

ISLAMIC LEGAL VIEWS ON THE EQUALITY OF DAYS IN DETERMINING THE BEGINNING AND END OF RAMADAN (ISBAT SESSION)

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ABSTRACT

Determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is an important aspect in the implementation of fasting for Muslims which has a strong basis in the Al-Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. In general, the methods used in this determination are divided into two main approaches: rukyatul hilal (direct observation of the crescent moon) and hisab (astronomical calculations). Differences in the use of these methods often lead to differences in determining the start and end of Ramadan among various Muslim communities. This study aims to analyze Islamic legal views on efforts to standardize days in determining the start and end of Ramadan through the Isbat Session mechanism. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with library research, by reviewing classical and contemporary literature relevant to the fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) for determining prayer times. The results show that normatively, Islam allows for differences in methods for determining the start of the month, as long as they are based on valid evidence. However, in the context of national life, the Isbat Session organized by the government is an important instrument in integrating the results of rukyat and hisab to achieve uniformity in determining the days. From an Islamic legal perspective, there is a fiqh principle of hukmul hakim yarfa'ul khilaf which emphasizes that government decisions can eliminate differences of opinion for the common good. Some scholars support the unification of days as a means of maintaining the unity of the Muslim community and adherence to the ulil amri (leaders in authority). On the other hand, others maintain the legitimacy of differences based on the concepts of ikhtilaf and differences in matla' (reasoning). Therefore, a moderate approach offers a solution by emphasizing tolerance for differences while promoting unity through official state authority. Therefore, the unification of days in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is not an absolute obligation in classical fiqh, but rather a contextual necessity in modern society to maintain social harmony and unity among Muslims.

A. INTRODUCTION

Determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is a fundamental aspect of fasting, a practice that has both theological and social dimensions in the lives of Muslims. In Islamic teachings, determining prayer times is not only related to the accuracy of Islamic law but also reflects adherence to the provisions set forth in the Quran and the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. Normatively, the basis for determining the beginning of the

Islamic month, including Ramadan, refers to the rukyatul hilal method, namely direct observation of the appearance of the crescent moon, as mentioned in various hadith. However, the development of science has given rise to the hisab method, namely astronomical calculations that allow for a more accurate and systematic determination of the moon's position. Both methods have their own argumentative basis in the treasury of Islamic law.¹

Differences in the use of rukyat and hisab methods often lead to differences in determining the start and end of Ramadan within the community. This phenomenon occurs not only globally but also nationally, including in Indonesia, which has a diverse range of Islamic community organizations. These differences, on the one hand, reflect the richness of ijtihad in Islam, but on the other hand, have the potential to cause confusion and division among the community. Therefore, a mechanism is needed to bridge these differences in order to create uniformity in the implementation of worship, without neglecting the basic principles of Islamic law.²

It is in this context that the Isbat Session serves as an official forum organized by the government to determine the start and end of Ramadan nationally. This session integrates hisab data with rukyat results from various regions, and involves clerics, astronomy experts, and representatives of Islamic organizations. The decisions produced by the Isbat Session are expected to serve as a shared reference for Muslims in observing fasting and Eid al-Fitr. From an Islamic legal perspective, the government's authority in making these decisions is legitimized through the principle of Islamic jurisprudence, which states that a leader's decision can eliminate differences for the public good.³

However, the views of Islamic scholars regarding the unification of days in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan are not unified. Some scholars support this unification effort on the grounds of maintaining the unity of the community and avoiding social conflict, while others maintain the permissibility of differences based on the concepts of ikhtilaf and differences in matla'. These differing views demonstrate the dynamics in the interpretation of Islamic law that adapt to the context of time and place. Therefore, this study is important to comprehensively examine the Islamic legal perspective on the unification of days in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan through the Isbat Session, taking into account normative, methodological, and sociological aspects.⁴

1 Thomas Djamaluddin., *Astronomi Memberi Solusi Penyatuan Ummat*. Indonesia: Lembaga Penerbangan dan Antariksa Nasional. LAPAN, 2011.

