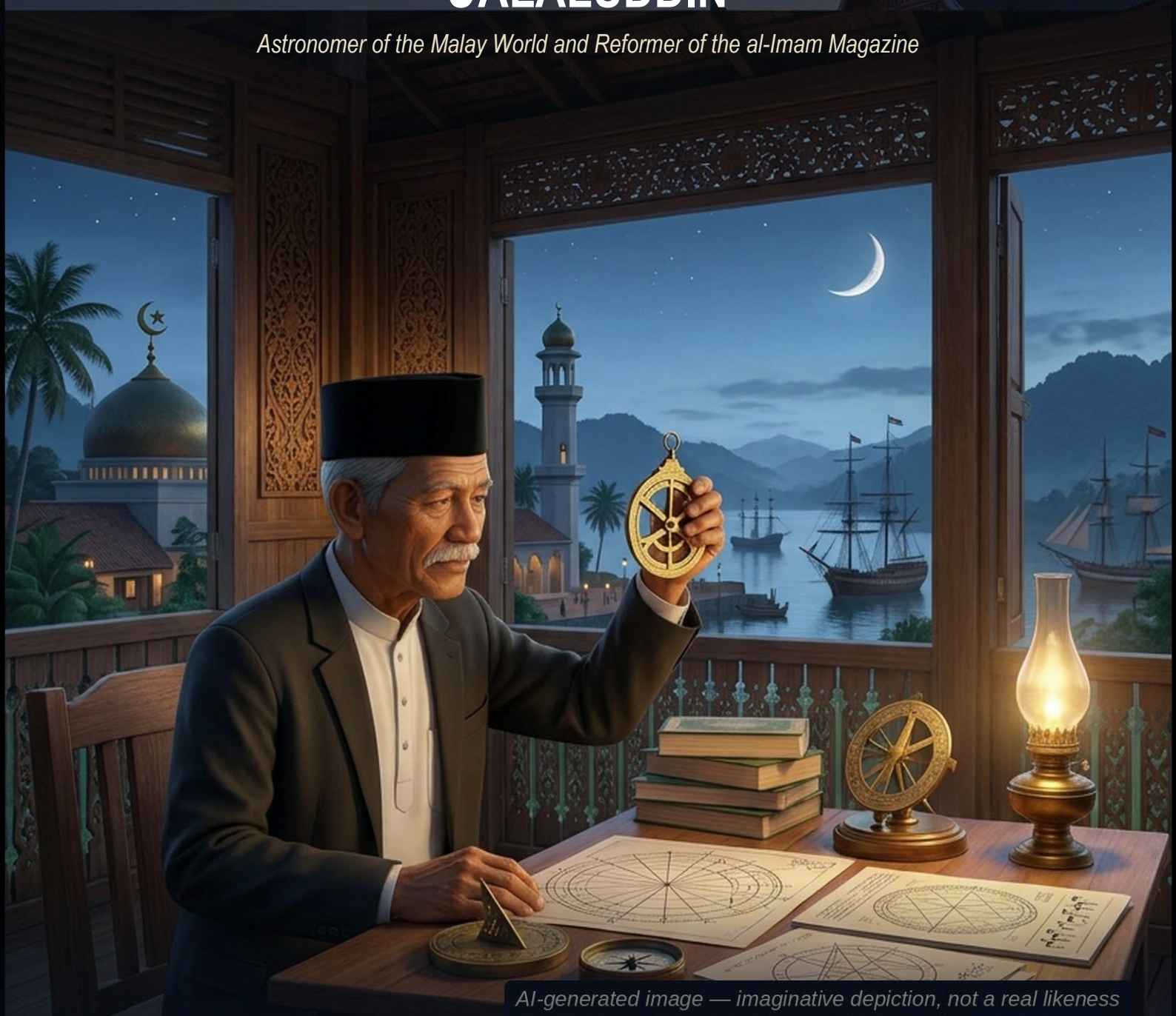
TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 48

