



### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NAHDLATUL ULAMA AND MUHAMMADIYAH IN THE APPLICATION OF THE WILAYATUL HUKMI MATLAK TO THE DETERMINATION OF THE BEGINNING OF THE MONTH OF RAMADAN

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#### Abstract

Determining the beginning of the month of Ramadan is one of the main sources of difference between major Islamic organizations in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. This determination is very important because it directly relates to the implementation of obligatory worship for Muslims. This study aims to examine the sources of community differences and to analyze the methods employed by NU and Muhammadiyah (through the Majelis Tarjih) in determining the beginning of Ramadan, particularly in relation to the application of *matla'* and *wilāyat al-hukmī*. This research adopts a library research method, with primary data derived from academic journals, classical jurisprudential texts, and relevant scholarly books. The findings show that Nahdlatul Ulama determines the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah based on the principle of *wilāyat al-hukmī* through *ru'yat al-hilāl bi al-fi'l*, namely direct observation of the new moon. This approach is intended to promote unity in determining the beginning of the lunar month within a single governmental authority. In contrast, Muhammadiyah determines the beginning of the lunar month using the *hisāb ḥaqīqī wujūd al-hilāl* method. According to this method, the new month begins when three criteria are fulfilled: the occurrence of conjunction (*ijtimā'*), the conjunction taking place before sunset, and the position of the moon being above the horizon at sunset.

Muhammadiyah thus relies on astronomical calculation as the primary basis for determining the beginning of the month.

**Keywords:** Reckoning, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Ramadan, rukyat,

### Abstrak

Penentuan awal bulan Ramadan merupakan salah satu sumber perbedaan utama di antara organisasi Islam besar di Indonesia, yaitu Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) dan Muhammadiyah. Penentuan ini sangat penting karena berkaitan langsung dengan pelaksanaan ibadah wajib bagi umat Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji sumber-sumber perbedaan yang terjadi di tengah masyarakat serta menganalisis metode yang digunakan oleh NU dan Muhammadiyah (melalui Majelis Tarjih) dalam menetapkan awal bulan Ramadan, khususnya terkait dengan penerapan *matlak* dan *wilāyatul hukmi*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan (library research), dengan sumber data utama berupa jurnal ilmiah, literatur fikih klasik, dan buku-buku akademik yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Nahdlatul Ulama menetapkan awal bulan Ramadan, Syawal, dan Zulhijah berdasarkan prinsip wilayatul hukmi melalui rukyatul hilal bil fi'li, yaitu pengamatan langsung terhadap hilal. Pendekatan ini dimaksudkan untuk mewujudkan kesatuan dalam penetapan awal bulan Qamariah dalam satu wilayah pemerintahan. Sebaliknya, Muhammadiyah menetapkan awal bulan Qamariah dengan menggunakan metode *hisab hakiki wujudul hilal*. Menurut metode ini, awal bulan ditetapkan apabila tiga kriteria terpenuhi, yaitu terjadinya *ijtimak* (konjungsi), *ijtimak* terjadi sebelum matahari terbenam, dan pada saat matahari terbenam posisi bulan berada di atas ufuk. Dengan demikian, Muhammadiyah menjadikan perhitungan astronomis sebagai dasar utama dalam penentuan awal bulan.

**Kata Kunci:** Hisab, Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Ramadhan, rukyat.

### A. Introduction

In determining the beginning of the lunar month, several methods serve as the basis for its determination, most notably the *hisab* method and the *rukyat* method. *Hisab* is a calculation-based system grounded in the astronomical movements of the moon and the earth around the sun. According to this system, the length of each lunar month is not fixed but depends on the position of the crescent moon (hilal) at the beginning of the month. Consequently, two consecutive months may consist of either 29 or 30 days and may even alternate, as recognized in *hisab* 'urfī. In practice, the *hisab* method relies on astronomical data and precise calculations of celestial motion.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, *rukyat*,

<sup>1</sup>Susiknan Azhari, *Encyclopedia of Hisab Rukyat*, (cet. II, Yogyakarta: Student Library, 2008).

commonly referred to as *rukyat al-hilāl*, is an activity undertaken to observe the appearance of the young crescent moon after conjunction (*ijtima'*) in the western horizon (*ufuq*), shortly after sunset and before the beginning of a new lunar month. This method is particularly emphasized prior to the months of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhulhijjah in order to determine the commencement of these significant months. In practice, however, the *hisab* and *rukyat* methods are not necessarily contradictory but can be understood as complementary approaches in determining the beginning of the lunar month.<sup>2</sup> However, in practice, the methods of *hisab* and *rukyat* are not necessarily contradictory, but rather complementary.<sup>3</sup>

