahhāb Khallāf, *ʿIlm Uṣūl Al-Fiqh* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Dakwah al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.).

of practical application of *ijtihad* itself.³⁶ In practice, there are two main approaches to conducting legal *istinbath*: *istinbath* based on the explicit meaning of the message contained in the text, and *istinbath* derived from the implicit meaning or implied impression of the text.³⁷

Thus, the object or focus of *istinbath* is *syar'i* propositions, both those originating directly from the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as from non-textual propositions such as *qiyas*, *istihsan*, and *maslahat murlah*. This is because, basically, the laws established through methods such as *qiyas*, *istihsan*, and others remain the result of the *istinbath* process, which is based on the principles contained in the Koran and Sunnah.³⁸

From the explanation above, *istinbath* is identical to *ijtihad*, with both having similarities and differences. Both are similar in that they are attempts to understand and reason about the law. The target is practical sharia evidence, both directly and indirectly. The practitioner must possess the ability and expertise to meet certain requirements. The resulting legal status is equally *zanni*. However, there is a difference between the two: *ijtihad* has a broader scope than *istinbath*. *Ijtihad* encompasses both legal *istinbath* and legal application. Meanwhile, *istinbath* does not encompass *ijtihad* activities related to legal application. Therefore, *istinbath* is a subset of *ijtihad*.

Broadly speaking, there are three types of *istinbath* methods: the *bayani istinbath* method, the *ta'lili istinbath* method, and the *istishlahi istinbath* method. The *bayani istinbath* method is a legal *istinbath* pattern that relies on linguistic rules.³⁹ The *istinbath ta'liliy* method is an *istinbath* method that is based on the *illat* of the *dishari'atan* of a legal provision.⁴⁰ The *istinbath istishlahi* method is an *istinbath* method that applies general rules, as there are no specific arguments regarding a problem in the Qur'an or hadith based on the rules of *istishlah* or *mashlahah mursalah*.⁴¹

According to Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, *ijtihad*, as an outpouring of intellectual ability in formulating legal rulings, consists of two types: *ijtihad intiqai* and *ijtihad insya'i*. *Ijtihad intiqai* is choosing one opinion from the strongest opinions in the Islamic *fiqh* heritage, which is full of fatwas and decisions. Meanwhile, *ijtihad insya'i* is the drawing of new legal conclusions from a problem that previous scholars have not previously raised, whether the problem is old or new. In other words, *ijtihad insya'i* covers part of the old problem, namely by a contemporary *mujtahid* to obtain a new opinion on the problem that has not been obtained from the opinions of the *salaf* scholars.⁴²

From Yusuf al-Qardhawi's explanation of the division of *ijtihad*, it can be understood that the results of legal formulation based on the thoughts of *mujtahids* do not have the same standing as revealed truth. The products of *ijtihad* are human in nature and therefore subject to review, as is the concept of *ijtihad intiqai*, which opens up space for evaluation of the opinions of previous scholars. The results of *ijtihad* are essentially *zanni* (strong assumptions) because they are based on human rational capacity rather than absolute truth. Therefore, within a single legal issue, differing views and variations in *ijtihad* results are natural.

³⁶ Syekh Al-Imam Muhamad Asy-Syaukani, *Irsyad Al-Fukhul Min Ilm Al-Ushul* (Bairūt: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.).

³⁷ Muhammad Abu Zahrah, "Ushul Al-Fiqh," *Darul Fikri Al-Araby*, 1958.

³⁸ Zufriani Zufriani et al., "Rukyat as Determination of the Lunar Month Beginning: A Method, Obstacles, and Debate in Indonesia," *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 22, no. 1 (June 13, 2023): 53, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v22i1.6570>; A F Hasanuddin, *Anatomi Al-Qur'an: Perbedaan Qira'at Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Instinbath Hukum Dalam Al-Qur'an* (RajaGrafindo Persada, 1995).

³⁹ Ali Hasaballah, "Ushul Al-Tasyri'al-Islami," *Mesir: Dar Al-Ma'arif*, 1971.

⁴⁰ Muhammad Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi, *Al-Madkhal Ila Ilm Ushul Al-Fiqh* (Damaskus: Jamiah Damaskus, 1959).

