Visualization and Legalization of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan’s Hisab Method in Tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka

Wendi Parwanto
Pontianak State Islamic Institute

Email: wendiparwanto2@gmail.com

Abstract
This study is intended to examine the effect of the hisab-rukyat methodology of K.H. Ahmad Dahlan on Hamka’s interpretation, explanation, and illustration in his work, Tafsir Al-Azhar. These two figures are linked by the Muhammadiyah organization where K.H. Ahmad Dahlan was the founder and central figure of his time, while Hamka was a cadre who later became a prominent cleric, even an icon of Muhammadiyah. This research is a library research with a narrative-analytical model. Data were collected from primary sources in the form of Tafsir Al-Azhar by Hamka. This study shows that Hamka is quite accommodating to the reckoning and rukyat methods, even though Muhammadiyah is organizationally inclined to reckoning. However, Hamka put emphasis on prioritizing reckoning because it is in line with advances in science and technology. Hamka shows an objective-reformist typology of thought, namely a combination of classical and modern thought that is directed at reform. This study is expected to contribute to the enrichment of perspectives on the reckoning method that has developed in Indonesia, so that the method of calculating time or the Hijri calendar is not stuck in a new state, and even triggers tensions between Muslims with different organizational affiliations.

Keywords: Method Visualization; Method Legalization; Ahmad Dahlan Hisab Method; Hamka’s Tafsir Al-Azhar

Abstrak
sehingga metode penghitungan waktu atau kalender Hijriyah tidak terjebak pada kejumudan baru, bahkan memicu ketegangan antar umat Islam yang berbeda afiliasi organisasi.

**Kata Kunci:** Visualisasi Metode; Legalisasi Metode; Metode Hisab Ahmad Dahlan; Tafsir Al-Azhar Hamka

---

**Introduction**

In general, Muslims agree that on the 1st of Ramadan and the 1st of Shawwal, they must fast and end their fast, but the reality, especially in Indonesia, is that polemics still often occur in determining the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan, especially from the two 'giant' Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Indonesia, namely Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah (Ansori, 2014).

Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are two organizations of Islamic society that thrive in Indonesia, and these two organizations play an important role in coloring the model and pattern of Indonesian society's diversity, such as differences about the Qunut prayer in the dawn prayer, about wirid together after the prayer and a number of other differences. Including the frequent occurrence of differentiation and differentiation when determining the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan, and this difference occurs due to differences in the system, method and calculation mechanism used by the two. Nahdhatul Ulama is identical to the rukyat method (Nofialdi, 2019), while Muhammadiyah is identified by using the reckoning system. With the differences in the calculation models, it is possible that the results obtained will also be different because each model, method, and accounting typology used must have its own advantages and disadvantages. The calculation methods of reckoning and rukyat are two calculation models that are interrelated and complementary. However, this can be a trigger for dividing the people. In fact, basically the Prophet Muhammad never distinguish between the method of reckoning and rukyat (Rausi, 2019).

The difference between the reckoning and rukyat models is due to differences in understanding the language of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, especially in nazhara lafadz. Nahdhatul Ulama understands it literally-textually that what is meant by the lafadz is seeing with the 'naked eye', while according to Muhammadiyah it is seeing with modern tools or technology (Izzuddin, 2007). the understanding of Nahdhatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah in understanding the meaning of nadzara in the hadith are two understandings that are accommodated in the scope of the lafadz, so they do not have to be contested or debated protractedly (Hefni, 2019).
There are a number of studies that reveal about Hamka. The themes of the latest studies on the perspective of al-Azhar-Hamka interpretation include: The concept of Aulia’ (Kholid et al., 2021); Authority and Tradition Relation in Pancasila Discourse (Gunawan, 2021); Feminine Concept (Zulkarnaini, 2021); Criticism of Polygamy Practices in Minangkabau (Herlambang, 2020); Religious Moderation (Ulinnuha & Nafisah, 2020) and a number of other studies. However, there has been no study of Muhammadiyah’s ideological bias in Tafsir al-Azhar-Hamka or the continuity of KH Ahmad Dahlan’s ideology in Hamka’s interpretation. So this research is important to do to find out further how the construction of reformist Islamic ideas as the face of the Muhammadiyah spirit in Tafsir al-Azhar-Hamka.