The Hijri calendar system, also known as the Qamariyah Islamic calendar, is fundamentally based on the cycle of *hilal* observation or the revolution of the moon around the earth. This system reflects the implementation of the Prophet's hadith which instructs Muslims to begin fasting and end it upon sighting the crescent moon, and to complete the month to thirty days when the crescent is obscured (Narrated by al-Bukhari). During the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), *rukyat* served as the sole guideline for determining the beginning of lunar months, resulting in months of either 29 or 30 days depending on the success of observation.<sup>4</sup>

The determination of the beginning of the Qamariyah month is therefore a matter of great urgency for Muslims. In addition to determining Islamic holidays, it establishes the beginning and end of Ramadan and Dhulhijjah, which are directly related to individual religious obligations (*fard 'ayn*), namely fasting and performing the pilgrimage (*hajj*). For this reason, determining the beginning of the lunar month can be regarded as a religious obligation that must be carefully and responsibly addressed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Muhyidin Khazin, *Falak Science in Theory and Practice*, (Yogyakarta: Buana Pustaka., 2008).

<sup>3</sup> T Djamaruddin, *Menggagas Fiqh Astronomy, Hisab-Rukyat Analysis and the Search for Solutions to Differences in the Feast Days*, (cet. I, Bandung: Kaki Langit., 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Imam Bukhori, *Saheh Bukhari*, (Beirut: Darul Fikri, Juz.II, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> Hisab Agency, Ministry of Religious Affairs Rukyat, and Almanac Hisab Rukyat, "Project for the Development of Islamic Religious Courts" (Jakarta, 1981).

From both astronomical and juridical perspectives, determining the beginning of the lunar month cannot be separated from the issue of the location of *rukyat* and *markaz* (reference point) used in observation and calculation. Due to the spherical shape of the earth, the visibility and calculated position of the crescent moon vary depending on the geographical location of the reference point. As explained by Anwar, the first visibility of the hilal after conjunction is geographically limited and does not simultaneously cover the entire surface of the earth, meaning that at the same time some regions may observe the crescent while others may not.<sup>6</sup> This geographical variation gives rise to the concept of *matlak*, which refers to the territorial scope of validity in determining the beginning of the lunar month. According to Azhar, differences in *matlak* can influence the determination of the beginning of the month even when *rukyat* and *hisab* yield similar results. Consequently, differences in fasting and the celebration of Eid may occur due to differing *matlak* interpretations. Ruskanda identifies three major opinions regarding *matlak* applicability: first, applicability within a distance of approximately 80 kilometers; second, applicability within eight degrees of longitude, as practiced in Brunei; and third, applicability across an entire legal jurisdiction (*matlak wilāyatul ḥukmi*), whereby determinations made in any part of a country apply to the whole territory.<sup>7</sup>

In Indonesia, the determination of the beginning of the lunar month has particular characteristics due to the involvement of both the state and Islamic mass organizations. The government, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, seeks to unify the determination of the Qamariyah month—especially Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhulhijjah—for the sake of public benefit. However, major Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah (Majelis Tarjih) often issue their own determinations. According to Izzuddin, although NU is commonly associated with the *rukyat* mazhab and Muhammadiyah with the *hisab* mazhab, both organizations adopt

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<sup>6</sup> Azhari, *Encyclopedia of Hisab Rukyat*.

<sup>7</sup> S Farid Ruskanda, *Rukyah with Technology: An* (Gema Insani, 1994).

the same territorial approach, namely wilāyatul ḥukmi, meaning that once a new month is declared in any region of Indonesia, it applies to all Muslims throughout the country.<sup>8</sup>