⁴¹ Wahbah Al-Zuhayli, *Uṣūl Al-Fiqh Al-Islāmī* (Suriah: Dar al-Fikr, 1986).

⁴² Watni Marpaung and Nurhayati Nurhayati, "Determination the Beginning of Qamariyah Month According to Government," *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura* 19, no. 2 (December 28, 2019): 278, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v19i2.4867>; Yusuf Qaradawi, Abu Barzani, and Muhammad Luqman Hakiem, *Ijtihad Kontemporer: Kode Etik Dan Berbagai Penyimpangan* (Risalah Gusti, 2000).

Consequently, the law produced through *ijtihad* is not binding in all cases, and no one is obligated to follow it consistently. A legal issue that has been examined by one *mujtahid* remains open to review by another *mujtahid* in accordance with changing times, conditions, and circumstances. In this context, the principle that law can change with changing times and circumstances applies. Meanwhile, in the realm of *ijtihad insya'i*, there appears to be an awareness that the limitations of texts, both the Qur'an and the *hadith*, necessitate the role of reason in addressing new issues. This is natural, because since the death of the Prophet Muhammad revelation has ceased; the role of *ijtihad* serves as a bridge between the divine message and the realities of human life.⁴³

According to Fathurrahman Djamil, a *mujtahid* conducting *ijtihad intiqai'i* must consider several important factors, including social and cultural changes, developments in science and technology, and suitability to the needs of the times. These factors serve as the basis for consideration in formulating solutions to the legal issues faced. Therefore, implementing *ijtihad intiqai'i* requires in-depth, critical thinking about the issues discussed. This study focuses not only on the evidence and arguments put forward by classical jurists but also assesses the extent to which these views remain relevant and applicable in contemporary life.⁴⁴

The *hisab rukyat* jurisprudence of the Hijri calendar was compiled based on an understanding of several verses of the Qur'an and the *hadith* of the Prophet SAW. There are around fifteen verses in the Al-Qur'an relating to the Hijri calendar⁴⁵ and the *hadiths* of the Prophet PBUH. totaling fifty-six *hadith*.⁴⁶

In the context of the legal *istinbath* method for determining the beginning of the month in the Hijri calendar, it can be explained, as in the previous *ijtihad* theory, that the verses of the Qur'an and *hadith* that form the basis for determining the beginning of the month can be interpreted through two approaches: textual and contextual. The textual approach is an analytical method that emphasizes a literal understanding of the Qur'an and *hadith*, taking into account their linguistic and grammatical features. For example, the use of *nahwu* (Arabic grammar) and *balaghah* (rhetoric) in understanding the verses of the Qur'an falls within the textual approach. The advantage of this method lies in its ability to preserve the text's authenticity and meaning, ensuring that the interpretation remains faithful in the original intent. However, this approach has limitations in exploring meaning related to the historical, social, and situational contexts that underlie the revelation of the text.⁴⁷

The contextual approach focuses on the historical, social, and cultural aspects underlying the creation of a text. In Islamic studies, this approach aims to explore the moral messages and universal values contained in the text, so they can be applied to the demands and dynamics of the times. Contextual analysis seeks to understand the social, cultural, and historical conditions at the time the text was written, recognizing that every religious text has a historical dimension that shapes

⁴³ Saifuddin Herlambang et al., "Husn Al-Jawāb 'an Ithbāt Al-Ahillaḥ Bi Al-Ḥisāb: Basyūnī 'Imrān's Method for Standardising the Determination of the Qamariyah Month in the Sultanate of Sambas (1913-1976)," *Journal of Islamic Law* 5, no. 2 (August 21, 2024): 222-41, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v5i2.2775>; Moh Anas Kholish and Nor Salam, "Hukum Islam Progresif: Epistemologi Alternatif Dalam Menjawab Problem Kemanusiaan," 2020.

⁴⁴ Abdul Helim, "Hamka's Legal Methodology on Hisab-Ru'yah in His Book 'Saya Kembali Ke Ru'yah,'" *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 23, no. 2 (July 12, 2024): 215, <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v23i2.11952>; Djamil Fathurrahman, "Filsafat Hukum Islam," *Jakarta: Logos Wacana Ilmu*, 1997, 135. his stance evolved dramatically, concluding unequivocal support for the practice of *ru'yah* (moon sighting)

⁴⁵ H Susiknan Azhari, *Kalender Islam Ke Arah Integrasi Muhammadiyah-NU* (Museum Astronomi Islam, 2012).

