

Husn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Ahillaḥ bī al-Ḥisāb: Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s Method for Standardising the Determination of the Qamariyah Month in the Sultanate of Sambas (1913-1976)

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Abstract

This article analyses the responses of Basyūnī ‘Imrān (1885-1976), a *muftī* (jurisconsult) and *qādhī* (judge) with the title Mahārāja Imām (highest religious official) in the Sambas Sultanate, to the debates surrounding the determination of the beginning of Ramaḍān and Eid al-Fitr at the turn of the twentieth century. The differences arose from conflicting claims of accuracy between two methods, *ḥisāb* (astronomical calculations) and *ru’yah* (physical sighting of the moon), in determining the start of the lunar month among Muslims. Concerned about these issues, Basyūnī ‘Imrān addressed them in his manuscript written in Arabic-Malay (known as Aksara Jawī), titled *Husn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Ahillaḥ bī al-Ḥisāb* (1933). By employing a historical approach and content analysis of the manuscript, the authors find that Basyūnī ‘Imrān favoured the *ḥisāb* method for determining the start of the lunar month. In addition to referencing Sūrah al-Raḥmān verse 5, Sūrah Yūnus verse 5, and a hadith narrated by Imām Mālik, Basyūnī ‘Imrān also considered the geographical and social conditions of Muslims to standardise the observance of fasting and Islamic festivals in the Sultanate of Sambas and its surroundings. He argued that differences in determining the start of the lunar month should not lead to divisions among Muslims, as both methods are grounded in the same theological principles. This finding contributes to the history of Islamic legal thought in Indonesia by providing evidence of scholarly efforts to standardise the determination of the lunar month during his tenure as Mahārāja Imām in the Sultanate of Sambas from 1913 to 1976.

[Artikel ini menganalisis respons Basyūnī ‘Imrān (1885-1976), muftī dan qādhī yang bergelar Mahārāja Imām di Kesultanan Sambas, terhadap polemik perbedaan dalam penentuan awal puasa Ramadhan dan hari raya Idul Fitri pada awal abad kedua puluh. Perbedaan tersebut disebabkan saling klaim kebenaran metode, antara ḥisāb dan ru’yah, dalam penentuan awal bulan Qomariyah di kalangan umat Islam. Prihatin terhadap peristiwa tersebut, Basyūnī ‘Imrān meresponsnya sebagaimana yang tertuang dalam manuskrip berbahasa Arab-Melayu (dikenal sebagai Aksara Jawī) yang berjudul, *Husn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Ahillaḥ bī al-Ḥisāb* (1933). Dengan menggunakan pendekatan sejarah dan analisis konten manuskrip, para penulis menemukan bahwa Basyūnī ‘Imrān cenderung menggunakan metode ḥisāb dalam penentuan awal bulan Qomariyah.

Selain merujuk pada Sūrah al-Raḥmān ayat 5, Sūrah Yūnus ayat 5, dan sebuah hadis yang diriwayatkan oleh Imām Mālik, Basyūnī ‘Imrān juga mempertimbangkan kondisi geografis dan sosial umat Islam untuk menyeragamkan pelaksanaan ibadah puasa dan hari raya Islam di Kesultanan Sambas dan sekitarnya. Menurutnya, perbedaan dalam penentuan awal bulan tersebut tidak boleh menimbulkan perpecahan di antara umat Islam, karena kedua metode tersebut berlandaskan pada dasar teologi yang sama. Temuan ini berkontribusi terhadap sejarah pemikiran hukum Islam di Indonesia dengan memberikan bukti adanya pemikiran ulama yang berupaya menyeragamkan penentuan awal bulan Qomariyah yang diterapkannya ketika menjabat sebagai Mahārāja Imām di Kesultanan Sambas pada tahun 1913 sampai 1976.]

Keywords: Basyūnī ‘Imrān, Ḥisāb Method, Islamic Astronomy, Qamariyah Month, Sambas Sultanate.

Introduction

Ramaḍān and Shawwāl are two months in the Islamic (*Hijri*) calendar with significant spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions for Muslims worldwide.¹ However, there are often differences in determining the start of these months.² These discrepancies arise from the varying methods and criteria employed by different countries.³ On December 8, 2021, four countries, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Singapore (MABIMS), implemented new crescent moon visibility criteria to determine the beginning of the Qamariyah months (lunar).⁴ Although these countries share the same criteria and theological foundations, differences in scholars’ interpretations have resulted in two primary methods for determining the onset of the lunar months: *ḥisāb* (astronomical calculations) and *ru’yah* (physical moon sighting).⁵ Each group within the Muslim community asserts that their chosen method aligns most accurately with Shari’ah.⁶ These differing approaches have the potential to cause discord among Muslims.⁷

In Indonesia, the polemic over determining the beginning of the months of Ramaḍān and Shaw has persisted since the early 20th century, with ongoing debates among Indonesian

¹ Jaffer Idris, Charlotte Rowley, and M. Jabar Yaqub, “Religious Events: Celebrating Eid-al-Fitr as a Family,” in *Family Events: Practices, Displays and Intimacies*, ed. Thomas Fletcher (London: Routledge, 2022), 117–29.

² Ridwan Ridwan and Muhammad Fuad Zain, “Religious Symbol on Determining the Beginning and End of Ramadan in Indonesia,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (July 26, 2021): a6397.

³ See: A Jusran Kasim et al., “Determination of Hijri Calendar in Islamic History and Its Criteria in Southeast Asia,” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 19, no. 1 (2024): 247–59; Abdul Mufid and Thomas Djamaluddin, “The Implementation of New Minister of Religion of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore Criteria towards the Hijri Calendar Unification,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): a8774.

⁴ Maskufa Maskufa et al., “Implementation of the New MABIMS Crescent Visibility Criteria: Efforts to Unite the Hijriyah Calendar in the Southeast Asian Region,” *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 1 (30 June 2022): 209–36.

⁵ Marwadi Marwadi, Rina Heriyanti, and Farah Nuril Izza, “The Fiqh of Hisab-Ru’ya in the Twentieth Century Indonesia: Study on the Thoughts of Hamka, Hasbi Ash-Shiddiqy, and Moenawar Chalil about the Unification of Hijri Calendar,” *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 17, no. 1 (April 6, 2023): 13–26.

⁶ Abdul Mufid et al., “Unification of Global Hijrah Calendar in Indonesia: An Effort to Preserve the Maqasid Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW),” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 10, no. 2 (November 25, 2020), 17–36.