Previous research related to this research is *first* Hindun's research, UIN Mataram (2022) entitled *Matla' Wilayatul Hukmi (Review of Jurisprudence and Astronomy)*.<sup>9</sup> *Second*, Badriah and Faisal (2018) entitled *Determination of the Beginning of the Month with the Ittihadul Mathla' Method in Indonesia*.<sup>10</sup> *Third* Oktavia (2020) entitled *Determination of mathla' Hilal (Place of Rising or Place of Emergence)*.<sup>11</sup> *Fourth* Ulum (2019) entitled *Fatwa of NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) and Muhammadiyah of East Java on Hisab Rukyat*.<sup>12</sup> *Fifth* Antasalam (2022) entitled *Determination of the Hijri Calendar According to Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Ulama in Indonesia*.<sup>13</sup> *Sixth* Husna et al, (2022) entitled *Unification of the National Hijri Calendar in the Perspective of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Organizations*.<sup>14</sup> *Seventh* Jamaludin (2018) Titled *Determination of the Beginning of the Kamariah Month and its Problems in Indonesia*.<sup>15</sup> *Eighth* Nasution (2018) Titled *Determination of the Beginning of the Kamariah Month Comparative Study of Tarekat Naqsabandiyah Pauh, Padang City with Tarekat Naqshabandiyah*

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<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Izzuddin, *Fiqh Hisab Rukyah* (Erlangga Publisher, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Sahadatina Hindun, "Matla'wilayatul Hukmi Review of Jurisprudence and Astronomy" (UIN Mataram, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Nurul Badriyah, "Determination of the Beginning of the Month by Ittihadul Mathla' Method in Indonesia," *Al-Qadha: Journal of Islamic Law and Legislation* 5, no. 1 (2018): 48-56.

<sup>11</sup> Putri Aulia Oktavia, "Determination of Mathla' Hilal," *AL - AFAQ : Journal of Falak Science and Astronomy* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 89–105, <https://doi.org/10.20414/afaq.v2i1.2302>.

<sup>12</sup> Miftahul Ulum, "Fatwa Ulama Nu (Nahdlatul Ulama) and Muhammadiyah East Java on Hisab Rukyat," *Islamic Journal* 1, no. 2 (October 28, 2021): 244–72, <https://doi.org/10.54298/jk.v1i2.3369>.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Hafiz and Dhiauddin Tanjung, "Determination of the Hijri Calendar According to Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama Ulama in Indonesia," *JOURNAL OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION* 3, no. 2 (2022): 357-66.

<sup>14</sup> Amira Himayah Husna, Shirly Ardini, and Siti Tatmainul Qulub, "Unification of the National Hijri Calendar in the Perspective of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Organizations," *AL-FAQ : Journal of Falak Science and Astronomy* 3, no. 2 (February 9, 2022): 171–88, <https://doi.org/10.20414/afaq.v3i2.4772>.

<sup>15</sup> Dedi Jamaludin, "Determination of the Beginning of the Kamariah Month and Its Problems in Indonesia," *Al-Marshad: Journal of Islamic Astronomy and Related Sciences* 4, no. 2 (December 20, 2018): 156–71, <https://doi.org/10.30596/jam.v4i2.2441>.

*Babussalam, Langkat.*<sup>16</sup> Ninth Harismawan (2019) entitled *Analytical Study of Wujudul Hilal Criteria According to the Tarjih and Tajdid Council of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership.*<sup>17</sup> Tenth Fatimah (2021) entitled *The views of Muhammadiyah and NU on the New Order Government Policy Regarding the Uniformity of Eid Al-Fitr.*<sup>18</sup> Eleven Arfi (2021), entitled *Application of the Concept of ittihadul Matlak in Implementing the Beginning of the Kamariah Month in the Mabims Region.*<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Maghfuri's article (2020) is entitled *Calculation of Solar Eclipse Calculations with Ephemeris Hisab Rukyat data.*<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Hidayat (2019) entitled *History of the Development of Hisab and Rukyat.*<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Indayani's article (2021) is entitled *Responding to the Diversity of Hisab Rukyat of Community Organizations in Indonesia.*<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Marwadi's article (2018) is entitled *Interconnection of Fikih Hisab Rukyat and Geodesy Science.*<sup>23</sup>

From several existing studies, no one has specifically discussed the matlak wilayatul hukmi from the perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, while the two organizations have a very large following that will greatly affect religious life in Indonesia and more specifically in determining the beginning of the lunar month (Ramadan).

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<sup>16</sup> M H D Fikri Maulana Nasution, "Determination Of The Beginning Of The Month Of Kamariah A Study Of Comparison Between . 6, no. 1 (2018).