2 Ahmad Izzuddin., *Fiqh Hisab Rukyah; Menyatukan NU & Muhammadiyah dalam penentuan Awal Ramadhan, Idul Fitri dan Idul Adha*, Jakarta : Erlangga, 2007.

3 Ahmad Wahidi., Menyatukan Penetapan 1 Ramadhan, Syawal dan Zulhijjah di Indonesia, Jurisdictie, *Jurnal Hukum dan Syariah*, Vol. 2 No. 2, Desember 2011.

4 Susiknan Azhari., *Penggunaan Sistem Hisab & rukyat di Indonesia; Studi tentang Interaksi Muhammadiyah dan NU*, Jakarta : Badan Litbang & Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2007.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with library research, examining classical and contemporary literature relevant to the Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) on determining prayer times. The results show that normatively, Islam allows for differences in methods for determining the beginning of the month, as long as they are based on valid evidence.⁵

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Basic Concepts of Determining the Beginning and End of Ramadan in Islam

Determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is a crucial part of fasting, a practice that holds a strategic place in Islamic teachings. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam and is obligatory for every qualified Muslim. Therefore, determining the start and end of Ramadan must be based on sound evidence, both in terms of the basic principles of Islam (the Quran and Hadith) and the scientific approach developed within the Islamic scholarly tradition. In this context, Islam provides clear guidelines and provides scholars with the opportunity to conduct ijtihad (practice) in determining the most appropriate method.

Normatively, the primary basis for determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is found in the Quran, specifically in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 185, which mentions the obligation to fast during Ramadan. However, the Quran does not explain in detail the method for determining the beginning of the month. Further explanation is found in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, which states, "Fast you because you see the new moon and break your fast because you see the new moon; if the new moon is closed then complete the number of the month of Sha'ban to thirty days." This hadith is the main basis for determining the start of Ramadan using the rukyatul hilal method, namely direct observation of the appearance of the first crescent moon after ijtima' (conjunction).⁶

The rukyatul hilal method has strong historical roots in Muslim practice since the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions. At that time, technological limitations made direct observation the only method available to determine the arrival of the new moon. Rukyat was performed by sighting the crescent moon on the western horizon after sunset on the 29th of Sha'ban. If the crescent moon was sighted, the following day was designated the beginning of Ramadan. If it was not sighted, the month of Sha'ban was shortened to 30 days. This method excels in its simplicity and conformity to the texts of the hadith, leading many scholars to maintain it as the primary method.

However, with the advancement of science, particularly in astronomy, the hisab method emerged as an alternative for determining

5 Zed Mestika., *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*, Jakarta : Yayasan Bogor Indonesia, 2004.

6 Ali Imron., Pemaknaan hadis-hadis Hisab-Rukyat Muhammadiyah dan Kontroversi yang Melingkupinya, *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis*, Vol. 15 No. 1, Januari 2014.

the start of the Hijri month. Hisab is a mathematical and astronomical calculation to determine the position of the moon and the likelihood of sighting the crescent moon. This method allows for a more precise and planned determination of the start of the month, even well before the rukyat (seeing the moon) is performed. In Islamic history, hisab has been known since classical times and has continued to develop into a highly accurate modern astronomical science. Therefore, some scholars accept hisab as a valid method for determining the start of Ramadan, especially under certain conditions.

The difference between the rukyat and hisab methods lies not only in the determination method, but also in the epistemological approach used. Rukyat emphasizes direct empirical observation, while hisab relies on predictive scientific calculations. In practice, this difference often leads to discrepancies in determining the start of Ramadan, especially when the hisab results indicate that the crescent moon is above the horizon but not yet visible to the naked eye. This situation has given rise to debate among Islamic scholars regarding which method should be prioritized.

