

The Issues and Prospects of the Global Islamic Calendar

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Abstract. This article discusses the concept of the global Islamic calendar, precisely the concept put forward by Jamaluddin 'Abd ar-Raziq, for which he offers a calendar named "*at-Taqwim al-Qamary al-Islamy al-Muwahhad.*" He presented the fiqh side carefully and examined the validity requirements that must be fulfilled by each calendar that would be integrated with the Islamic calendar, which he has been working with the Astronomy Association of Morocco for more than ten years. The making of an integrated lunar calendar has enormous importance. The significance lies in the fact that such a calendar can unite Muslims throughout the world regarding the lunar months in general and months of worship in particular. This calendar must be based on the basics of sharia and true science to realize the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid asy-syariah al-Islamiyyah*). The methodology of this research is the study of figures, which is one type of qualitative research and the analysis of Islamic calendar concept studies. The article concludes that the global Islamic calendar is an urgent need for Muslims today.

Keywords: *calendar, unification, reckoning*

INTRODUCTION

Calendar, or called "*tarikh*" or "*taqwim*" in Arabic, literally means "to repair," "balance," and "limit" (*ishlâh*, *ta'dîl*, and *tahdîd*) [1]-[3]. The calendar is a reflection of the applied system of time carried out by humans based on the basics that remain to be a handle, signs, and rules for the activities of everyday human life throughout history [4]. The absence of rules regarding time for individuals or groups can result in loss of human ability to do careful planning for the future. In this case, the urgency of the calendar is in its relation to worship, especially fasting and holidays.

Among the lists of problems faced by Muslims (*ummah*) is the absence of a unified calendar to minimize chaos which might occur. Therefore, the Islamic calendar, which is reflected in the inability to unite the fall of Islamic holidays, is urgently needed.

Concerns over the chaos of the dating system and complaints about the absence of a unified

Islamic time system has long been established in Islamic history.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Muhammad Rasyid Rida (1865-1935) expressed his concern about the Muslim dispute over the calendar. He said, "From the time we begin to mature to old age, we always hear the sadness of Muslims due to the chaos and disputes that occur regarding the issue of the initial determination of Ramadan to start the obligatory of fasting and the initial determination of Shawwal to end Ramadan and start the holiday." Likewise, the initial determination of Zulhijah to determine time before Arafat. These concerns continue to grow on various occasions [5].

METHOD

The current research methodology is a character study, which is one type of qualitative research. The study of character is a study of an in-depth, systematic, or critical analysis of the history of characters, original ideas, and socio-historical context surrounding the character studied, in this case, who have thoughts about the calendar in general and the Islamic calendar in particular. The research aims at exploring an ideal concept of a global Islamic calendar that is compatible with sharia (*fiqh*) and science.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Islamic Calendar of the Age of Caliph Umar bin Khattab

When the expansion of Islam spread to other regions, the tradition of correspondence among the regions came into force. Therefore the need for scheduling (dating) in the Arabian territories was necessary. Al-Tabari (d. 310/922) and Al-Biruni (d. 440/1048) narrated that Abu Musa al-Ash'ari wrote to Umar bin Khattab stating that he received non-dated records. Even though the notes are listed in Syakban, but it becomes a problem: When? This year? Last year? or the year coming? Regarding this phenomenon, the Caliph Umar consulted with his friends to address the administrative problems associated with this calendar.

History shows that dating with the new numbering was applied to the Caliph Umar bin Khattab, precisely in the year 17/638. The date with this numbering was later agreed upon and given the name with the "Hijri Calendar" as it symbolizes the

migration of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions from the glorious city of Mecca to the shining city of Medina. The naming itself was proposed by Ali ibn Abi Talib RA.

Ali Hasan Musa said, the idea of making this calendar appeared as a response to the unclear variety of documentation (correspondence) at the time. With a variety of proposals, it was finally agreed that the start of the Islamic calendar began with the year of the migration of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, so-called the calendar with the "Hijri Calendar" [4]. Therefore, the migration of Prophet Muhammad was set as the first year (01 Muharram 01 H), which coincided with July 16, 622 M. And the year of the issuance of the decision was immediately set as the year 17 H (the year when Caliph Umar leads) [4].

Modern Islamic Calendar: From Local to Global

▪ **Ummul Qura**

The Ummul Qura calendar is the official calendar used by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the initiative of King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST). This calendar is used for civilian matters. The determination of Ramadan, Idul Fitri, and Idul Adha is under the authority of Majlis al-Qadha 'al-A'la based on rukyat standards. Ummul Qura calendar uses the principles of (1) *ijtima qablal gurub*, (2) moonset after sunset (the moon above the horizon when *gurub*) [6].