⁷ Alimuddin Alimuddin, “Hijriyah Months and the Construction of Religious Moderation in the Sombaopa Community of Gowa, South Sulawesi,” *Al-’Adalah* 20, no. 1 (25 June 2023): 137–56.

scholars regarding the use of *ḥisāb* and *ru'yab*.⁸ This debate stemmed, in part, from the Dutch colonial government's policy that granted Muslims the freedom to choose between these two methods.⁹ One of the prominent responses to this debate came from Basyūnī 'Imrān, a leading scholar from Sambas, West Kalimantan. He held the titles of *muftī* and *qādhī*, as well as Mahārāja Imām (the highest religious official) and advisor on Islamic affairs to the Sultanate of Sambas, having been appointed on November 9, 1913 (10 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1331).¹⁰ His response is documented in his work, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb 'an Ithbāt al-Abillab bi al-Ḥisāb*. This manuscript reflects his concern over the divisions among Islamic groups, each claiming superiority in their method for determining the beginning of the months. Basyūnī 'Imrān argued that the differences in these methods should not lead to division among Muslims, as both are based on the same theological foundation.¹¹ Consequently, his thoughts, as presented in this manuscript, warrant further analysis in this article.

Research on the thoughts and works of scholars from the Borneo remains relatively limited. Some scholars have examined the writings of Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjari,¹² Ismail Mundu,¹³ and Basyūnī 'Imrān. Previous studies on Basyūnī 'Imrān have primarily focused on three areas: education,¹⁴ *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis),¹⁵ and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).¹⁶ These studies highlight that Basyūnī 'Imrān significantly contributed to the advancement of Islam

⁸ Azmi Muttaqin, "Determination of the Beginning of Ramadhan and Syawal in Indonesia (An Overview of Political and Historical Perspectives)," *Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities* 7, no. 2 (2022): 131–47.

⁹ Jaenal Arifin, "Proses Penentuan Awal Ramadhan, Syawal, dan Dzulhijjah di Indonesia: Sinergi antara Independensi Ilmuwan dan Otoritas Penguasa," *Jurnal Penelitian* 13, no. 1 (June 21, 2019): 37.

¹⁰ Moch Nur Ichwan, "Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis: The Holy Qur'ān in Egypt and Indonesia," *Archipel* 62, no. 1 (2001): 143–61.

¹¹ Muḥammad Basyūnī 'Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb 'an Ithbāt al-Abillab bi al-Ḥisāb* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2022), 1-2.

¹² See: Zein Firdaus, Muhammad Marbawi, and Muhammad Wildan Afif, "Banjar Cultural Marriage Taboos and Analysis of the Prohibition of Marriage in Kitabun Nikah by Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari," *El-Ushab: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 1 (1 July 2023): 183–92; Muhammad Iqbal, "Arsyad al-Banjari: A Banjarese Shāfi'ī Scholar," in *Arsyad Al-Banjari's Insights on Parallel Reasoning and Dialectic in Law* (Springer, Cham, 2022), 111–20; Nor Ipanyah et al., "Determination of Sekufu in the Kitabun Nikah al-Banjari," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 21, no. 1 (14 April 2021): 125–33.

¹³ Muhammad Lutfi Hakim, "Ismail Mundu on Islamic Law of Inheritance: A Content Analysis of Majmū' al-Mirāth fi Ḥukm al-Farā'id," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 61, no. 1 (30 June 2023): 59–79.

¹⁴ See: Sunandar Sunandar, "Resonansi Maharaja Imam Muhammad Basiuni Imran (1885-1976) di Sambas," *Medina-Te: Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 1 (2 August 2019): 75–91; Nasrullah Nasrullah et al., "Pembaruan Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Basiuni Imran (1906-1976 M)," *Jurnal Diskursus Islam* 6, no. 1 (24 April 2018): 135–55; Erwin Mahrus, *Falsafah dan Gerakan Pendidikan Islam: Maharaja Imam Sambas, Muhammad Basiuni Imran 1885-1976* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2007).

¹⁵ See: Wendi Parwanto et al., "The Pattern of Sufism on Interpretation of Q.S. Al-Fatihah in the Tafsir Manuscript by M. Basiuni Imran Sambas, West Kalimantan," *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies* 2, no. 2 (17 March 2023): 163–79; Saifuddin Herlambang et al., "The Translation of the Qur'an in Sambas Script: A Studi on Jawi and Latin Script by Muhammad Basiuni Imran," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 21, no. 2 (11 December 2023): 325–252; Luqman Abdul Jabbar, "Tafsir Al-Quran Pertama di Kalimantan Barat (Studi Naskah Kuno Tafsir Surat Tujuh Karya Maharaja Imam Kerajaan Sambas 1883-1976)," *Jurnal Khatulistiwa: Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 100–11.

¹⁶ See: Asman and Nur Syamsiah, "History of Muhammad Basiuni Imran as Head of Shari'ah Court Office in the Implementation of Islamic Law in Sambas 1951-1955 West Kalimantan," *Jurnal Syariah* 30, no. 2 (13 June 2023): 175–205; Muhammad Rahmatullah, *Pemikiran Fikih Maharaja Imam Kerajaan Sambas Muhammad Basiuni Imran (1885-1976)* (Pontianak: Bulan Sabit Press, 2003); Hamka Siregar, "Dynamics of Local Islam: Fatwa of Muhammad Basiuni Imran, the Grand Imam of Sambas, on the Friday Prayer Attended by Fewer than Forty People," *Al-Albab* 2, no. 2 (1 December 2013): 187–202.

in West Kalimantan. However, unlike scholars who have focused on his contributions to *fiqh*, this article explores his work in Islamic astronomy (*‘ilm al-falak*), specifically his treatise *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Itbbāt al-Abillab bī al-Ḥisāb*. While Hamka Siregar asserts that Basyūnī ‘Imrān adhered to the Shāfi‘ī school of thought,¹⁷ which accepts both *ru’yab* and *ḥisāb* as valid methods,¹⁸ Basyūnī ‘Imrān prioritised the *ḥisāb* method over *ru’yab* in determining the beginning of the Qamariyah months, considering the geographical and social conditions of Sambas. His preference for the *ḥisāb* method was intended to address the ongoing debates among scholars of his time and to prevent potential conflicts within the Muslim community. Therefore, this article builds upon previous studies on Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s *fiqh*-related works by focusing on his contributions to *‘ilm al-falak*, an area that has received little scholarly attention.