In addition to differences in methods, the concept of matla' is also an important factor in determining the start and end of Ramadan. Matla' refers to differences in geographic regions that affect the likelihood of sighting the crescent moon. Scholars differ on whether sighting in one region is valid for other regions. Some scholars argue that if the crescent moon is sighted in one place, it applies to all Muslims (ittihad al-matla'). Others argue that each region has its own matla' (ikhtilaf al-matla'), so determining the start of Ramadan can vary from one region to another.⁷

These differing views on matla' have significant implications for the practice of determining the start of Ramadan, especially in the modern era characterized by ease of communication and global mobility. On the one hand, the concept of ittihad al-matla' supports global uniformity in determining the start of Ramadan. However, on the other hand, the concept of ikhtilaf al-matla' allows flexibility for each region to determine the start of Ramadan based on local conditions. Both views have a strong argumentative basis in the Islamic jurisprudence tradition, so it cannot be easily decided which is more correct.⁸

In an effort to bridge the gap between rukyat and hisab, and between ittihad and ikhtilaf matla', some scholars have developed an integrative approach that combines both methods. This approach is known as imkanur rukyat, which refers to the probability of sighting the crescent moon based on certain scientifically determined criteria. In this approach, hisab is used to determine whether the crescent moon is theoretically possible to be sighted, while rukyat is used to empirically

7 Diana Sari & Destri Natalia., Metode Penetapan Awal Ramadhan Menurut Kementerian Agama Di Kota Lubuklinggau, *Syariahku : Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam*, Vol. 1 No. 1, 2024.

8 Abdullah Ibrahim., Pandangan Ulama Dayah Terhadap Metode Rukyatul Hilal, Makalah, Bimbingan Teknik Rukyah Hilal Awal Ramadhan dan Syawal, Dinas Syariat Islam Aceh Barat 10 Desember/17 Shafar 1436 H.

confirm the results. Thus, the two methods can complement each other and reduce potential differences.

In Indonesia, this integrative approach is applied to determine the start of Ramadan through the Isbat (Isbat) meeting. The government combines hisab (calculation) data with rukyat (observation) reports from various regions to determine the start of the Islamic month nationally. This approach reflects an effort to accommodate diverse views within the community while maintaining uniformity in the implementation of religious observances. However, differences can still arise, particularly due to Islamic organizations using hisab methods with differing criteria.

From an Islamic legal perspective, differences in determining the start and end of Ramadan are permissible forms of *ijtihad*. No single method is absolutely mandatory, as long as it has a valid and justifiable basis. Therefore, Islamic scholars emphasize the importance of tolerance and mutual respect for differences. These differences should not be a source of division, but rather a source of richness within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Furthermore, determining the start and end of Ramadan has not only legal dimensions, but also social and spiritual ones. Uniformity in the start and end of fasting can strengthen a sense of togetherness and solidarity among Muslims. Conversely, differences that are not properly managed can lead to confusion and potential conflict. Therefore, ongoing efforts are needed to increase public understanding of the fundamentals of determining the start of Ramadan, as well as the importance of maintaining unity in diversity.⁹

Globally, the issue of determining the start of Ramadan is also a concern among Muslims in various countries. Differences in methods and criteria often lead to discrepancies in determining the start of fasting and Eid al-Fitr. This has led to the idea of developing a global Islamic calendar that could be used collectively by all Muslims. While this idea has the potential to unite the Muslim community, its implementation still faces various challenges, both technically and in terms of differing Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

Thus, the basic concept of determining the beginning and end of Ramadan in Islam reflects a balance between text and context, between tradition and modernity. The rukyat and hisab methods, as well as the concept of *matla'*, demonstrate that Islam allows for various approaches to understanding and practicing religious teachings. In addressing these differences, wisdom, tolerance, and prioritizing the common good are key. Determining the beginning and end of Ramadan is not merely a technical matter of the calendar, but also part of an effort to maintain harmony and unity among Muslims in carrying out their religious duties.¹⁰

9 Tim Lajnah Falakiah NU., *Panduan Hisab dan Rukyat*, Surabaya: NU Press, 2018.

10 Ahmad Fadholi., *Sidang Isbat, Urgensi Dan Dinamikanya. Asy Syar'iyah: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah dan Perbankan Islam* Vol. 4 No. 2, Desember 2019.