SHAYKH TAHIR JALALUDDIN

Astronomer of the Malay World and Reformer of the al-Imam Magazine



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

TRACING THE SCHOLARS OF ISLAM

SERIES 48

SHAYKH TAHIR JALALUDDIN

Astronomer of the Malay World and Reformer of the al-Imam Magazine

هُوَ ٱلَّذِي جَعَلَ ٱلشَّمۡسَ ضِيَآءً وَٱلۡقَمَرَ نُورٗا وَقَدَّرَهُۥ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعۡلَمُواْ عَدَدَ ٱلسِّنِينَ وَٱلۡحِسَابَ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ إِلَّا بِٱلۡحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ لِقَوۡمٖ يَعۡلَمُونَ

"It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined for it phases - that you may know the number of years and account [of time]. Allah has not created this except in truth. He details the signs for a people who know."

SURAH YUNUS 10:5

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who made the sun and the moon so that we may know the number of years and the reckoning of time. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This forty-eighth book of Tracing the Scholars of Islam tells the story of Shaykh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin al-Falaki — a son of Minangkabau who studied in Mecca and at al-Azhar, checked the qiblah of mosques, wrote astronomy books with logarithms, and became a reformer through the al-Imam magazine. May his story teach us that astronomical calculation, too, is worship.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook is an **AI-generated image** — an ***imaginative depiction, not the real likeness*** of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin. This label is also printed on the cover. An elderly scholar in a black songkok and a dark jacket sits on ***the verandah of a wooden house*** at dusk, measuring the sky with ***a brass astrolabe***.

On his table are ***a sundial, a compass, star charts and qiblah diagrams***, ***books*** and ***an oil lamp*** — symbols of his expertise in ***astronomy (falak)***, especially ***the qiblah and prayer times***.

Outside are ***a harbour with sailing ships***, ***a mosque dome and minaret***, ***a crescent moon*** and the first stars — a reminder of ***Singapore and Penang***, where he served — and a horn-shaped roof recalling his origins in ***Minangkabau***.

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SHAYKH TAHIR JALALUDDIN

The forty-eighth book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam** tells the story of ***Shaykh Muhammad Tahir ibn Shaykh Muhammad Jalaluddin al-Falaki*** (1869–1956 CE), a scholar born in ***Minangkabau*** who served in ***the Malay Peninsula*** and was called ***"al-Falaki"*** — the astronomer.

He was ***a pioneer of modern astronomy (falak)*** in pre-independence Malaya: he checked ***the qiblah of mosques***, wrote books on ***prayer times and the qiblah using logarithms***, and introduced methods of ***calculation (hisab)*** for the start of the Hijri months. He was also a ***reformer*** linked to the ***al-Imam*** magazine (1906–1908).

This eBook explains ***the verses on the sun, moon and stars***, his journey of learning to ***Mecca and al-Azhar***, ***how the qiblah is calculated***, ***istiwa' a'zam***, ***prayer times and the new moon***, the al-Imam magazine, and his legacy down to ***the Sheikh Tahir Astronomy Centre*** today.

Note: The translation of Qur'anic verses in this eBook is that of Sahih International. The grading of each Hadith is stated in the Hadith box. Information from books of history and modern research is **biographical narration (not Hadith)** *and is placed in the brown "History Note" boxes. The cover image is an AI-generated image and is marked as such. Qiblah directions and distances are* **calculated** *in this eBook; for worship, follow the rulings of your local religious authority.*

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THE SUN AND MOON FOR RECKONING TIME

SURAH YUNUS 10:5

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَٱلْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُۥ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا۟ عَدَدَ ٱلسِّنِينَ وَٱلْحِسَابَ ۚ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ يُفَصِّلُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٥

It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined for it phases - that you may know the number of years and account [of time]. Allah has not created this except in truth. He details the signs for a people who know.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/10:5

Allah made the sun and the moon and determined their phases ***"that you may know the number of years and account [of time]"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 10:5.

This verse is the ***motto*** of this eBook because Shaykh Tahir's whole life was an effort to ***reckon time*** accurately — prayer times, the qiblah and the start of the months — for the ***worship*** of the Muslims.