This article is a philological study employing a historical approach. The primary source for this research is Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Itbbāt al-Abillab bī al-Ḥisāb*. The philological analysis involved transliterating the manuscript, originally written in the *Janī* script (Malay-Arabic script), into Indonesian and identifying both the physical characteristics and the content of the text. After the transliteration, the authors conducted a substantive analysis of the manuscript using a historical approach. Additionally, the authors consulted various research findings, scholarly articles, and relevant Islamic texts as secondary sources to aid in the historical analysis of the manuscript. These steps were undertaken to provide a comprehensive understanding of Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s views on the determination of the Qamariyah months, as well as the historical background and context in which the manuscript was written.

Basyūnī ‘Imrān: *Muftī* and *Qādhī* in the Sultanate of Sambas

Basyūnī ‘Imrān was born in Sambas on October 16, 1885, with the full name H. Mohd. Basioeni bin H. Imran. His father, Muḥammad ‘Imrān, held the position of Mahārāja Imām in the Malay Sultanate of Sambas.¹⁹ Basyūnī ‘Imrān received his early education at a colonial primary school (*volkschool*) in Sambas and was first taught religious studies by his father, focusing on the Arabic language, Qur’anic recitation, and *fiqh*. At the age of 17, in 1902, his father sent him to Mecca to further his religious education. There, Basyūnī ‘Imrān studied under prominent Malay scholars such as ‘Umar al-Sumbawī, ‘Uthmān al-Sarawākī al-Puntiyānī, and Aḥmad Khaṭīb Minangkabawī. He also studied various other disciplines, including logic, *uṣūl al-fiqh* (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), hadith, *tafsīr*, and Islamic

¹⁷ Siregar, “Dynamics of Local Islam,” 187–202.

¹⁸ Wahbah al-Zuhailī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islamī wa Adillatuh*, vol. 2 (Damsyik: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 581–82.

¹⁹ Jajat Burhanudin, “Chapter 3 Halal Practices at the Dawn of Southeast Asian Modernity: Some Cases of Halal Fatwa in al-Manār in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” in *Rethinking Halal: Genealogy, Current Trends, and New Interpretations*, ed. Ayang Utriza Yakin and Louis-Léon Christians (Leiden Boston (Mass.): Brill, 2021), 56–79. According to other sources, it is stated that Basyūnī ‘Imrān was born on November 4, 1883. See: Gusti Mahyuddin Ardhi, “Muhammad Basiuni Imran 1883-1976: Maharaja Imam Kerajaan Sambas Rekonstruksi Pemikiran Keagamaan dan Politik Kenegaraan,” in *Sastrawan Nusantara Ke-XI in Bandar Sri Begawan* (Brunei Darussalam, 2001), 3.

theology under the Arab scholar ‘Alī al-Mālikī. After nearly five years of study in Mecca, Basyūnī ‘Imrān returned to Sambas in 1906.²⁰

In 1910, Basyūnī ‘Imrān travelled to Cairo with his brother, Ahmad Fawzi, and his friend, Ahmad Sa’ud. They enrolled in a newly established school founded by Rashīd Riḍā, *Dār al-Da‘wah wa al-Irshād*. Upon their arrival in Cairo, they were met by Ṣālih Riḍā and taken to his brother Rashīd’s house, where they stayed until suitable accommodation was found in another apartment owned by Rashīd. During their meeting, Rashīd inquired about the state of scholarship among Javanese scholars and praised Basyūnī ‘Imrān for his excellent command of Arabic. Basyūnī ‘Imrān remained in Cairo for three years before returning to Sambas in 1913.²¹

Figure 1
Mahārāja Imām Kesultanan Sambas (1913-1976)



Source: Syahrul Hidayat dan Kevin W. Fogg, 2018.

After completing his Islamic education in the Middle East, Basyūnī ‘Imrān held several key religious positions in Sambas. In 1906, he was appointed Imām of the Sambas Jami’ Mosque and served as a religious educator for the Sultan’s family at the Sambas Sultanate Palace. Upon his return from Cairo in 1913, he was appointed as *mufī* and *qādhī* of the Sambas Sultanate, with the title Mahārāja Imām, succeeding his late father.²² This appointment was made by M. Tsafiuddin II, the 13th Sultan of the Sambas Sultanate. Basyūnī ‘Imrān served in these roles from November 9, 1913, until his death on July 26, 1976.²³ In addition to his positions within the Sultanate, he also served as Adviseur Bestuur Commissie Swapradja Sambas (1946–1951) and Head of the Religious Court Office for

²⁰ Martin van Bruinessen, “Basyuni ‘Imran (Muhammad Basyuni b. Muhammad ‘Imran, Sambas, West Borneo, 1885-1953),” in *Dictionnaire Biographique des Savants et Grandes Figures du Monde Musulman Périphérique, du XIXe Siècle à Nos Jours* (Paris: CNRS-EHESS, 1992), 26.

²¹ Michael Francis Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 138.

²² Jajat Burhanudin, *Islam dalam Arus Sejarah Indonesia* (Jakarta: Prenada Media, 2017), 368.

²³ Moh. Haitami Salim et al., *Sejarah Kesultanan Sambas, Kalimantan Barat* (Jakarta: Puslitbang Lektur dan Khazanah Keagamaan, 2011), 93.

Singkawang/Sambas (1951–1952).²⁴ Basyūnī ‘Imrān passed away in Pontianak at the age of 91 and was buried in Sambas.²⁵

Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s deep concern over the decline and stagnation of Muslims in various parts of the world established him as a scholar not only respected by the local Muslim community²⁶ but also influential within the broader Islamic world.²⁷ It was demonstrated when he sent a letter to Rashīd Riḍā posing the question, *limādhā ta’akbbāra al-muslimūn wa limādhā taqaddama ghayrubum* (why are Muslims falling behind while others are advancing?). Rashīd Riḍā subsequently presented this question to Amīr Shakīb Arslān, who responded by producing a treatise that examined the causes of Muslim decline in contrast to the rapid progress of other nations.²⁸