2. Isbat Session and Efforts to Align Days

The Isbat (Isbat) meeting is a crucial mechanism for determining the beginning and end of the Islamic months in Indonesia, particularly for the start of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha. In the context of the diverse Muslim community, the Isbat meeting serves as an official forum aimed at bridging differences in methods for determining the beginning of the month and simultaneously achieving uniformity in the practice of religious observances. The Isbat meeting serves not only as an administrative measure but also as a reflection of the integration of religious teachings, scientific developments, and the social needs of modern society.

Conceptually, the Isbat Session is a deliberation forum organized by the government, in this case the Ministry of Religious Affairs, involving various relevant parties. These parties include clerics from various Islamic organizations, astronomy experts, astronomers, and representatives of other relevant institutions. In this forum, a comprehensive discussion is held regarding the position of the crescent moon based on hisab data and reports of rukyatul hilal results from various observation points throughout Indonesia. Thus, the Isbat Session does not rely solely on a single method, but combines empirical and scientific approaches to produce more accurate and widely accepted decisions.¹¹

The background to the Isbat Session cannot be separated from the differences in methods for determining the beginning of the Hijri month among Muslims. Some groups prefer sighting the crescent moon as a method that aligns with the practices of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, while other groups rely on hisab (calculation) as a method considered more certain and scientific. These differences often lead to differences in how to begin fasting and celebrate holidays, which can ultimately lead to confusion and potential division within the community. Therefore, the Isbat Session was introduced as a solution to unify these diverse views in a single, collective decision.

The Isbat Session goes through several important stages. The first stage is the presentation of hisab data conducted by astronomers and celestial experts. This data includes information on the position of the moon, the altitude of the crescent moon, elongation, and other astronomical parameters used to determine the likelihood of sighting the crescent moon. The second stage is the submission of reports on the results of the rukyat (seeing) from various regions. Rukyat teams spread across Indonesia conduct direct observations of the crescent moon at designated times and then report their results to the Isbat Session committee. The third stage is deliberation and decision-making, which is carried out by considering all the data presented.

The decisions made during the Isbat Session are administratively binding and serve as official guidelines for Muslims in Indonesia. From an

11 Azhari, Susiknan., Fenomena Perbedaan Idul Fitri Masa Orde Baru Sebuah Survei Historis, *Jurnal Profetika*, Vol. 2 No. 1, 2000.

Islamic legal perspective, these decisions are strongly legitimized through the principle of obedience to ulil amri (leaders) and the Islamic jurisprudence principle of hukmul hakim yarfa'ul khilaf, which means that the decisions of those in authority can eliminate differences of opinion. This principle demonstrates that in situations of differing ijihad, the decisions of legitimate authorities can serve as a common reference to safeguard the public interest. Therefore, following the results of the Isbat Session is seen as a way of maintaining unity and social order in the practice of worship.

The effort to standardize the days through the Isbat (Islamic Calendar) meeting not only aims to achieve technical uniformity but also has broader social significance. Uniformity in the start and end of Ramadan can strengthen a sense of togetherness and solidarity among Muslims. Fasting performed simultaneously creates a stronger spiritual atmosphere, both within the family, community, and nation. Furthermore, uniformity also facilitates the regulation of various aspects of social life, such as determining national holidays, religious activities, and economic activities related to Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.

However, efforts to reconcile the days through the Isbat (Islamic calendar) meeting are not always without challenges. One major challenge is the differing views among Islamic organizations, which have different methods for determining the beginning of the month. Some organizations choose to continue using their own calculation method and do not always follow the results of the Isbat meeting. This demonstrates that although the Isbat meeting has formal legitimacy, its acceptance among the public is not always absolute. Therefore, a more inclusive and dialogical approach is needed to increase trust and participation of various parties in the Isbat meeting process.