<sup>17</sup> Harismawan Masyfuk, "An Analytical Study of the Criteria for Wujudul Hilal According to the Tarjih and Tajdid Council of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership," 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Anis Fatimah, "Muhammadiyah and NU Views on the New Order Government's Policy Regarding the Uniformity of Eid Al-Fitr2, no. 2 (August 7, 2022): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.22515/isnad.v2i2.4852>.

<sup>19</sup> ARFI HILMIATI, "Application of the Concept of Ittihādul Maṭla'in Determining the Beginning of the Kamariah Month in the Mabims Region," n.d..

<sup>20</sup> Alfan Maghfuri, "Accuracy of Solar Eclipse Calculation with Ephemeris Hisab Rukyat Data," *AL - AFAQ : Journal of Falak Science and Astronomy* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2020): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.20414/afaq.v2i1.2292>.

<sup>21</sup> Ehsan Hidayat, "History Of The Development of Hisab And Rukyat," *Elfalaky* 3, no. 1 (June 11, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.24252/ifk.v3i1.9777>.

<sup>22</sup> Wiwik Indayati, "Addressing the Diversity of Hisab Rukyat of Community Organizations in Indonesia," *AL - AFAQ : Journal of Falak Science and Astronomy* 3, no. 2 (February 9, 2022): 131–42, <https://doi.org/10.20414/afaq.v3i2.4771>.

<sup>23</sup> Marwadi Marwadi, "Interconnection of Jurisprudence of Hisab Rukyat and Geodesy Science," *Al-Manahij: Journal of Islamic Legal Studies* 12, no. 2 (December 5, 2018): 217–32, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v12i2.1768>.

## B. Method

The research method used in this research is *library research*, which is a type of research used in the collection of in-depth information and data. Data collection techniques are manual and online, while data sources are derived from literature or journals and library books, magazines and other references related to this research.

## C. Result and Discussion

### 1. Matlak

The term Mathla' in Islamic studies is the geographical limit of the validity of rukyat. Based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) mathla' is written in matlak which means the place where the sun rises, the dawn rises, or the moon rises. While in terms of falak, matlak is the boundary of the region based on the extent to which Hilal is visible, the boundary is geographically, the validity of the results of rukyat or regarding the rise of hilal (crescent moon) for determining the beginning and end of the Hijriyah month.<sup>24</sup>

The concept of matla' began to emerge from differences of opinion regarding the extent to which the results of rukyat could be applied. Is the result of rukyat in a region only applicable to the local area or is the result of rukyat also applicable throughout the world. From these differences of opinion then gave rise to the term matla'. Matla' etymologically in the Arabic dictionary is seen from the word مطّالع, مطّالع, يطّلّع, طّلّع, whose zdharaf makān becomes which means "the place of rising" or "the place where the new moon appears". In English it is called "Rising Place" which means the place where the celestial body rises or in the Indonesian dictionary it means the place where the moon rises, the dawn rises, or the sun rises.<sup>25</sup>

The Hanafi Mazhab as quoted by al-Zuhaili believes that in determining the beginning of the Hijri Month, especially the beginning of

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<sup>24</sup> Muchtar Salimi, "Minimum Hilal Visibility: A Comparative Study Between Ministry of Religious Affairs Criteria and Astronomy," 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Taufiqurrahman Kurniawan, "Falak Science and Global Matlak Review" (MPKSDI Yogyakarta, 2010).

Ramadan and the beginning of Shawwal can be done in two ways, namely. First, rukyat is done by a large group whose criteria are the need for religious knowledge (shara'), this method is done when the sky is clear. Then the person who testifies that he saw the crescent moon testifies with the phrase (I testify). Secondly, if the sky is not clear because it is covered by clouds or fog, then it is sufficient for the imam or leader to hold the testimony of a Muslim who is fair, mature, intelligent, male or female, free or slave, because the issue of rukyat is a religious issue of equal value by narrating a hadith. In this case, the one who sees the moon does not need to testify by saying a sentence. Testimony can be given in front of a judge (*qadhi*).<sup>26</sup>