BY PRECISE CALCULATION

Allah says (55:5): ***"The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 55:5.

WORSHIP	ASTRONOMY NEEDED
The five daily prayers	The sun's position: dawn, noon, shadow, sunset, twilight.
The qiblah	Coordinates of the place and the Ka'bah; spherical trigonometry.
Ramadan fasting and Eid	The birth and visibility of the new moon.
Hajj and zakat	An accurate Hijri calendar.

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THE STARS AS GUIDES

SURAH AL-AN'AM 6:97

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلنُّجُومَ لِتَهۡتَدُواْ بِهَا فِى ظُلُمَٰتِ ٱلۡبَرِّ وَٱلۡبَحۡرِۗ قَدۡ فَصَّلۡنَا ٱلۡأٓيَٰتِ لِقَوۡمٍ يَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darknesses of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/6:97

Allah ***"placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darknesses of the land and sea"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 6:97.

Allah also says (16:16): ***"And by the stars they are [also] guided"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:16.

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ASTRONOMY IN ISLAMIC CIVILISATION

Astronomy flourished in Islamic civilisation because of ***the needs of worship***. Earlier books in this series told the story of figures such as ***al-Khwarizmi***. Shaykh Tahir continued this tradition in ***the Malay world***.

ASTRONOMICAL INSTRUMENT	USE
Astrolabe	Measuring the altitude of stars and the sun.
Sundial	Telling time from shadows.
Compass	Finding direction, with magnetic correction.
Logarithm tables	Simplifying trigonometric calculation.

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BACKGROUND: FROM MINANGKABAU TO THE MALAY PENINSULA

In the late 19th century CE, many sons of ***Minangkabau*** studied in ***Mecca***, and some later moved to ***the Malay Peninsula and Singapore***. They brought knowledge, books and the spirit of ***islah (reform)***.

HISTORY NOTE: A STUDENT OF SHAYKH AHMAD KHATIB

Among Shaykh Tahir's teachers in Mecca was ***Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi***, a Minangkabau scholar who served as imam and preacher of the Shafi'i school at al-Masjid al-Haram. Many reformers of the archipelago were his students.

Hamka's father, ***Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah*** (Book 47), was another ***Kaum Muda*** figure from Minangkabau of the same era.

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Penang State Mufti Department, Special Edition PFST: Astronomy Scholars (2022).
https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

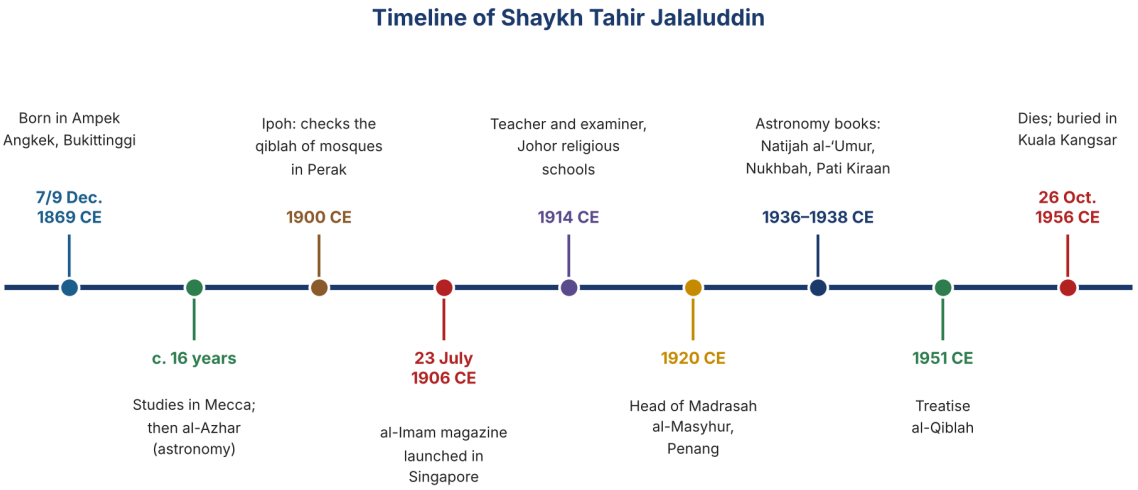
PLACE	LINK WITH SHAYKH TAHIR
Ampek Angkek, Bukittinggi	Birthplace (1869 CE).
Mecca	About 16 years of study.
Cairo	Shahadah al-'Alamiyyah from al-Azhar, including astronomy.
Perak, Johor, Singapore, Penang	Teaching, checking the qiblah and writing.