Furthermore, challenges also arise from technical and scientific aspects, particularly related to the crescent moon visibility criteria. Differences in determining the minimum criteria for crescent moon visibility can affect the results of determining the beginning of the month. In recent years, various efforts have been made to develop more uniform criteria, both at the national and regional levels, such as through the MABIMS forum (Ministries of Religious Affairs of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore). These criteria are expected to serve as a common reference in determining the likelihood of crescent moon visibility, thereby reducing differences in determining the beginning of the Hijri month.¹²

In a global context, efforts to standardize the Islamic calendar have become an increasingly relevant issue with increasing interaction between countries and easier access to information. Muslims around the world can easily detect differences in the determination of the start of Ramadan in other countries, which ultimately raises questions about the possibility of a global Islamic calendar. While this idea is appealing, its

12 Azhari, Susiknan., Gagasan Penyatuan Umat Islam Indonesia melalui Kalender Islam, *Jurnal Ahkam*, Vol. XV No. 2, Juli 2015, page.249-258.

implementation still faces various obstacles, both in terms of differing methods and religious authorities in each country. In this regard, the Isbat (Isbat) meeting at the national level remains the most realistic solution to maintain uniformity within the country.

The role of education is also crucial in supporting the success of the Isbat Session and efforts to reconcile the days. The public needs to be provided with a sufficient understanding of the fundamentals of determining the beginning of the Hijri month, including the difference between rukyat and hisab, as well as the rationale behind the decisions made in the Isbat Session. With a sound understanding, the public is expected to accept differences with a wiser attitude and be less easily provoked by inaccurate information. This education can be provided through various channels, both formal and informal, including educational institutions, mosques, and the mass media.

Furthermore, the Isbat (Isbat) meeting also reflects efforts to harmonize religion and state in Indonesian society. As a predominantly Muslim nation, Indonesia has a responsibility to ensure that religious observances can proceed in an orderly and harmonious manner. In this regard, the government acts as a facilitator, accommodating diverse perspectives without neglecting the fundamental principles of Islamic law. The Isbat meeting serves as a concrete example of how the values of deliberation and togetherness can be applied to resolve differences within society.

Thus, the Isbat Session can be understood as a crucial instrument in efforts to unify the dates for determining the start and end of Ramadan. While it does not completely eliminate differences, its existence can reduce the potential for conflict and provide clear guidelines for the community. Efforts to unify the days through the Isbat Session also reflect a commitment to maintaining the unity of the Muslim community, without ignoring the diversity of views. Therefore, the success of the Isbat Session depends heavily on cooperation between the government, religious scholars, and the community in building collective awareness of the importance of unity in carrying out worship.¹³

Ultimately, the Isbat Session is not merely a forum for determining prayer times, but also a symbol of collective efforts to maintain harmony in diversity. Facing the various challenges, openness, tolerance, and mutual respect are required among all parties. Thus, the primary goal of the standardization of days, namely creating unity and togetherness among Muslims, can be optimally realized in community life.

3. Ulama's Views on Unification at the Beginning of Ramadan

Unifying the start of Ramadan is a persistent issue in the lives of Muslims, particularly amidst the diversity of methods for determining the start of the Islamic month. Differences in determining the start of Ramadan generally stem from the use of rukyatul hilal (direct

13 Widiana Wahyu., *Penentuan Awal Bulan Kamariah dan Permasalahannya di Indonesia, Hisab Rukyat dan perbedaanya*, ed. Choirul Fuad Yusuf, Jakarta: Direktorat Peradilan Agama, 2004.

observation of the crescent moon) and hisab (astronomical calculations) methods, as well as differences in understanding the concept of matla' (geographical differences in sighting the crescent moon). Within the treasury of Islamic law, these differences are inextricably linked to the dynamics of ijtihad (intelligible text) among scholars seeking to understand the texts of sharia contextually. Therefore, examining the views of scholars on unifying the start of Ramadan is crucial for understanding its legal position and relevance in the lives of modern Muslims.

In general, scholars agree that determining the beginning of Ramadan is firmly based on the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), including the command to fast upon sighting the new moon and to break the fast upon seeing it. This hadith serves as the primary basis for scholars who emphasize the importance of rukyatul hilal (crescent moon sighting) as a textual method and in keeping with practices during the Prophet's time. However, this hadith is not always interpreted literally, as some scholars allow for the use of hisab (calculation) methods as a form of scientific development that can help more accurately determine the presence of the new moon. This difference in approach is a major factor in the emergence of differences in determining the beginning of Ramadan.¹⁴

In the context of unifying the start of Ramadan, a group of Islamic scholars strongly supports this effort. They argue that unity among Muslims in carrying out worship is crucial and aligns with the objectives of sharia (maqasid al-syari'ah). Unifying the start of Ramadan is considered a strategic step to avoid division, confusion, and potential conflict within society. Scholars who support this view also often refer to the principle of obedience to the ulil amri (government), as long as the decisions taken do not conflict with sharia. In this regard, government decisions made through mechanisms such as the Isbat Session are seen as legitimate and can serve as a shared guideline.