Wahbah al-Zuhaili also explained in his book *al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* that the opinion of the majority of Hanafi scholars believes that rukyat in one country applies to all Muslims in other countries, so that no difference in matla' has any effect on determining the beginning of the Hijri Month.<sup>27</sup> The Maliki Mazhab believes that in determining the beginning of the Hijri Month (especially the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal) can be done in three ways, namely: First, rukyat is carried out by means of even the largest group. they are not among the just people who are guaranteed not to lie according to custom, not gender discrimination, freedom or justice. Second, rukyat is done by two or more people fairly, whether the sky is cloudy or not. Third, the success of rukyat by just one person in the condition of the hilal, undoubtedly can be done in rukyat requires the success of rukyat by two people justice rukyatul hilal at the beginning of the month of Shawwal, as well as the testimony of the success of rukyat by women according to him is not acceptable Malikiah circle.<sup>28</sup>

Abdurrahman Al-Jaziri explained matla' according to the Maliki school that if the moon sighting has been determined in an area, then fasting is

<sup>26</sup> Wahbah Al-Zuhaily, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu, Volume II*, (jakarta: gema insani, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Al-Zuhaily.

<sup>28</sup> Meri Fitri Yanti, "The Opinion of Four Mazhab On Mathla'in Determining The Beginning of The Hijriah Month (Astronomical Perspective)" (IAIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2017).

obligatory for all areas and there is no difference regarding areas near or far from the area where the moon sighting was determined. When the news of rukyatul hilal has spread to all areas. So, all Muslims on earth are obliged to fast. And the difference in matla' hilal is not an absolute consideration.<sup>29</sup>

The Hanbali school believes that determining the beginning of the Hijri month can be done by a mukallaf, just in behavior and soul, male, female or slave. And the success of the rukyat of a just person is not enough if there are obstacles, and it requires the success of the rukyat of two just people at the beginning of Shawwal rukyat to determine Eid al-Fitr.<sup>30</sup> Hasan Ayub also explains in his book *fiqhul 'ibadaat biadillagia fil Islam* that the majority of Hanbali scholars determine that the difference in matla' has no effect, namely if the inhabitants of a country have seen the new moon of Ramadan, then all Muslim countries are obliged to fast at the same time as the inhabitants who see the crescent moon. Based on the general hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, about hukab rukyat, namely with the proposition "Fasting because of seeing the moon and breaking the fast because of seeing the moon", the target is all Muslims, if any of them see the moon in any area, then the results of his rukyat apply to all of them. And not differentiated based on differences in geography and boundaries.<sup>31</sup>

The Shafi'i school is of the opinion that the beginning of the Hijri month can be determined based on the customs of the person who made the rukyat of a just person, even if his identity is not clear, whether the sky is clear or covered by clouds. As long as the person who saw it is a just person, Muslim, adult, intelligent, free (free) and male. Ibn 'Umar saw the moon and then conveyed it to the Messenger of Allah. Then he welcomed the news by fasting and ordering it to the people.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Abdurrahman Al Jaziri, "Al-Fiqh 'Alamadahib Al-Arba'Ah Juz 4," *Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah*, 1990.

<sup>30</sup> Yanti, "The Opinion of Four Mazhab on Mathla'in Determining The Beginning Of The Hijriah Month (Astronomical Perspective)."

<sup>31</sup> Hasan Ayub, "Fikih IbadahA Complete Guide to Worship According to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah," *Terj Abdurrahim, Jakarta: CLM*, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Yanti, "The Opinion of Four Mazhab on Mathla'in Determining The Beginning Of The Hijriah Month (Astronomical Perspective)."

Wahbah Al-Zuhaily states that the Shafi'iah equate the difference in the matla' of the moon and the matla' of the sun with different prayer times. Whereas in nisbah (al Ma'qul) Islamic law (shara') establishes mandatory fasting, because of the birth of the month of Ramadan. Whereas this beginning of Ramadan itself is not the same because of the difference in matla' in a country including distance. So the law of starting fasting is according to the state itself.<sup>33</sup> Sayyid Sabiq in his book *Fiqh As-Sunnah* explains that the opinion chosen by the Shafi'i group is that each region has its own rukyat. As narrated by Kuraib.<sup>34</sup>

From several opinions there are differences about matlak in determining the beginning of the month. Broadly speaking, there are two *matla'*, namely: Global *matla'*, and local *matla'*. *Global matla'* is a geographical limitation of the validity of rukyat by using a philosophical approach which states that the first day of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah must fall on the same day for all inhabitants of the earth, as a symbol of unity of Muslims throughout the world.<sup>35</sup> The majority of scholars who adhere to this opinion are Hanfiyah and Malikiyah that if the inhabitants of a country see the hilal, then rukyat is valid for all countries in the world. Local *Matla'* is the limit of geographical validity of rukyat using a philosophical approach states that the unity of Muslims is not only based on the equality of the determination of the beginning of the Hijri month for the whole world, but that unity can be realized through mutual respect and respect for fellow Muslims. In the sense that if someone succeeds in rukyat hilal in a place of the area, then the results of rukyat hilal only apply in the area. The location of the hilal and its surroundings are determined to be included in the same *matla'*, which is the opinion regarding this *matla'* among the Shafi'iyah scholars.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Al-Zuhaily, *Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Wa Adillatuhu, Volume II*.