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BORN IN AMPEK ANGKEK

Shaykh Tahir was born in ***December 1869 CE*** in ***Kota Tua, Ampek Angkek (Empat Angkat), Bukittinggi***, West Sumatra. Sources give the date as ***7 December*** or ***9 December 1869***.

His full name was ***Muhammad Tahir ibn Shaykh Muhammad ibn Jalaluddin Ahmad ibn 'Abdullah al-Minangkabawi***. The title ***"al-Falaki"*** was given for his expertise in astronomy.



Sources: Penang Mufti Department (2022), Wikipedia and Biblioasia (NLB). His birth is given as 7 or 9 December 1869.

Figure 1: Timeline of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin.

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SIXTEEN YEARS IN MECCA

Shaykh Tahir studied in ***Mecca for about 16 years***. Among his teachers were ***Shaykh Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Khayyat***, ***Shaykh Muhammad Abi al-Fadl*** and ***Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi***.

HISTORY NOTE: FELLOW STUDENTS

In Mecca he studied alongside many Jawi students. According to a study in a ***University of Malaya journal***, one fellow student was ***Ustaz Haji Abu Bakar al-Muari*** — who later became his opponent in a debate on a point of jurisprudence.

This shows that ***differences of opinion*** can arise between friends who learned from the same teachers.

REFERENCES:

Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

University of Malaya journal, a study of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin's debates. https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JAT/article/download/8707/6196/18078

THE PATH TO PARADISE

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2699

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى التَّمِيمِيُّ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْعَلاَءِ الْهَمْدَانِيُّ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِيَحْيَى - قَالَ يَحْيَى أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ الآخَرَانِ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ الدُّنْيَا نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرَبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمَنْ يَسَّرَ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ يَسَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ سَتَرَ مُسْلِمًا سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ وَمَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَيَتَدَارَسُونَهُ بَيْنَهُمْ إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ وَغَشِيَتْهُمُ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِيمَنْ عِنْدَهُ وَمَنْ بَطَّأَ بِهِ عَمَلُهُ لَمْ يُسْرِعْ بِهِ نَسَبُهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever relieves a believer of one of the hardships of this world, Allah will relieve him of one of the hardships of the Day of Resurrection. Whoever makes things easy for one in difficulty, Allah will make things easy for him in this world and the Hereafter. Whoever covers the faults of a Muslim, Allah will cover his faults in this world and the Hereafter. Allah helps

His servant as long as the servant helps his brother. **Whoever follows a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise.** No people gather in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that tranquillity descends upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them, and Allah mentions them among those who are with Him. And whoever is held back by his deeds will not be hastened forward by his lineage."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya at-Tamimi, Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah and Muhammad ibn al-'Ala' al-Hamdani, from Abu Mu'awiyah, from al-A'mash, from Abu Salih, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Remembrance, Supplication, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness, chapter on the virtue of gathering to recite the Qur'an and remember Allah, Hadith No. 2699a.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2699a

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AL-AZHAR AND THE SCIENCE OF ASTRONOMY

After Mecca, Shaykh Tahir studied at ***al-Azhar University, Egypt***, and obtained the ***Shahadah al-'Alamiyyah*** in ***'Ulum al-'Arabiyyah wa ash-Shari'ah*** and in ***Astronomy ('Ilm al-Falak)***.