While serving as *muftī* and *qādhī*, Basyūnī ‘Imrān maintained correspondence with Rashīd Riḍā through al-Manār,²⁹ a magazine that Rashīd used to disseminate his ideas on modernism, reform, and the revival of the Muslim ummah through insightful essays.³⁰ One of the letters Basyūnī sent to Rashīd was a request for a fatwa (*istiftā*) regarding Tjokroaminoto’s proposal to translate Muḥammad ‘Alī’s Qur’an, a topic that sparked intense debate during the Al-Islam Congress in 1928. The Muhammadiyah delegation suggested a debate between ‘Alī and Rashīd to discuss Muḥammad ‘Alī’s translation, but this proposal was rejected by the Congress. Instead, Basyūnī ‘Imrān sought Rashīd’s fatwa on the matter.³¹

In addition to this, Basyūnī ‘Imrān submitted questions to Rashīd via al-Manār concerning the comparison of education in Egypt and Europe. He raised three key questions: First, are Egyptian secondary schools comparable to those in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and other European countries in terms of science, arts, and languages, apart from Arabic and Islamic studies? Second, were Egyptians who held

²⁴ Syahrul Hidayat and Kevin W. Fogg, “Profil Anggota: H. Mohd. Basioeni bin H. Imran,” Konstituante.Net, 1 January 2018, https://www.konstituante.net/id/profil/MASJUMI_mohd_basioeni.

²⁵ Nasrullah et al., “Pembaruan Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Muhammad Basiuni Imran (1906-1976 M),” 135–55.

²⁶ Supriyanto Supriyanto, “Periodisation of the Philosophy of Islamic Rationalism in the Perspective of Zaki Naguib Mahmud,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (23 February 2023): a8153.

²⁷ Syarif Syarif, Saifuddin Herlambang, and Bayu Suratman, “Quran Interpretation Methodology, New Media, and Ideological Contestation of Salafi in Sambas,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): a8814.

²⁸ See: Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā and His Associates (1898-1935)*, History of Christian-Muslim Relations 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 47; Mehdi Sajid, “Before Postcolonialism Shakib Arslan’s Response to Colonialism in the Interwar Years,” in *Postcolonial Intellectuals in Europe: Critics, Artists, Movements, and Their Publics*, ed. Sandra Ponzanesi and Adriano José Habel (New York: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018), 76; Muhamad Ali, “Nationalism and Islam: Perspective of Egyptian and Syrian Muslim Intellectuals,” *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 51.

²⁹ Jajat Burhanudin, “The Triumph of the Second Leaders: Ahmad Khatib and Rashīd Riḍā in Islamic Reform in Indonesia,” *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 2 (24 December 2021): 170–201.

³⁰ Abdul Matin Bin Salman, Yusuf Baihaqi, and Kusnadi, “Redefining Khabar al-Ahad Based on Rashid Rida’s Rational Approach in Al-Manar,” *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Hadis* 23, no. 2 (30 July 2022): 222.

³¹ See: Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Sectarian Translation of the Qur’an in Indonesia: The Case of the Ahmadiyya,” *Al-Jami’ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 53, no. 2 (10 December 2015): 251; Nur Ichwan, “Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis,” 143–61.

ministerial positions educated in Egypt or in Europe?³² Third, can it be said that graduates of Egypt's top schools are unable to compete with European graduates because Egyptian secondary schools do not offer the same standards in European languages and sciences? Furthermore, Basyūnī 'Imrān also sought Rashīd's opinion on whether nationalism was compatible with Islam. In al-Manār, Rashīd responded affirmatively, basing his view on the principle *ḥubb al-watan min al-īmān* (love of country is part of faith). This endorsement of nationalism by Rashīd Riḍā was subsequently embraced by Indonesian scholars, who came to view nationalism as compatible with Islamic principles.³³

Inspired by nationalism, the people of Sambas established the Sambas Indonesian Nation Association (Persatuan Bangsa Indonesia Sambas [PERBIS]) and actively resisted colonial rule in the lead-up to Indonesian independence. On October 27, 1945, they approached the Dutch administration, demanding that the Dutch lower their flag to recognise Indonesia's independence. The following day, they assembled at the theatre building, where Basyūnī 'Imrān delivered a speech urging the people of Sambas to continue their struggle until the Dutch flag was replaced by the Indonesian red and white flag. After Sambas became part of the Republic of Indonesia and was situated near Malaysia,³⁴ Basyūnī 'Imrān directed his political activities through the Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood (Masyumi). During the Old Order, one of Masyumi's early initiatives was to establish Islam as the foundation of the state, but this effort failed due to internal factors, including communist ideology, nationalism, and secularism.³⁵ In the Constituent Assembly following the first general election, Basyūnī 'Imrān was elected as a representative of Masyumi West Kalimantan, holding member number 305. In 1959, he, along with other scholars, was invited to a national conference to examine errors in the Qur'anic texts circulating at the time, during which he identified several inaccuracies.³⁶

In addition to his roles as *muftī* and *qādhī*, Basyūnī 'Imrān was a prolific scholar with a diverse body of work spanning the fields of *fiqh*, *tawḥīd*, history, *falak*, and other areas. According to Syarif's research, he authored fifteen notable works, including: *Tarjamah Durūs*

³² Mona Abaza, "Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Al-Manar and Islamic Modernity," in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous Notes*, ed. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard, and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 104–5.

³³ Azyumardi Azra, "Understanding Indonesia's "Third Way" Islam," in *Wars of Ideas: Theology, Interpretation and Power in the Muslim World*, ed. Ilan Berman (United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 80. Many scholars in the Indonesian archipelago, such as H. Abdul Karim Amrullah, maintained correspondence with scholars in the Middle East, particularly with Meccan scholars, concerning the religious tendencies of the Islamic community in Minangkabau. See: Saifuddin Herlambang, "Hamka, Social Criticism and the Practices of Polygamy in Minangkabau," *Al-Albab* 9, no. 1 (8 June 2020): 69–86.

³⁴ Asman Asman and Resali bin Muda, "Marriage Agreement Controversy in Indonesia-Malaysia Border Communities in Sambas Regency," *El-Mashlahab* 13, no. 1 (30 June 2023): 1.

³⁵ See: Hasanuddin Yusuf Adan et al., "Islam and the Foundation of the State in Indonesia: The Role of the Masyumi Party in the Constituent Assembly the Perspective of Fiqh al-Siyāsah," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 7, no. 1 (31 March 2023): 377–98; Fajri Matahati Muhammadiyah and Fairuz El-Mechwar, "Masyumi's "Djihad dan Qitaal" and Islamic Laws of War: Ahead of Its Time?," *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 2 (15 October 2023): 320–41.