<sup>34</sup> Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqhus Sunnah, Volume I*, (Cairo: Dar Al-Fath, 1990).

<sup>35</sup> Hindun, "Matla'wilayatul Hukmi A Review of Jurisprudence and Astronomy."

<sup>36</sup> Mukhlis Makruf, *The Thought of Tengku Muhammad Hasbi Ash-Shiddieqi in Determining the Beginning and End of Ramadan*, (Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Economics, UIN Walisongo, Semarang, 2013).

## 2. MUI Fatwa on *Matlak*

Regarding the issue of *matla'* in determining the beginning of lunar months, particularly Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued Fatwa Number 2 of 2004 concerning the Determination of the Beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah. This fatwa stipulates that: first, the beginning of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah is determined based on the methods of *hisab* and *rukyat* conducted by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and applies nationally. Second, Muslims throughout Indonesia are obliged to follow the government's determination regarding the beginning of these months. Third, the Minister of Religious Affairs is required to consult with the Indonesian Ulema Council, Islamic organizations, and relevant institutions in determining the beginning of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Zulhijah. Fourth, *rukyat* results from regions that allow the visibility of the crescent moon, even if they are outside the territory of Indonesia, may be used as a reference by the Minister of Religious Affairs, provided that regional considerations are met and Indonesia is still regarded as one *matla'*.

This fatwa reflects MUI's effort to harmonize religious jurisprudence with national unity by adopting the concept of a unified *matla'* (*wilāyat al-hukm*) for Indonesia. From a jurisprudential perspective, this approach prioritizes social cohesion and legal certainty over strict geographical differences in moon visibility. However, from an astronomical standpoint, the concept of *matla'* is closely related to the physical visibility of the crescent moon, which is influenced by factors such as longitude, latitude, altitude, and atmospheric conditions. Astronomically, differences in *matla'* are a natural consequence of the Earth's curvature and the varying positions of the Moon relative to the Sun and Earth, which may result in different visibility zones (*ikhtilāf al-matāli'*). Therefore, while the MUI fatwa adopts a unified *matla'* for practical and sociological reasons, it implicitly accommodates astronomical

considerations by allowing rukyat data from other regions, as long as they remain contextually relevant to Indonesia as a single *matla'*.<sup>37</sup>

### 3. Wilayatul Hukmi according to Nahdlatul Ulama

The Nahdlatul Ulama organization believes that the determination of the beginning of the month, especially those related to worship (Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijah) must be done by rukyat. This is because, according to Nahdlatul Ulama, they cling to the guidance of the Prophet's hadith which is more or less 23 hadith narrated by al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, an-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, at-Tirmidzi, Imam Malik, Ahmad bin Hambal, ad-Darimi, Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim, ad-Daruquthni, al-Baihaqi, etc., namely using the basis of rukyatul hilal bil fi'li, namely seeing the moon directly in the field on day 29 (night 30) or using the basis of istikmal, namely perfecting the age of the Moon to 30 days, if on day 29 (night 30) the hilal has not been successful in rukyat.<sup>38</sup>

The implementation of Nahdlatul Ulama hilal rukyat is carried out by forming and preparing the implementation of rukyat spread in various places throughout Indonesia. The rukyat implementers who are members of this organization have previously been equipped with knowledge about the technical rukyat through training held, so that those who carry out rukyat are people who are considered to have the skills and technical knowledge to meet the requirements. As for the area that will be applied to the implementation of the beginning of the month, NU adheres to the approach that the results of rukyat apply to the entire territory of Indonesia. NU is of the view that because Indonesia is a unitary territory (government) then in terms of determining the beginning of the month equality must be achieved. The rukyat that is accepted as the basis is the result of rukyat in Indonesia (not global rukyat) with the insight of one legal territory of the Republic of Indonesia. So if one place in Indonesia can see the hilal, then the results of the rukyat become the basis of *itsbatul 'aam* (notification). applies to Muslims throughout Indonesia.