HISTORY NOTE: CAIRO AND THE SPIRIT OF REFORM

Cairo in the late 19th century CE was a centre of ***Islamic reform***, led by ***Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh*** (Book 50) and later his student ***Rashid Rida***, through the magazine ***al-Manar***.

According to a University of Malaya study, Rashid Rida and several scholars of Mecca and Cairo later ***endorsed Shaykh Tahir's views*** in a debate on jurisprudence.

REFERENCES:

Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

University of Malaya journal, a study of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin's debates. https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JAT/article/download/8707/6196/18078

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UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELIGION

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 71 (MUTTAFAQ ‘ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عُفَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، عَنْ يُونُسَ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ قَالَ حُمَيْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ سَمِعْتُ مُعَاوِيَةَ، خَطِيبًا يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ بِهِ خَيْرًا يُفَقِّهْهُ فِي الدِّينِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا قَاسِمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُعْطِي، وَلَنْ تَزَالَ هَذِهِ الأُمَّةُ قَائِمَةً عَلَى أَمْرِ اللَّهِ لاَ يَضُرُّهُمْ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Humayd ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman said: I heard Mu‘awiyah رضى الله عنه delivering a sermon, saying: I heard the Prophet ﷺ say: **“Whoever Allah wishes good for, He gives him understanding of the religion. I am only a distributor, and Allah is the One who gives. This nation will remain upright upon the command of Allah; those who oppose them will not harm them, until the command of Allah comes.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa‘id ibn ‘Ufayr, from Ibn Wahb, from Yunus, from Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri, from Humayd ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahman, from Mu‘awiyah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 71. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1037).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:71

Shaykh Tahir combined ***understanding of the religion*** with ***mathematics and astronomy*** — both used to ***make worship easier*** for the Ummah.

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TURN YOUR FACE TOWARD AL-MASJID AL-HARAM

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:144

قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ ۖ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَىٰهَا ۚ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ
شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ ۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [O Muhammad], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]. Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:144

Allah commands: ***"So turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces toward it [in prayer]"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:144.

For Muslims far from Mecca, finding ***the qiblah*** requires ***knowledge***. This is the field for which Shaykh Tahir is best known.

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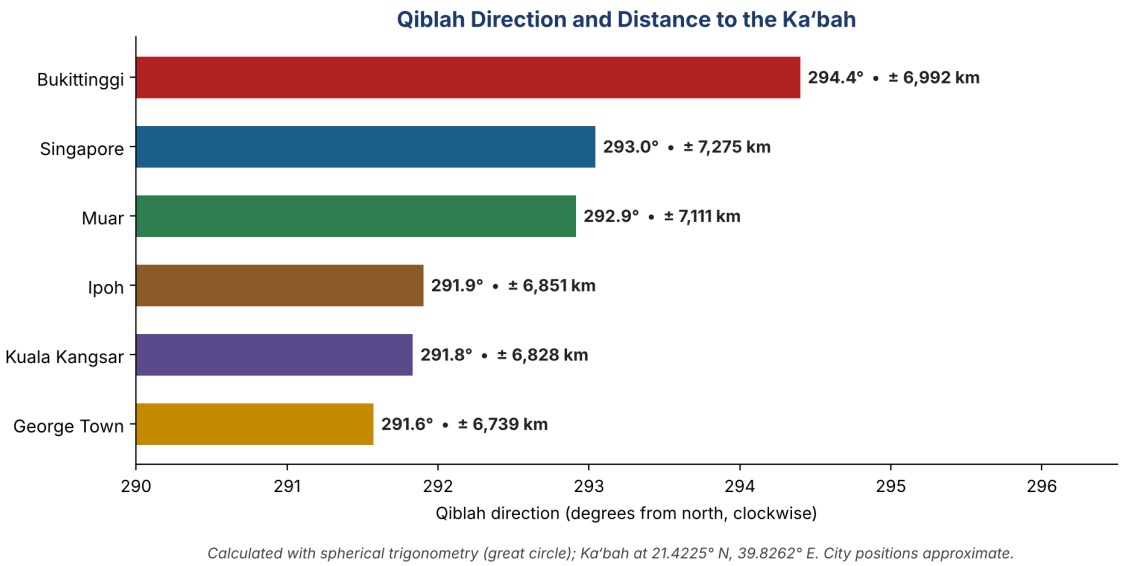


Figure 2: Qiblah direction and distance to the Ka'bah from several cities (calculated).