³⁶ This achievement led to Basyūnī 'Imrān receiving an accolade from President Soekarno in the form of a Qur'an enclosed in a meticulously calligraphed box. According to Badran, the son of Basyūnī 'Imrān, this recognition was presented during the Nuzul Qur'an commemoration held at the State Palace in Jakarta. See: Ardhi, "Muhammad Basiuni Imran 1883-1976," 21–2.

*al-Tārīkh al-Sharī‘ah, Bidāyah al-Tawhīd, Risālat al-Ṭāyah Sulūh, Dhikr al-Mawlid al-Nabawī, Tadbkīr, Kbuḷāṣah Sīrat al-Muḥammadiyyah, Nūr al-Sirāj fī Qiṣṣat al-Isrā’ wa al-Mi‘raj, al-Janā‘iz, Irshād al-Gilmān fī Ādāb Tilāwat al-Qur‘ān, Durūs al-Tawhīd, Daw’ al-Misbah fī Fiqh al-Nikāh, al-Nuṣūṣ wa al-Barābīn ‘alā Iqāmāt al-Jum‘ah bi-mad al-Arba‘in, Manḥal al-Gharībīn fī Iqāmāt al-Jumu‘ah bi dūn al-‘Arba‘in, al-Tadbkīrat al-Badi‘ah fī Ahkām al-Jum‘ah, and Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Ahillaḥ bī al-Ḥisāb.*³⁷ The latter work, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb*, which is analysed in this article, played a significant role in unifying Muslims in the determination of the Qamariyah month during the Sambas Sultanate. Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s authority in the social construction of Sambas society notably influenced its socio-religious aspects, particularly regarding daily religious practices. The role of *muftī* and *qādhī*, initially a position serving the sultanate family exclusively, evolved under his leadership to encompass the broader Muslim community in Sambas.³⁸

Basyūnī ‘Imrān exhibited a tolerant and moderate approach³⁹ in his thinking and daily life. His friendly demeanour extended to everyone, including clergy who visited him during Eid al-Fitr. In the political arena, Basyūnī ‘Imrān demonstrated an openness to various groups beyond his own affiliation. It was exemplified by his support for Firdaus, a candidate from the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party [PNI]), during the Sambas Regent election, despite his own association with the Masyumi party. Basyūnī ‘Imrān endorsed Firdaus on the grounds of his relevant experience in government, religious observance, and his close relationship with the Sultan of Sambas.⁴⁰

Basyūnī ‘Imrān on Ḥisāb Method for Determining the Qamariyah Month

The manuscript analysed in this article is titled in two languages. In Arabic, it is called *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Ahillaḥ bī al-Ḥisāb*, and in Malay, it is titled *Molek Jawaban pada Mengitsbatkan Awal Bulan dengan Kiraan*. The title can be translated in English as *Beautiful Answer in Determining the Beginning of the Month with Ḥisāb*. Basyūnī ‘Imrān wrote the manuscript on 23 December 1933 CE (6 Ramaḍān 1352 AH) and completed it on 3 February 1937 CE (21 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1355 AH). It was first published by Maktabah al-Zainīyah in Penang, Malaysia, in 1938. The work was subsequently collected by Haji Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah⁴¹ and republished by Khazānah Faṭānīyah in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2022.⁴²

³⁷ Syarif, “Corak Pemikiran Islam Borneo (Studi Pemikiran Tokoh Muslim Kalimantan Barat Tahun 1990-2017,” *Al-Turats: Jurnal Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2018): 15–31.

³⁸ Sunandar, “Resonansi Maharaja Imam Muhammad Basiuni Imran (1885-1976) di Sambas,” 75–91.

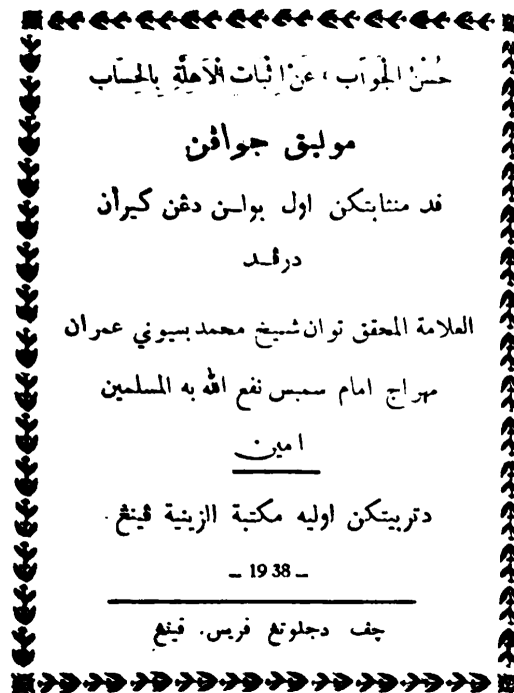
³⁹ Erwin Mahrus, Zaenuddin Hudi Prasajo, and B. Busro, “Messages of Religious Moderation Education in Sambas Islamic Manuscripts,” *Madania: Jurnal Kajian Keislaman* 24, no. 1 (30 June 2020): 39–48.

⁴⁰ Ardhi, “Muhammad Basiuni Imran 1883-1976,” 21–2.

⁴¹ Haji Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah is an author and researcher specialising in the biographies of Islamic scholars (*‘ulāma’*) from the Archipelago. His work has become a key reference in the study of the history of Islamic thought in the region. See: Fathaniah Fathaniah and Primatasha Desvira Dizza, “The Role of H. Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah in Islamic Education in West Kalimantan,” *Khatulistiwa* 12, no. 2 (2022): 114–27.

⁴² His full name is Muhammad Tahir bin Sheikh Muhammad, also known as Sheikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin al-Falaki (1869–1956). He is from Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra, Indonesia. See: Ahmad Faisal Abdul Hamid and Mohd Puaad Abdul Malik, “Analisis Penulisan Syekh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin dalam Kitab Ta’yid Tadhkirah Muttabi’ al-Sunnah,” *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 12, no. 1 (2017): 67–78.

Figure 2
Manuscript's Cover *Ḥusn al-Jawāb 'an Itbbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*



Source: Collection of H. Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah, 2022.

This manuscript consists of four sections. The first section discusses the concepts of *hilāl* (crescent moon), *qamar* (moon), and *shahr* (month). The second section addresses the origins of using numerical calculations for timekeeping. The third section explores the benefits of using *ru'yab* (sighting of the moon) as prescribed by Shari'ah for determining the times of worship. The fourth section focuses⁴³ on the use of *ḥisāb* (calculation) for determining all times of worship. These four discussions are written in Arabic-Malay, also known as *Jawī* script.⁴⁴ The manuscript measures 18.2 cm in length and 13.4 cm in width, with a total of 28 pages. In addition to an introduction by Shaykh Ṭāhir Jalāl al-Dīn al-Minkābī, the manuscript includes a preface by Basyūnī 'Imrān that explains the context and motivation behind its composition.