Furthermore, there is a fiqh principle often used as a basis for supporting unification at the beginning of Ramadan, namely hukmul hakim yarfa'ul khilaf, which means that the decision of a judge or ruler can eliminate differences of opinion. This principle demonstrates that in situations where there are differences in ijtihad among scholars, the decision of a legitimate authority can be a solution to unite the community. In the context of a modern state, the government plays a role as an authority that can establish policies for the public good, including determining the beginning of Ramadan. Therefore, following government decisions in this regard is seen as a form of maintaining social order and community unity.

However, not all scholars agree on the necessity of unifying the start of Ramadan. Some scholars argue that differences in determining

14 Abdullah Ibrahim., *Pandangan Ulama Dayah Terhadap Metode Rukyatul Hilal (Makalah, Bimbingan Teknik Rukyah Hilal Awal Ramadhan dan Syawal, Dinas Syariat Islam Aceh Barat 10 Desember/17 Shafar 1436 H)*.

the start of the Hijri months are normal and have existed since the time of the Companions. They refer to narrations that indicate differences in sightings between regions, which has become known as the concept of differences in *matla'*. In this view, each region has the authority to determine the start of Ramadan based on its own sightings, so it is not necessary to follow a single global or national decision. This opinion emphasizes that Islam allows for differences in matters of *ijtihadi* (judgment).¹⁵

Scholars who do not require a unified start to Ramadan also argue that there is no explicit evidence requiring uniformity in determining the start of the Hijri months across the region. They emphasize that the most important thing is for every Muslim to practice their religious duties based on faith based on sound evidence. In this regard, differences are not seen as a form of division, but rather as a blessing that demonstrates the breadth of Islamic law. Therefore, attempts to enforce a unified start to Ramadan without considering differences in *ijtihad* could create new problems in religious practice.¹⁶

On the other hand, there are also scholars who attempt to take a moderate position between the two opinions. This group acknowledges the legitimacy of differences in determining the start of Ramadan, but still encourages unification efforts for the common good. They argue that in the context of a modern, organized society, uniformity in the performance of certain religious obligations can have a positive impact on social life. However, such unification should not eliminate the right of individuals or groups to adhere to their own *ijtihad*, as long as it is carried out with mutual respect.

This moderate approach also emphasizes the importance of dialogue and cooperation between various parties, including religious scholars, the government, and astronomy experts. By comprehensively integrating *rukyat* and *hisab* methods, it is hoped that a common ground acceptable to various groups can be found. Furthermore, educating the public about the fundamentals of determining the start of Ramadan is also crucial to reducing the potential for conflict arising from differences. With a sound understanding, it is hoped that the public will be able to address differences wisely and not allow them to become a source of division.

In contemporary developments, efforts to unify the start of Ramadan also face the challenges of globalization and technological advancement. Information regarding the determination of the start of Ramadan in various countries is easily accessible, allowing Muslims worldwide to understand differences within a given region. While this raises awareness of the importance of unity, it can also exacerbate differences if not addressed wisely. Therefore, a more inclusive and

15 Rahman, Fahmi., Analisis Perbedaan Hisab dan Rukyat dalam Penentuan Awal Ramadan. *Jurnal Ushuluddin dan Fiqh*, Vol. 8 No. 1, 2020.