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<sup>37</sup> Indonesian Ulema Council, "Set of Fatwas of the Indonesian Ulema Council Since 1975," (*No Title*), 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Salam Nawawi, "Rukyat Hiiab Among NU-Muhammadiyah," *Surabaya: Diantama*, 2004.

This shows that Nahdlatul Ulama is the largest religious organization in Indonesia wants that in one region of the Indonesian state government in matters of determining the beginning of the month must achieve unity even though the territory of the Indonesian state stretches from Sabang to Merauke with a very long stretch covering three regions of time. This long stretch is related to the concept of matlak In fact, it will be divided into many different matlak must do its own rukyat. According to the Shafi'i school of thought, if it is proven that there is rukyat in a country, then rukyat This only applies to adjacent areas that are still in one region, with the criteria of one matlak is a distance of 24 farsakh or an area of 133 km. Whereas distant countries (above 133 km) are not bound by rukyat proven in this country.

However, Nahdlatul Ulama is an adherent of the Syafii school of thought in Indonesia today It does not actually adhere to this fundamental concept. This is because the distance between the western and eastern ends of Indonesia is 5,200 km. If within 133 km there is one matlak, then in Indonesia there are about 39 matlak. Because of these difficulties, according to Sahal Mahfuzh, Nahdlatul Ulama must switch mazhab (intiqal mazhab). However, Nahdlatul Ulama did not switch to the mazhab of the jumhur ulama, which is one rukyat for the whole world, but a new concept called wilayatul hukmi. That is one rukyat applies to existing national countries. The discussion of the matlak concept here is focused on local matlak, because Nahdlatul Ulama does not use global matlak. There is a distribution of local matlak based on distance, climate and the region of hukmi. Meanwhile, in astronomy, the limit of the validity of matlak is the boundary line of the lunar calendar where the limit is the imkanurukyat line (the line that limits an area of calculation to estimate whether it can make rukyat hilal and what cannot rukyat hilal).

This understanding of fiqh in determining the beginning of the month states that if a place has seen the hilal, then the provisions of the beginning of the month apply throughout the country where the judge (government) has power. With the above conditions, the territory of Indonesia can be considered as an absolute unity or undivided territory. So that is the limit of imkanurukyat

regarding the territory of Indonesia, then the provisions of sharia regarding rukyat apply throughout the territory of the country.

#### 4. Wilāyatul ḥukmi According to the Tarjih Council (Muhammadiyah)

Muhammadiyah, through the Tarjih and Tajdid Assembly and the Central Leadership, determines the beginning of the Qamariyah month using the hisab method based on the concept of *wujūd al-hilāl*. According to this method, the beginning of a lunar month is established when three criteria are fulfilled: first, the occurrence of *ijtima'* (conjunction); second, the *ijtima'* occurs before sunset; and third, at sunset the upper limb of the Moon is above the horizon, indicating the manifestation of the hilal. In addition to these criteria, Muhammadiyah applies the *wilāyatul ḥukmi* approach, whereby the determination of the beginning of the lunar month applies uniformly to the entire territory of Indonesia. This approach is intended to prevent mafsat by maintaining national uniformity in the commencement of lunar months.<sup>39</sup> The use of *wilāyatul ḥukmi* by Muhammadiyah represents the implementation of the decisions of the XXV National Tarjih Conference held in 2000. The conference explicitly stipulated that the matlak used in determining the beginning of the Qamariyah month is based on *wilāyatul ḥukmi*. This principle was further reinforced by the XXVI Tarjih Conference in 2003, which reaffirmed that the applicable matlak for Muhammadiyah is the territorial jurisdiction of Indonesia as a single legal unit. Consequently, once the criteria for the hilal are fulfilled in any part of Indonesia, the beginning of the month is declared for the entire country.<sup>40</sup>

In practice, the application of *wilāyatul ḥukmi* does not pose significant issues when hisab results show consistent hilal visibility across all regions of Indonesia. Problems arise, however, when calculations indicate differing hilal altitudes, whereby some regions show a positive hilal height (above the horizon at sunset) while others remain negative (below the horizon). Under the

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<sup>39</sup> Guidelines for Hisab Muhammadiyah," Cet. 1; Yogyakarta: Tarjih and Tajdid Council of the Central Leadership" (Muhammadiyah, 2009).