Method
This type of research is library research, using a narrative-analytic model, as well as with primary data sources, namely Hamka’s Tafsir al-Azhar. While the secondary sources are other relevant literature both in print and online. The focus or emphasis in this study is on how the construction and configuration of the ideology of Muhammadiyah introduced by KH Ahmad Dahlan is visualized in Hamka’s interpretation of al-Azhar.

Result and Discussion
Overview of the Historical-Sociological Layout of Hamka’s Biography
Hamka's real name is Abdul Malik. His father's name is Karim Amrullah. Hamka is a combination of the name Abdul Mallik with his father’s name, so that it becomes an acronym for Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah). Hamka is the eldest of seven children. Hamka was born in Sungai Batang, Maninjau on February 17, 1908 AD (H. Hamka, 1979). Hamka’s father, Haji Karim Amrullah, is an important figure in the renewal of Islamic thought in Minang, West Sumatra, so that Hamka’s socio-intellectual character is not far from the colors and nuances of his father’s thoughts. Hamka is an important and quite influential figure in scholarship and Islam in the archipelago (Firah, 2021). Hamka’s footsteps are recorded in the historical experience and journey of his life, various achievements and awards he has obtained not only awards at the local and national level but, to the international arena, including in Mecca and Medina (Rush, 1930).

When Hamka was in Makkah, he founded the East Indies Islamic Boarding School, which was formed with the aim of being a forum for providing teaching and training in the field of Islam and religion, including in providing Hajj rituals training for prospective pilgrims from Indonesia. Then with a number of achievements that Hamka has made he received his Doctorate Honoris Causa in 1958 and 1974 (Syafi'i, 2014). When Hamka's career reached its culmination, politics in Indonesia even worsened, especially after the Presidential Decree on July 5 1959 and the disbandment of the Constituent
Assembly and Masyumi. Hamka was accused of holding a “hidden meeting” to plan the assassination of Soekarno, and was accused of plagiarizing the work of Mustafa Lutfi Al-Manfaluti. The implications of these accusations caused Hamka to be imprisoned in 1964 (Parwanto, 2018).

During his lifetime, Hamka was quite active in a number of organizations and was quite productive in producing written works. Apart from being known as a scholar, Hamka is also a scholar and writer who has many fields of discipline, this is represented by Hamka’s works including: the book of Tafsir Al-Azhar; Khatib al-Uمام; Islam and Democracy; Thought Revolution; Summary of Muslim Dates; The sinking of the Van Der Wijck Ship; Under the Protection of the Kaaba; and a number of other posts (Hamka, 1983).

Geo-Historical and Socio-Political context Writing Tafsir al-Azhar

Initially, al-Azhar’s interpretation was a summary of a series of routine Hamka recitations held at the al-Azhar mosque, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta. The name of the al-Azhar mosque for the mosque was given by the Chancellor of al-Azhar University, Egypt at that time, namely Sheikh Mahmud Saltut, a great commentator and Middle Eastern scholar when he visited Indonesia in 1960 AD. so that it will become the al-Azhar campus in the archipelago. The naming of al-Azhar, correlates with the historical setting of its place of birth, namely the al-Azhar mosque (Hidayati, 2018). Hamka started writing his commentary from QS al-Mu’minun because he was worried that he would not be able to finish writing this commentary until he died.

The factors that stimulated and motivated Hamka to write the interpretation of al-Azhar as stated in the preamble (muqqadimah) of the interpretation were: First, he wanted to instill a spirit of Islamic intellectuals in the souls of the younger generation of Islam who have a strong interest in studying the Qur’an, but get stuck. with a lack of mastery of Arabic (Hamka, 1984). Second, to make it easier for missionaries to take and refer to the Qur’anic arguments that are appropriate and relevant to the realities of the local culture of the archipelago. This is deemed necessary in an effort to increase public interest in learning, understanding, and internalizing Islamic values which are a way of life (Faderspeal, 1994).

Then, in 1962 AD, the recitation delivered by Hamka at the Al-Azhar Mosque was published in the Panji Masyarakat magazine. This commentary lecture continued to contribute to the chaos of the political climate in which the al-Azhar mosque was accused of being the headquarters of "Neo Masyumi" and "Hamkaism". Then on January 27, 1964, Hamka was arrested by the Old Order government on charges of threatening and betraying the state. Before being arrested, Hamka had finished writing 2 juz of al-Azhar interpretations, and it turned out that during his detention of approximately 2 years and 4 months it did not dampen Hamka's intentions and enthusiasm in working, while he was in
prison, Hamka always consistently wrote al-Azhar interpretations (Alfiyah, 2017).