16 Muhammadiyah., *Maklumat Penentuan Awal Ramadan dan Syawal*, Yogyakarta: PP Muhammadiyah, 2022.

adaptive approach is needed to address this issue, while adhering to the basic principles of Islamic law.¹⁷

Some contemporary scholars have even proposed a global Islamic calendar as a solution to unify the determination of the beginning of the Islamic months, including Ramadan. This idea is based on advances in astronomy that allow for accurate calculations of the moon's position worldwide. However, the implementation of this idea still faces various challenges, both technical and differing Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) perspectives. Nevertheless, this effort demonstrates a growing awareness among scholars of the need to find solutions that can accommodate the needs of Muslims in the modern era.

Ultimately, the views of scholars regarding unifying the beginning of Ramadan reflect the dynamic and rich intellectual tradition within Islam. Differences of opinion should not be viewed as a weakness, but rather as a manifestation of the flexibility of sharia law, capable of adapting to various circumstances. In addressing these differences, tolerance, mutual respect, and prioritizing the common good are crucial principles. Unifying the beginning of Ramadan can be an ideal goal in maintaining the unity of the ummah, but it must be approached wisely and without ignoring the diversity of existing ijtiḥad.

Thus, it is understandable that unifying the beginning of Ramadan is not a simple matter, but rather involves various aspects, including theological, fiqh, and social. The role of religious scholars in providing wise and contextual guidance is crucial in maintaining the balance between unity and diversity among Muslims. In this context, constructive dialogue and openness to differences are key to achieving harmony in the practice of worship in a pluralistic society.¹⁸

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the basic concept of determining the beginning and end of Ramadan, the mechanism of the Isbat (Confirmation of the Moon) meeting, and the views of Islamic scholars regarding the unification of the beginning of Ramadan, it can be concluded that the determination of prayer times in Islam has a strong normative basis and allows for flexibility in its implementation. In principle, Islamic teachings emphasize the use of rukyatul hilal (the crescent moon sighting) as the primary method for determining the beginning of the Islamic month, as emphasized in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. However, scientific developments have presented the hisab method as an alternative, rationally based method accepted by some scholars. The two methods are not inherently contradictory but can complement each other in determining prayer times accurately. The differences in the use of the rukyat and hisab methods in practice often lead to differences in determining the start and

17 Hamzah, Ahmad., *Astronomi Islam: Hisab dan Rukyat dalam Penentuan Kalender Hijriah*. Jakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2021.

18 Hasanuddin, A., Implementasi Hisab dan Rukyat di Indonesia, *Jurnal Falakiyah*, Vol.10 No.2, 2021.

end of Ramadan among the community. These differences are part of the *ijtihad* (experimental) system in Islamic law, demonstrating the breadth and flexibility of sharia law in responding to changing times. However, in the context of social and national life, these differences have the potential to cause disharmony if not managed properly. Therefore, a mechanism is needed that can accommodate these various approaches while maintaining the unity of the Muslim community. The *Isbat* (confirmation) meeting organized by the government is one effort to bridge these differences through an integrative approach between *rukyat* and *hisab*. Decisions made in the *Isbat* meeting are legitimate from an Islamic legal perspective, based on the *fiqh* principle of *hukmul hakim yarfa'ul khilaf* (invalidity), which emphasizes that decisions by legitimate authorities can resolve differences for the common good. Thus, the *Isbat* Session serves not only as a forum for determining prayer times but also as a social instrument for maintaining the unity of the Muslim community in collective worship. On the other hand, the views of Islamic scholars regarding the unification of days in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan demonstrate diverse perspectives. Some scholars support this unification as an effort to maintain Islamic brotherhood and prevent division, while others continue to acknowledge the legitimacy of differences based on the concepts of *ikhtilaf* and differences in *matla'*. This difference indicates that unification of days is not an absolute obligation in classical *fiqh*, but rather a matter of *ijtihadi* (judgment) and contextual considerations. Therefore, a moderate approach that prioritizes tolerance for differences while respecting government decisions is the most relevant solution in the context of modern society. Therefore, unification of days in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan through the *Isbat* Session can be understood as a strategic effort to maintain a balance between the accuracy of sharia and the unity of the Muslim community. Mutual respect for differences and obedience to the decisions of legitimate authorities are key to achieving harmony in the implementation of worship amidst the diversity of the Muslim community.

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