<sup>40</sup> Djamaruddin, *Menggagas Fiqh Astronomy, Hisab-Rukyat Analysis and the Search for Solutions to Differences in the Feast Day.*

wilāyatul ḥukmi principle, regions with negative hilal altitude are included in the determination of the new month based on the positive results in other regions. This practice becomes problematic when the boundary line of wujūd al-hilāl passes through Indonesian territory, effectively dividing it into regions that have met the criteria and those that have not.

One notable example of this issue occurred in 2013 at the beginning of Ramadan 1434 H. The *ijtima'* took place at 2:16 p.m. on July 8, 2013, resulting in varying hilal conditions across Indonesia. Muhammadiyah issued Edict No. 04/MLM/IO/E/2013, declaring that Ramadan began on July 9, 2013. This decision generated debate, as in several regions the hilal altitude was still negative at sunset. The reliance on pure hisab without incorporating rukyat criteria raises theoretical tension with the concept of matlak, which originally emerged from the uncertainty of hilal visibility. With pure calculation, the need for matlak becomes less relevant, as a lunar date line could theoretically delimit regions entering the new month at different times, albeit with the consequence of dividing a single legal jurisdiction.

To address these challenges, two alternative solutions may be considered. The first is to maintain the Indonesian wilāyatul ḥukmi concept by requiring that the hilal be above the horizon throughout Indonesia after *ijtima'* and sunset, as proposed by Azhari. However, this approach may cause western regions to delay the beginning of the month while waiting for eastern regions, potentially leading to uncertainty in worship, especially at the beginning of Shawwal. The second alternative is to apply the wujūd al-hilāl boundary line as a date demarcation, accepting differences in the beginning of the month within a country while maintaining uniformity within each city. This approach finds support in the hadith of Kuraib, which indicates the permissibility of differing lunar determinations between regions, even under a single political authority.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Azhari, *Encyclopedia of Hisab Rukyat*,.

## D. Conclusion

Based on the discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the differences between Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in determining the beginning of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhu al-Hijjah stem from differences in the methods used to establish the beginning of the lunar month as well as in the interpretation of the concept of *matla'* within the framework of *wilāyat al-hukmī*. Nahdlatul Ulama determines the beginning of the month by prioritizing *ru'yat al-hilāl bi al-fī'l*, namely direct observation of the crescent moon in the field, which is then applied nationally through the principle of *wilāyat al-hukmī*. This approach aims to maintain unity among Muslims within a single governmental territory, despite Indonesia's vast geographical expanse, which astronomically has the potential for differences in *matla'*.

Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah determines the beginning of the lunar month using the *hisāb haqīqī wujūd al-hilāl* method, whereby the beginning of the month is established when three criteria are fulfilled: the occurrence of conjunction (*ijtimā'*), the conjunction takes place before sunset, and the position of the moon is above the horizon at sunset. In its application, Muhammadiyah also adopts the principle of *wilāyat al-hukmī* by implementing the results of these calculations on a national scale, so that all regions of Indonesia are considered to enter the new month simultaneously.

These differing approaches have tangible practical implications for the social and religious life of Muslims in Indonesia, particularly with regard to the implementation of Ramadan fasting and the determination of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. The recurring differences in the commencement of fasting and the celebration of religious holidays have the potential to cause confusion within the community, fragmentation in religious practice, and challenges in achieving social and religious uniformity, especially within families, educational institutions, and government bodies. Nevertheless, these

differences also reflect the dynamics of *ijtihād* and the richness of Islamic intellectual traditions that continue to develop in Indonesia.

Potential common ground between these differences lies in the shared objective of both NU and Muhammadiyah to uphold public welfare (*maṣlahah*) and to ensure orderliness in religious observance. Both organizations recognize the importance of territorial authority (*wilāyat al-hukmī*) as the basis for implementing the determination of the beginning of the lunar month. Therefore, efforts toward harmonization can be pursued through strengthening dialogue among Islamic organizations, the government, and experts in Islamic astronomy, as well as by developing more integrative criteria that combine jurisprudential and astronomical approaches. In addition, enhancing public literacy regarding the foundations of *hisāb* and *ru'yat* differences is an important step so that such differences are not perceived as sources of division, but rather as expressions of legitimate diversity in *ijtihād* within the framework of unity among Indonesian Muslims.

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