**Presentation of Interpretation: Systematization, Methodology, and Patterns**

The construction and typology in systematizing commentary writing on classical literature (conviction) national generally displays four patterns in the typology of interpretation presentation, namely: *tahlili* (Analysis); *ijmali* (global); *muqarin* (comparative); and *maudhu’i* (thematic). However, the presentation model of interpretive writing that refers to the four elements above is less representative if it is focused on the construction aspect in the systematization of interpretive writing. So with this basis, it invites reasoning to the writers of *ul* literature *ulum* Quran and *ulum* al-Tafsicontemporary in reconstructing the typological mapping and systematization model in writing the interpretation. Islam Gusmian for example, in his book he divides into two in the systematic aspect of the presentation of interpretations, namely: a coherent presentation system based on the order of letters in the Mushaf and a thematic presentation system based on the topic or theme being studied (Gusmian, 2013).

Thus, if in referring to the mapping carried out by Islam Gusmian, the systematic presentation of the interpretation of al-Azhar represents the typology of presenting the interpretation in a coherent manner based on the order of the letters in the Koran. The presentation of this coherent interpretation has been widely known by Indonesian commentators since the beginning. In contrast to the thematic presentation model, the thematic topic typology of interpretation emerged later along with the variety and complexity of the problems faced by mankind in modern times, thus giving rise to criticism of modern-contemporary commentators to give birth to solutive, accommodating, and progressive interpretations in solving problems. various problems faced (Mustaqim, 2008).

Hamka’s methodology of al-Azhar interpretation so far is still based on the barometer of the four methods of interpretation as in the systematic discussion of the writing of interpretation above, namely, the *tahlili*, *ijmali*, *muqarin* and *maudhu’i* interpretation methods. Referring to a number of studies on Hamka’s interpretation, especially on the point of emphasis on the interpretation method, Hamka’s interpretation is classified using the *tahlili* interpretation method (analysis), because variations in argumentation in interpreting a verse have begun to be displayed, with the meaning that in interpreting a verse Hamka has begun to photograph it with multiple perspectives, both from classical disciplines, such as lexical-linguistic analysis, *asbab an-Nuzul, munasaabah*, as well as from modern sciences such as social science, science, and even aspects of the locality of society he also displays in his interpretation (Alfiyah, 2017).
Tafsir Approach: Local-Communal Tradition Towards Contextual Interpretation

Hans G. Gadamer said that in interpreting the verse it is difficult for an exegete of the Qur’an to be separated from the context of the sociohistorical climate that surrounds him (Gadamer, 2004). Likewise, what Azyumardi Azra explained that scientific background, domicile, and organization - more or less will color and influence the product of interpretation carried out (Shihab et al., 1999). Likewise with Hamka, he was born and raised in the Maninjau lake area, a lake that is known to be full of all its beauty, so that it gave birth to literary thoughts. It is not only in his literary works that speak poetic language and nuances, but these poetic nuances and language are also often found in the language of interpretation that he presents.

Apart from the language aspect, Hamka also lives in a socio-cultural space that is rich in traditions and culture, so that when Hamka interprets the verses of the Koran he often visualizes the traditions and culture of the people in his area as part of the means or methods for expressing and narrating the meaning of the interpreted verse (Judge, 1970). When interpreting the Qur’an, Hamka tries to bring the text into the context of a verse or from "verse textuality" to "verse contextuality", contextuality in the sense of bringing the traditions or habits of the community into the context of the interpretation of a verse, namely traditions or habits used as the basis for explanations in capturing meaning in a verse. Koran texts. for example when he interprets QS al-Falaq (113): 4, he alludes to the Minang people’s belief in magic; the interpretation of QS al-Nisa (4): 4, he alludes to the dowry which is determined based on customs and traditions (Hamka, 1984), and a number of other interpretations.

Hamka wants people to think ahead and develop and not be stagnant and fanatical about the intellectual traditions of their forefathers. Therefore, he always voices rationality, modernity, and is accommodative progressive in accepting progress and developments of the times, including in the development of reckoning calculations in determining the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan.