▪ **Ilyas Calendar**

Basic Calendar of Ilyas proposals includes (1) reckoning in rukyat; (2) GTKI. IR reckoning is done globally, from latitudes of 0 °, 5 °, to 15 ° to find IR points.

▪ **Calendar 'Audah, Atbī, Mizyan**

The calendar concept 'Audah, Atbī, Mizyan is based on four zones:

1. Position 150 ° East to 75 ° East (South, East and Southeast Asia (India, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, etc.)
2. Position 75 ° East to 30 ° East (Arabian Peninsula, Sham, Iran, Afghanistan, Soviet fractions, and Russia).
3. Position 30 ° East to 15 ° West (Africa and Europe)
4. Position 45 ° to 120 ° West (North America and South America) [7].

With the following conditions:

- a. If the *hilar* visibility occurs in Zone I, then all zones will start at the beginning of the month simultaneously.
- b. If visibility occurs in Zone II, Zone I starts from the new moon one day late from the other zones.

- c. If the new moon is seen in Zone III, Zones II and I start a new month one day late from Zones III and IV.

▪ **Qasum-Audah Calendar**

The principle of the Qasum-udahA calendar is as follows:

1. The world is divided into two zones: the Western Zone (covering the Americas), and the Eastern Zone (other than the Americas).
2. The beginning of the month begins in the two zones the next day if *Ijtima* occurs before dawn in Mecca.
3. The beginning of the month starts the next day in the west zone and is postponed a day in the east zone if *Ijtima* occurs between dawn in Mecca and 12:00 WU [8], [9].

▪ **Universal Hijri Calendar**

Two main principles form the basis of this calendar, namely:

1. The earth is divided into two zones:
 - a. Eastern Zone: includes the line region of 180 ° East towards the west to 20 ° west (includes continents of Australia, Asia, Africa, and Europe)
 - b. Western Zone: covers the region of 120 ° west to the western regions of North America and South America.
2. The new moon starts the next day in each zone if, on the 29th of the evening, the current month is possible for rukyat [10].

Unification Calendar "Jamaluddīn' Abd ar-Raziq"

The stretcher of the calendar is called the "Islamic Unification Kamariah Calendar" or "*at-Taqwīm al-qamarī al-Islāmi al-Muwahhad*," which is a recent calendar concept proposed by a Moroccan astronomy practitioner named Jamaludin 'Abd ar-Raziq. The idea of this calendar aims to equate the calendar (calendar) throughout the world with the principle of 'one day one date' and 'one day one day.' The implication of this principle is expected so that there will be no more differences in days and dates in starting fasting and holidays.

Jamaluddin's idea is contained in his work entitled "*at-Taqwīm al-qamarī al-Islami al-Muwahhad*," the title of this book became the name of the concept of his calendar. In addition to this book, Jamaludin's ideas were also expressed in many articles, which he conveyed on various occasions, both locally and internationally. These articles include: "*at-Taqwīm al-Islami; al-Muqarabah as-Syumuliyyah*" (*Islamic Calendar; A Comprehensive Approach*) and "*Bidayah al-Yaum wa Bidayah al-lail wa an-Nahar*"

(Beginning of the Day, Beginning of the Night and Beginning of the Day) [11].

In Indonesia, the idea from Jamaluddin ‘Abd ar-Raziq was scientifically responded by Prof. Dr. Syamsul Anwar, MA (Chairperson of the Tarjih Assembly and Tajdid Muhammadiyah Central Leadership) in his paper entitled "Development of the Preparation of International Islamic Calendar Arrangements" which he delivered in a meeting of Muhammadiyah reckoning experts in Indonesia some time ago. Next again, this article was collected in a book along with other articles related to reckoning and the calendar entitled "Holidays & Problems of Hisab-Rukyat."

Three Principles of Unification Calendar

There are three principles of calendar unification proposed by Jamaludin ‘Abd ar-Raziq, namely:

1. The Principle of Reckoning; it is not possible to unite the calendar with the foundation of rukyat, because the calendar must be made to far ahead consistently. Rejection of reckoning means the dissolution of all efforts to prepare the unification calendar.
2. Rukyat Transfer Principle (*naql ar-ru'yah*); that is, if rukyat occurs in the western end, rukyat is transferred to the East to apply to the eastern end, although in the eastern part it is not possible for rukyat.
3. Principles of the Beginning of the Day (*bidayah al-yaum*); in this issue, Jamaluddin argues that the concept of the beginning of the day must be agreed upon by accepting the world convention on days i.e., from midnight at 180 degrees longitude.