In the introduction of *Ḥusn al-Jawāb 'an Itbbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, Basyūnī 'Imrān addresses the disputes among scholars and their followers over the use of *ḥisāb* or *ru'yab* to determine the beginning of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl. He argues that such disagreements are harmful to the Muslim community, as they could foster negative perceptions among non-Muslims due to differing dates for fasting and Eid al-Fitr. Basyūnī 'Imrān believes these disputes should not cause division, as both methods are rooted in the same religious texts. Instead, he stresses the importance of consensus in determining the start of the month. In the manuscript, he favours the *ḥisāb* method over *ru'yab*, as it aligns better with the

⁴³ 'Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb 'an Itbbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, 1-2

⁴⁴ Manuscripts written in Jawi script played a significant role in shaping the beliefs and knowledge of the Muslim community in Indonesia. See: Teuku Zulkhairi and Ibnu Hajar, "How Jawi Script Influences Religious Attitudes: An Evidence from Aceh," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, no. 2 (30 May 2023): 638.

geographical and social context of the Muslim communities in Borneo, particularly in the Sambas, Mempawah, and Pontianak Sultanates.⁴⁵

Why Did Basyūnī ‘Imrān Choose the *Ḥisāb* Method?

Two factors led Basyūnī ‘Imrān to favour the *ḥisāb* method over *ru’yah* for determining the Qamariyah month in the Sambas Sultanate. The first factor was the region’s geographical conditions, as the area was frequently affected by rain, making it difficult for scholars and authorities to observe the *hilāl*. As a result, the *ḥisāb* method was used to determine the beginning of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl. He argued that there should be no doubt (*shakk*) in using *ḥisāb* for determining the start of Ramaḍān and the other 11 months, especially when this determination is made by the leader (*amīr*). He emphasised that when Imāms, kings, or *amīrs* announce the beginning of the Qamariyah month using *ḥisāb*, it becomes a binding decree for Muslims.⁴⁶

The second factor is the social condition of the Muslim community in the Sambas Sultanate, which lacked sufficient Islamic knowledge. Although the *ru’yah al-hilāl* (crescent moon sighting) method is based on the Hadith, “Do not fast until you see the *hilāl*,” another hadith also states, “We are *ummi* people, neither writing nor calculating (*ḥisāb*). The month is sometimes 29 or 30 days”. Based on these two traditions, Basyūnī ‘Imrān concludes that during the Prophet Muhammad’s time, Muslims were *ummi* (unlettered), so they relied on *ru’yah al-hilāl* to determine the beginning of the Hijri month.⁴⁷ However, the Prophet was also commanded to lead his people out of ignorance. Therefore, learning *ḥisāb* is essential to move beyond the *ummi* condition, as it allows Muslims to progress through knowledge and overcome backwardness. Basyūnī ‘Imrān states:⁴⁸

“The claim that there were no experts in ḥisāb contradicts the apparent meaning of the Hadith, which states that the Ummah is ummiyah (unfamiliar with ḥisāb). However, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was sent to guide the Ummah out of such ignorance, as indicated by the Qur’anic text. Thus, it is unreasonable to suggest that the Ummah should be commended to follow something it has no knowledge of. If there had been individuals with expertise in ḥisāb during that time, it would have been valid, and perhaps even obligatory, to rely on their knowledge. However, this should not be confused with the assertions of most astrologers, whose conclusions are often based on speculation and are not definitive (qath’i).”

Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s view aligns with that of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, who argues that Muslims today are no longer *ummi* but have mastered the science of astronomy. This mastery not only aids in determining the start of the Qamariyah month but also in calculating the Qibla direction.⁴⁹ Al-Qaraḍāwī asserts that *ḥisāb* should be used alongside *ru’yah* to determine the

⁴⁵ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillah bī al-Ḥisāb*, 1–2.

⁴⁶ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillah bī al-Ḥisāb*, 25–8.

⁴⁷ Ahmad Musonnif, “In Search of the Moon: The Hisab, Ru’yah, and Kashf,” *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 16, no. 02 (31 December 2021): 105–25.

⁴⁸ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillah bī al-Ḥisāb*, 17.

⁴⁹ See: Nailur Rahmi and Yoga Agustio, “Pengukuran Arah Kiblat Tempat Ibadah dengan Aplikasi Arah Kiblat dan Azimut Matahari,” *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)* 20, no. 1 (21 June 2021): 47–61; A. Jamil, Sakirman Sakirman, and Moelki Fahmi Ardiansyah, “Penentuan Arah Kiblat dengan Posisi Matahari di Pusat Ibu Kota Kabupaten Lampung,” *Al-Manabij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 16, no. 1 (30 May 2022): 133–52; Reza Akbar, Aslan Aslan, and Riza Afrian Mustaqim, “Qibla Direction Calculation Methods in Islamic

beginning of the Hijri month unless no astronomer is available in a particular location. Similarly, Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s perspective is in line with Muhammadiyah’s, which holds that *ru’yab* is no longer valid because its legal rationale (*‘illah*) based on the *ummī* status of the Muslim community has ceased to exist. Today, many Muslims possess astronomical knowledge and can calculate the beginning of the Qamariyah month. Consequently, with the disappearance of the legal *‘illah*, the reliance on *ru’yab* is no longer relevant.⁵⁰ Muhammadiyah’s position reflects its responsibility in addressing contemporary religious issues within the Muslim community.⁵¹

The data indicates that Basyūnī ‘Imrān favoured the *ḥisāb* method for determining the Qamariyah month in the Sambas Sultanate. Two key factors influenced his preference for *ḥisāb* over *ru’yab*. First, the geographical conditions of the Sambas Sultanate, which are frequently affected by rain, hindered the visibility of the *hilāl*. Second, the social conditions of the local Muslim community, which lacked sufficient Islamic knowledge, further supported his preference for *ḥisāb*. As a *muftī* and *qādhī* with the title Mahārāja Imām, Basyūnī ‘Imrān mandated the use of the *ḥisāb* method for determining the Qamariyah month, a decision that extended to the Sambas Sultanate, Mempawah, and Pontianak areas.⁵² His endorsement of the *ḥisāb* method indirectly encouraged the Muslim community in the Sambas Sultanate to engage with scientific knowledge, including reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In addition to his preference for the *ḥisāb* method over *ru’yab*, Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s practical contribution lies in his ability to unify Muslims in the Sambas Sultanate regarding the determination of the months of Ramaḍān and Shawwāl. He argued that Muslims should preserve their unity, as both methods are grounded in religious texts. Consequently, Muslims should avoid division and mutual condemnation, regardless of their location. According to Basyūnī ‘Imrān, the different methods for determining the Qamariyah month do not negatively impact fasting or prayer.⁵³ His perspective underscores the importance of maintaining Muslim brotherhood despite differences in the methods of determining the Qamariyah month.

Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s Islamic Legal Reasoning for Determining the Qamariyah Month

Basyūnī ‘Imrān preferred using the *ḥisāb* method over *ru’yab* for determining the Qamariyah month. This preference is grounded in his interpretation of Sūrah al-Raḥmān, verse 5, Sūrah Yūnus, verse 5, and a hadith narrated by Imām Mālik. Sūrah al-Raḥmān, verse 5, states, “*The sun and the moon move according to calculation.*” In contrast, Sūrah Yūnus, verse 5, reads, “*It is He*

Astronomy References in Indonesia,” *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 2 (31 December 2022): 385–410; Hosen et al., “Tagyīr Mawdhī’ Inhirāf Qiblat al-Masjid fī Bamīkasān ‘alā Asasi al-Tiknôlôjiyya al-Mutaqaddimah: al-Tahlīla al-Ijtīmā’ī wa al-Tsaqāfi,” *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 18, no. 2 (2023): 591–625.

⁵⁰ Machzumy, “Pengaruh Curah Hujan terhadap Keberhasilan Rukyat Hilal pada Observatorium Lhoknga Aceh,” *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 3, no. 1 (9 August 2019): 223.

⁵¹ 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 (29 July 2022): 53–72.

⁵² ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Itbbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, 1–2.

⁵³ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Itbbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, 25–8.

who made the sun a shining light and the moon a light, and determined for its phases, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning. Allah has not created this except in truth. He explains the signs to people who know.” Basyūnī ‘Imrān argues that these verses highlight the importance of distinguishing *ḥisāb* from astrology, which he views as imprecise and largely speculative. According to him, while astrology often provides uncertain or hidden information, the science of *ḥisāb*, when conducted by experts, offers a more accurate and beneficial method for determining the Qamariyah month.

Based on Sūrah al-Raḥmān, verse 5, and Sūrah Yūnus, verse 5, astrology is distinguished from *ḥisāb*. Hamka, in Tafsir al-Azhar, explains that Sūrah al-Raḥmān, verse 5, describes the sun and moon’s movements as occurring with precise calculation. The Earth orbits the moon over the course of 365 days, while the lunar year is 354 days due to a discrepancy of approximately 11 days.⁵⁴ Sūrah Yūnus, verse 5, discusses the consistent movement of the moon and the necessity of understanding its orbital parameters. Hamka asserts that the concept of calculation (*ḥisāb*) is integral to understanding these celestial phenomena.⁵⁵ Although initially favouring the *ḥisāb* method, Hamka eventually opted for the *ru’yah* method in determining the beginning of the Qamariyah month.⁵⁶ This shift highlights Hamka’s engagement with scientific reasoning in his interpretation of Quranic verses, reflecting his reputation as a rational and critical *mufassir*.⁵⁷

In addition to these two verses, Basyūnī ‘Imrān reinforced his argument by citing a hadīth narrated by Imām Mālik. This hadīth discusses the observation of the moon for determining the start of Ramaḍān and states, “*Lā taṣūmū ḥattā tarawū al-hilāl wa lā tuftirū ḥattā tarawhu fa-in ghumū ‘alaykum faqdurū lab*” (Do not fast until you see the *hilāl*, and do not break your fast until you see it; but if the *hilāl* is obscured, then estimate it).⁵⁸ Basyūnī ‘Imrān interprets the term “*faqdurūlab*” as an instruction to use the *ḥisāb* method if an expert is available. According to him, if a *ḥisāb* expert is present, the use of *ḥisāb* is permissible and advisable, as *ḥisāb* is considered an exact science (*qaṭ‘ī*). If no *ḥisāb* expert is available, the month should be completed in 30 days.⁵⁹

In the context of the Sambas Sultanate, Basyūnī ‘Imrān contended that once a *ḥisāb* expert is available, there is no need to debate or question the application of the *ḥisāb* method for determining the beginning of the Qamariyah month. He argued that the use of the *ḥisāb* method offers significant benefits for scientific accuracy under all conditions. Although the

⁵⁴ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar* (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2003), 7072.

⁵⁵ Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 3230–31.

⁵⁶ 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 (12 July 2024): 215–26.

⁵⁷ See: Saifuddin Herlambang and Wendi Parwanto, “Paradigm Shifts in the Interpretation of Heaven Illustration Among Indonesian Mufassir: A Comparative Analysis of as-Singkili, Hamka, and M. Quraish,” *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Hadis* 24, no. 1 (7 April 2023): 181–204; Anwar Mujahidin, Muhammad Shohibul Itmam, and Ahmad Choirul Rofiq, “The Dynamic of Contextualization in Indonesian Qur’anic Tafsirs: A Comparative Study of Tafsir al-Azhar and Tafsir al-Mishbāh on the Story of the Prophet Moses,” *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur’an dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (15 August 2024): 221–46.

⁵⁸ Imām Mālik, *Al-Muwaththa’* (Madinah Press, 1989), 221.

⁵⁹ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillāh bi al-Ḥisāb*, 18–20.

ḥisāb method was not employed during the Salaf period, advancements in contemporary science justify its use today.⁶⁰ Basyūnī ‘Imrān asserts:⁶¹

“In the context of *ḥisāb* (astronomical calculations), it is noted that this method did not exist during the time of the Salaf, who reached a consensus (*ijmā‘*) on this matter. It is now understood that this consensus permits the use of *ḥisāb* and that it should not be disregarded. Specifically, it is not permissible to rely solely on moon sightings in the evening if the astronomer, who uses *ḥisāb*, determines that visibility of the moon cannot be established. Thus, when determining the time for the month (*ḥilāl*), it is essential to consider the sun’s position at the end of the month (*shahr*), including hours and minutes. Furthermore, if individuals only partially observe the moon but cannot confirm the beginning of the month, they should not unilaterally declare the start of the month for everyone.”

Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s viewpoint aligns with that of Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, who argued that fasting based on *ḥisāb* is permissible. According to al-Subkī, if the crescent moon is reported to have appeared but *ḥisāb* calculations, which are considered definitive (*qaṭ‘ī*), indicate that the crescent moon should not be visible, then such testimony (*shahādah*) should be deemed invalid and rejected. In the context of *fiqh*, *shahādah* must be supported by an oath and concrete evidence. At the same time, in the realm of astronomy, *shahādah* must be based on accurate measurements of external factors such as weather, climate, and environmental conditions.⁶² For al-Subkī, the value of news (*ḵabar*) and testimony is considered probabilistic (*ẓannī*), whereas *ḥisāb* is definitive (*qaṭ‘ī*). Thus, definitive evidence cannot be contradicted by probabilistic information (*ẓannī*).⁶³

In addition to referring to Sūrah al-Raḥmān verse 5, Sūrah Yūnus verse 5, and a hadith narrated by Imām Mālik, Basyūnī ‘Imrān also considered the geographical and social conditions of Muslims in the Sambas Sultanate when determining the use of the *ḥisāb* method for establishing the Qamariyah month. This approach demonstrates Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s moderate style of Islamic legal reasoning, which integrates both normative and empirical approaches. Jaelani and Risa observe that while Basyūnī ‘Imrān’s jurisprudential views align with the opinions of the four Sunnī schools of thought, particularly the Shāfi‘ī school, he exhibits a degree of independent thought that diverges from mainstream Shāfi‘ī views.⁶⁴ It is

⁶⁰ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, 20.

⁶¹ ‘Imrān, *Ḥusn al-Jawāb ‘an Ithbāt al-Abillāh bī al-Ḥisāb*, 20–1.

⁶² See: Muh Arif Royyani et al., “Shahadah ‘Ilmy; Integrating Fiqh and Astronomy Paradigm in Determining the Arrival of Lunar Months in Indonesia,” *AL-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum & Pranata Sosial* 16, no. 2 (2021): 503–24; Ahmad Junaidi, “Syahadah Rukyatulhilar Using Astro Digital Imaging: From Subjectivity to Objectivity,” *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar‘iah* 14, no. 1 (29 June 2022): 58–74.

⁶³ Nurul Syakirah Rahiman, Mohd Saiful Anwar Mohd Nawawi, and Raihana Abdul Wahab, “Analisis Perbandingan Konsep Imkān al-Ru‘yah antara Kitab Fatāwā al-Subkī oleh Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī dan al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā oleh Ibn Taymiyyah,” *Jurnal Fiqh* 18, no. 2 (29 December 2021): 435–66.

⁶⁴ Referring to the Shāfi‘ī school of thought in various fatwas and religious activities is a common practice among scholars and Muslim communities in Indonesia. See: Abdul Helim et al., “Fiqh Reference Patterns of the Majelis Taklim in Central Kalimantan,” *El-Mashlahab* 14, no. 1 (30 June 2024): 169–88; Ihdī Karim Makinara, Jamhuri Ungel, and Fitrah Arrazi, “Physical Handicap as a Reason for Divorce: Case Study at the Sharia Court, Banda Aceh, Indonesia,” *El-Ushrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 6, no. 2 (30 December 2023): 318–34; Siti Hanna et al., “Woman and Fatwa: An Analytical Study of MUI’s Fatwa on Women’s Health and Beauty,” *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 24, no. 1 (30 June 2024): 171–84; Edy Setyawan, Ahmad Alamuddin Yasin, and Rahman Dahlan, “Legal Culture Review and Judicial Track Record of the Kesultanan Cirebon in the Manuscript Pepakem Jaksa Pepitu,” *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam dan Kemanusiaan* 24, no. 1 (18 July 2024): 1–21.

exemplified by his adherence to the old opinion (*qaul qadīm*) of Imām Shāfiʿī, which holds that Friday prayers are valid even if performed by fewer than 40 individuals. Muhammad Rahmatullah notes that Basyūnī ʿImrān sometimes adopts a rationalist stance but can also exhibit literal and textual interpretations.⁶⁵ Zulkifli highlights that Basyūnī ʿImrān’s application of the *ḥisāb* method for determining the Qamariyah month reflects an adaptation to the socio-cultural context of the Sambas Sultanate, aiming to prevent mere imitation and fanaticism by re-opening the door to *ijtihād*.⁶⁶

Conclusion

This article concludes that Basyūnī ʿImrān preferred the *ḥisāb* method over the *ruʿyah* method for determining the start of the Qamariyah month in the Sambas Sultanate. This preference is based on two primary factors: the region’s frequent rainfall, which impedes the observation of the *hilāl*, and the local Muslim community’s insufficient religious knowledge. In addition to these factors, Basyūnī ʿImrān also draws on Sūrah al-Raḥmān verse 5, Sūrah Yūnus verse 5, and a hadith narrated by Imām Mālik to standardise the practices of fasting and Islamic holidays in the Sambas Sultanate and its environs. Basyūnī ʿImrān contended that the *ḥisāb* method was better suited to contemporary conditions and societal needs and could advance scientific understanding among Muslims without compromising religious principles. His application of the *ḥisāb* method in determining the beginning of the Qamariyah month was in effect during his tenure as mufti and *qādhi* in the Sambas Sultanate from 1913 to 1976.

The limitations of this study are primarily due to its specific focus on the context of the Sambas Sultanate and the work of Basyūnī ʿImrān. As a result, the findings may not be fully applicable to other regions or communities with differing geographical and social conditions. Nevertheless, the study suggests that Basyūnī ʿImrān’s moderate approach, integrating the *ḥisāb* method while considering local conditions, could serve as a model for other scholars in applying Islamic law in a manner that aligns with scientific advancements and local community needs. Furthermore, this approach has the potential to mitigate divisions among Muslims regarding the determination of the Qamariyah month by underscoring the importance of deliberation and community unity.

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⁶⁵ Jaelani Jaelani and Risa Risa, “Islamic Thoughts of Sambas Ulama of the 19th and 20th Centuries: Typology of Thoughts of Ahmad Khatib Sambas and Muhammad Basiuni Imran,” *Jurnal Alwatziqhoebillah: Kajian Islam, Pendidikan, Ekonomi, Humaniora* 9, no. 2 (21 July 2023): 503–17.

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