The History of the Emergence of the Muhammadiyah Hisab Method

On November 18, 1912 in Yogyakarta K.H. Ahmad Dahlan founded a large organization, which is now known as the Muhammadiyah organization. In the course of his life, Ahmad Dahlan always tried to echo the spirit of renewal. Likewise, the birth of the reckoning method in Muhammadiyah cannot be separated from the historical journey and life experience of KH Ahmad Dahlan. On the other hand, the birth of a methodology cannot be separated from the dialectic of reality that occurred and was faced at that time, including the Muhammadiyah reckoning method. This method was born from the anxiety of KH Ahmad Dahlan when he saw the religious model of the people in Yogyakarta at that time, especially in determining the beginning and end of the month of
Ramadan. He is not satisfied with the statement of the Qur’an which mentions "kuntum khaira ummatin", but in empirical reality (Mulyadi, nd). At that time, determining the beginning and end of Ramadan was based on the beliefs and traditions of the palace, namely by using the aboge calculation system. The calculation of days with the aboge system is a speculative calculation because it is only based on tradition and belief alone, so the level of accuracy is less representative, especially if it is used to determine the time of worship for Muslims. Therefore, according to KH Ahmad Dahlan, the aboge calculation model or system must be reviewed (Rohmat, 2014).

To reconstruct the system aboge adopted by the people of Yogyakarta, KH Ahmad Dahlan began to explain to Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII that calculations using the aboge system in determining holidays cannot be accounted for based on reason, scientific principles and values of the Koran. Therefore, a fairly representative and accommodative system used to determine the holiday is to use the reckoning system, because according to the reckoning calculation, the holiday falls on the 1st of Shawwal marked by the appearance of the new moon from the western horizon. Thus, the determination of the holiday is not determined based on the provisions of the day, but if at the end of Ramadan it is seen the new moon, then the next day Muslims are obliged to celebrate Eid. Based on this explanation, the proposal from KH Ahmad Dahlan was accepted by the palace (Mulyadi, nd).

Visualization and Legalization of KH Ahmad Dahlan’s Hisab Method in Hamka’s Tafsir Al-Azhar

The visualization and legalization of the reckoning method in the interpretation of al-Azhar put forward by Hamka can be seen when he interprets verse 185 and the end of verse 187 of surah al-Baqarah. When interpreting verse 185, he provides an illustrative diction of the method of reckoning with a Muslim who lives in the north pole, which is very difficult to ‘find’ the rays of the sun. Thus, when he wants to perform fasting, he must automatically use the reckoning system, because it is impossible to perform rukyat. Hamka explained that it is possible for people who live at the poles to experience day or night for a long period of time. However, the calculation of the day in the calculation of the month remains the same as in general. So when they meet or find the month of Ramadan as an obligatory month for fasting, it is obligatory for them to fast if they are Muslim (Hamka, 1984).

Hamka also illustrates by telling a friend who lives in Scandinavia where the sun has not been seen for months, but he continues to pray, fast and so on, because the alternative he chooses is to follow his watch or a familiar calendar. So in this section, Hamka begins to try to introduce the reckoning method when it is not possible to perform the rukyat method. as an implication that in any situation and condition and however if he is a Muslim, then it is obligatory for him to fulfill all the norms and rules in his religion. Then when he encounters
difficulties like the case above, then he is allowed to do ijtihad based on his own ability, because Islam is not a rigid and frozen religion (Hamka, 1984).

When he interpreted Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 187, Hamka stated that in the Qur’an there is no ‘argument of arguments’ for those who fast using the rukyat and reckoning system. This means that among users of the reckoning and rukyat systems there are only variations in methodology, not contradictions in substantive terms, because substantively ontologically, followers of the reckoning and rukyat methods both recognize that the command to fast is obligatory if there are enough provisions and the time is right (Hamka, 1984).

Hamka explained that the reality at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, people fast guided by the rukyat system, because at that time people were still ummi (don’t know how to read and write), but the Messenger of Allah. nor does he want his people to continue to maintain his ummi tradition. Therefore, according to Hamka, the intellectuals of the people must also advance and develop in accordance with technological developments and the progress of the times. Hamka illustrates with prayer times, in ancient times when Muslims wanted to perform prayers, they had to leave the house to see the sun as a sign whether prayer time had entered or not. Then along with the times and technology, this no longer needs to be done because the time for prayer has been scheduled based on the hour or time in each area (Hamka, 1984).