In addition to the three principles, Jamaluddin ‘Abd ar-Raziq also set seven conditions, namely:

1. Calendar terms; position the day in an orderly flow of time, with the principle of "one day one date and one day one day in the whole world," and avoid one day two dates.
2. Conditions for Kamaria; that is based on the factual circulation of the moon in the sky.
3. Conditions for the birth month; not allowed in the new moon before ijtimak.
4. Conditions for imuk rukyat; the beginning of the month has to be seen.
5. Terms must not delay entering the new month; that is when the new moon has been seen.
6. Terms of unification; it applies throughout the world in an integrated manner without dividing the earth into several zones.
7. Conditions of globality; that the time system applied is in line with the world's agreement on time [12].

Universal Day Conception: A Breakthrough

Universal Day (*al-yaum asy-syumuly or al-yaum al-'alamy*) is the duration of a day from 00:00 to the next 00:00 worldwide, assumed to be 48 hours in duration. The concept of Universal Day is a new perspective in positioning the flow of the world day for a specific purpose. This concept was initiated by Jamaluddin Abd ar-Raziq, the figure mentioned above, in his persistent efforts to formulate a Unified Islamic Shariah Calendar. The idea of the day, as well as the concept of this calendar, is contained in his work entitled "*at-Taqwim al-Qamary al-Islamy al-Muwahhad*."

Conceptually, the 48-hour Universal Day is characterized by the beginning of the next Universal Day not at the end of the previous Universal Day, but in the middle. The assumption is that when Universal Day has lasted 24 hours, the next Universal Day has begun. It means that the second half of the first Universal Day coincides with the first half of the next Universal Day. If, for example, one day (Friday, as an example) if it starts at longitude 180 ° East at 00:00 (local time) and ends at longitude 180 ° West (where both lines coincide) at 00:00 (local time)) the following night (Saturday night). Then we assume that the time period is 48 hours.

More easily, the Universal Day flow can be formulated as follows: the time duration from 00:00 to 12:00 (noon) is 12 hours. In circulation, in an hour the earth rotates by 15 ° towards Universal Time (WU) +11 hours, then moves again as far as 15 ° entering WU 10 hours, moving again 15° towards WU + 9 hours, and so on until it goes beyond 24 time zones until it reaches the line longitude 180 ° west which is longitude 180° east. The time cycle beyond the 24 time zones is 360 °, while the duration is 24 hours. Furthermore, the length of time from 12:00 WU - 12 hours (time zone west end) until the end of a day in the same time zone the next night is 12 hours. So, 12 hours from midnight to noon in the 12 hour time zone plus 24 hours of rotation of the earth from longitude 180 ° east to 180 ° west by crossing 24 time zones and plus 12 hours from noon to next midnight in the end zone west (WU - 12 hours) the amount is 48 hours. Therefore one day throughout the world lasts for 48 hours; this is what is called Universal Day, according to Jamaluddin [13].

Conceptually, the assumptions and applications of Universal Day, which makes 48 hours a day last night, do not matter. The problem is setting the midnight time (00:00) as the start of the day. It is true that scholars still disagree about the beginning of the day. But as far as its development, the differences of these scholars are only limited to two choices, namely between the setting of the sun (jumhur view) and the dawn (view of the Hanafi school of law).

So far, no evidence has been found, and the views of the ulama which accommodate midnight as a starting point for a day. That is, the Universal Day's budget is purely the result of thoughts on socio-religious phenomena and natural reality.

Implicitly, this phrase would like to emphasize that the current reckoning and rukyat debate is no longer relevant. The mission of the Islamic calendar, which is unification in nature, is to curb the scheduling of the time of the Islamic world both in terms of worship time and administrative time without being chaotic. Challenges, in fact, did occur. Yet, if this calendar project is successful, it could be a valuable contribution to world civilization.

The discourse on the formation of a unified Islamic calendar which has recently begun to flourish is based on the cause and the chaotic timetable of the Islamic world, especially related to moments of worship. Regarding this phenomenon, a few scholars have concerned about finding solutions to this problem. Some figures mentioned earlier, including Mohammad Ilyas (Malaysia), Nidhal Guessoum (Algeria), Muhammad Audah (Jordan), Jamaluddin Abd ar-Raziq (Morocco), and Syamsul Anwar (Indonesia) have their attention to this issue. Hopefully, the concepts and applications of a time scheduling (calendar) could be formulated and can be used by all Muslim communities around the world, both zonal and unified.

CONCLUSION

The reviewers of this field concluded that the most essential thing in formulating an integrative and unification calendar is the certainty about when the new day and month begin, not how it is determined.

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