⁴⁶ Susiknan Azhari, *Hisab & Rukyat: Wacana Untuk Membangun Kebersamaan Di Tengah Perbedaan* (Pustaka Pelajar, 2007).

⁴⁷ Muhammad Iqbal and Dinda Nur Khadijah, "Pendekatan Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Dalam Kajian Islam," *Khazanah : Journal of Islamic Studies*, April 18, 2025, 16-22, <https://doi.org/10.51178/khazanah.v4i1.2452>.

its meaning. The advantage of this approach lies in its flexibility, which allows understanding of religious teachings to remain relevant and applicable in changing times.

Muhammadiyah, which applies the *hisab imkanurrukyat* method with the concept of the Single Global Hijri Calendar (KHGT) to determine the beginning of the Hijri month, can be categorized as a form of *ijtihad intiqā'i*, namely by adopting the views of scholars who permit the use of *hisab* in determining the beginning of the month. This *ijtihad* conducted by Muhammadiyah can also be classified as contextual *ijtihad*, as it seeks to understand the verses of the Quran and hadith in light of evolving social conditions, time, and place.

The Prophet's command to perform *rukyat hilal* (crescent sighting) in the hadith is not understood as a form of *ta'abbudi* (purely ritual) worship, but rather as a practical tool relevant at that time for a society that was still illiterate and unfamiliar with astronomical calculations. Thus, physical *rukyat* is merely a tool for determining the beginning of the month, including the months of worship, not the primary purpose of the hadith. The goal to be achieved, in accordance with *maqāṣid al-syari'ah*, is to ensure that the initial determination of worship - such as fasting - can be carried out precisely, accurately and definitely.⁴⁸

Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah applies the form of *ijtihad intiqā'i* by choosing the views of scholars who establish *rukyat hilal* as the primary method in determining the beginning of the Hijri month. Al-Irsyad's thought pattern shows a tendency toward the textual *ijtihad* method, namely, understanding the hadith literally according to its wording contained in the text. In practice, Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah determines the beginning of the Hijri month based on *rukyat hilal*, as explained in Umar Hubeis' fatwa on *hisab* and *rukyat*. Meanwhile, *hisab* is positioned only as an aid to guide the implementation of *rukyat*, to be more precise and efficient, with *imkanurrukyat* as the basis for determination. The results of the *hisab* calculations used as a reference by Al-Irsyad members are official, having been approved by the *Hisab Team* of the Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah Central Leadership.⁴⁹

5. Conclusion

The differences in the *rukyat* (observation) methods between Muhammadiyah and Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah reflect the epistemological diversity within the modern Islamic *fiqh* tradition in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah displays a contextual character of *ijtihad* by emphasizing scientific rationality through the *imkanurrukyat* (calculation and ascertainment) method and the concept of a Unified Global Hijri Calendar. This approach demonstrates an effort to integrate astronomy and the *maqāṣid al-sharia* (the principles of sharia) to achieve the welfare and unity of the *ummah*. Meanwhile, Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah maintains a more textual approach, prioritizing *rukyat* as the primary method, deemed most in keeping with the guidance of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and positioning *hisab* as a technical support. This difference reflects two complementary styles of legal *istinbath* within the treasury of Islamic law: Muhammadiyah's contextual *ijtihad* and Al-Irsyad's textual *ijtihad*. Both stem from the same intention to bring about the welfare and unity of the *ummah* through accurate timing of worship. Therefore, it is essential to develop an epistemological dialogue between these two paradigms to create a more comprehensive integration of *hisab* and *rukyat* methods that all Indonesian Muslims can accept.

⁴⁸ Anwar, "Tinjauan Maqasid Syariah Terhadap Kalender Islam Global."

⁴⁹ Fadholi, "Pandangan Ormas Islam Terhadap Draft Kriteria Baru Penentuan Kalender Hijriah Di Indonesia."

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