Thus, it is not the methodological aspect that must be debated, because the orientation is faith and piety. Therefore, regardless of the calculation method used, as long as it can be justified, then it is perfectly legal to use it. However, he further explained that there is nothing wrong if the government orders the use of the reckoning system, because nowadays the facilities and infrastructure of the reckoning system are modern and representative, so that the level of accuracy can also be accounted for rather than just using observations with the naked eye. Hamka legalized so that Muslims are responsive and accommodating to the progress of the times and technological developments, because all of these can be utilized in accordance with the spirit of Islam which in fact never restrains its people from progress and development of the times.

**Typology of Hisab Hamka Method in Tafsir Thought**

The typology that the writer is referring to, portrays the position of Hamka’s thinking, especially when interpreting the method of reckoning in the construction of a typology of interpretive thought which will be seen from the three elements of the typology of interpretive thought, namely: traditionalist-scripturalist; subjectivist-revevalist; and objectivist-reformist (Mustaqim, 2010). First, the traditionalist-scripturalists, among the salient features of this school are its strict adherence to the traditions of past thought (turast) in maintaining the character and identity of their thinking. This school also invites back to the behavior of the salaf scholars and tends to be obedient to their opinions (al-Hifni, 1993). Second, subjectivist-revevalist, according to this school that every idea or
idea is completely individual subjectivity. Therefore, he is free to interpret religious texts without being bound by standard rules. Third, the objectivist-reformist school, this flow is a creative synthesis of the two previous schools which contradict each other in an argumentative diametrical way. If the first school tends to be anti-modernist and literal-textual in nature, while the second school (subjectivist-revivalist) tends to be secular and westernized, then this third school tries to moderate the two schools, in the sense that this school remains conservative towards the teachings of Islam and schools of thought of previous scholars but accept modernity as long as it leads to the benefit (Mustaqim, 2010).

From the three typological mappings of interpretive thought, a conclusion can be drawn that the face of interpretation carried out by Hamka, especially in interpreting verses about fasting in the aspect of the calculation method at the beginning and end of Ramadan, tends to be an Objectivist-reformist typology. It can be seen when he is not confined, treacherous, and rigid with classical calculation models, namely only focusing on rukyat calculation models with the naked eye. The progress of the times as well as the development of technology and knowledge must be accepted, so that the human thinking model must come forward, but that does not mean that the classical model must be deconstructed and removed because it must be admitted that the rukyat model is the first model of early calculations in Islam that has been carried out since the time of the Prophet Muhammad and friends (Alfian & Ridho, 2020) in the more sense that even the reckoning system will not be born without a rukyat calculation model, because in fact the typology of thought was born due to the needs and demands of the times and the development of human civilization. So that all calculation models created should make it easier for humans to carry out their religious laws (Nurkhanif, 2018).

Likewise Hamka, according to him based on a number of illustrations in the interpretation above, he does not blame the rukyat model, but the use of the model will be mental if faced with certain conditions or areas, so the reckoning method is quite accommodating in Hamka’s considerations, in other words the method should be flexible and flexible so that it can be conditional and situational.

**Conclusion**

Hamka’s thoughts regarding the reckoning method in determining the beginning and end of Ramadan are quite flexible and accommodating to the variations of reckoning and rukyat that are often contested in Indonesia. However, Hamka directed that Muslims are more inclined to reckoning, because this method has adopted the development of science and technology. The use of reckoning does not mean abandoning rukyat which is stated explicitly in the Hadith, but this is a form of practicing rukyat which has also been interpreted through the tools of science and technology. In explaining this method, Hamka
not only provides a descriptive description in Tafsir Al-Azhar, but also provides illustrations and visualizations, so that the explanation can be observed more easily.

This study is expected to contribute in enriching the Islamic treasures in Indonesia regarding the reckoning-rukyat method. Hamka’s interpretation shows that Muhammadiyah’s use of the reckoning method, and apparently also the use of rukyat by Nahdatul Ulama, is not as rigid as it is often understood by many people. Thus, the two methods are more likely to be compromised, so that Muhammadiyah and NU organizations do not need to be dragged into differences of opinion and even knowledge debates at the time of determining the beginning of Ramadan and Shawwal. However, this study is only limited to looking at the visualization described by Hamka in his commentary. Another, more comprehensive study is needed to see other interpretation methods developed in or developed by Muhammadiyah figures to prove the claim of flexibility and dynamics in the use of these methods within Muhammadiyah.

Bibliography