From the Malay Peninsula, the qiblah points ***north-west***, about ***21°–24° north of west***. From Bukittinggi, Shaykh Tahir's birthplace, the qiblah is ***about 294.4°***, and from Kuala Kangsar, where he is buried, ***about 291.8°***.

Note: The figures above are calculated in this eBook for educational purposes. For the qiblah of a mosque or home, consult **your local religious or astronomy authority**.

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CHECKING THE QIBLAH OF MOSQUES

In ***1900 CE***, Shaykh Tahir was ***a cloth merchant in Ipoh***, and at the same time ***checked the qiblah of mosques in Perak***.

HISTORY NOTE: WHY CHECK THE QIBLAH?

Many old mosques were built with an ***estimated*** qiblah, for example by facing ***due west***. From the Malay Peninsula the true direction is north-west, so facing due west can be ***off by more than 20°***.

With astronomy, Shaykh Tahir could ***calculate*** a more accurate direction and advise the mosques.

REFERENCES:

Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

METHOD OF FINDING THE QIBLAH	ACCURACY
Facing due west	Rough; off by more than 20° from Malaya.
Magnetic compass	Good, if corrected for magnetic declination.
Spherical trigonometry	Accurate, if coordinates are known.
The sun's shadow at istiwa' a'zam	Very accurate and simple (chapter 10).

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HOW THE QIBLAH IS CALCULATED

The qiblah is calculated with ***spherical trigonometry***: the earth is treated as a sphere, and we form ***a triangle*** between ***the North Pole, the Ka'bah and our location***.

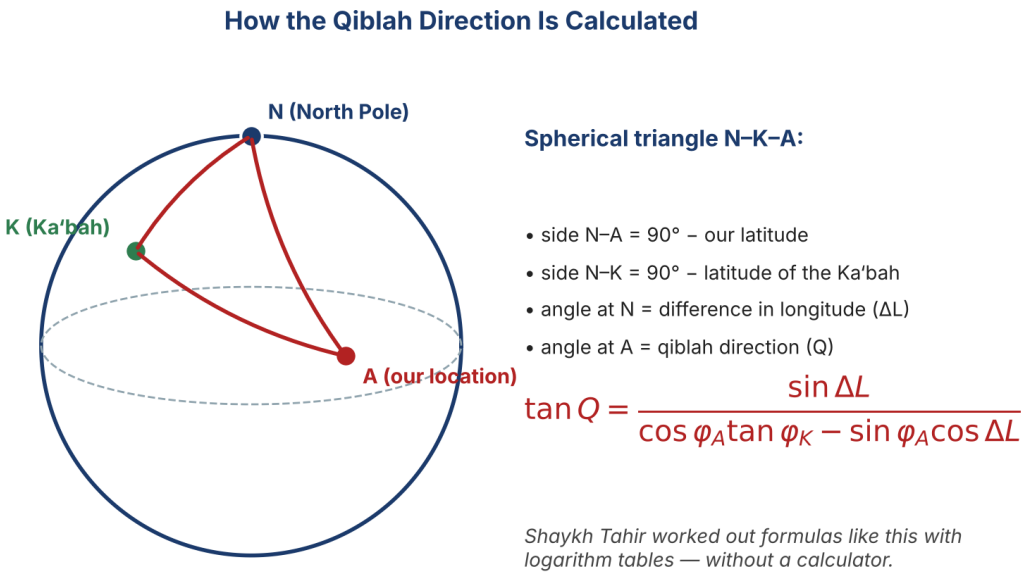


Figure 3: The spherical triangle used to calculate the qiblah.

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HISTORY NOTE: LOGARITHMS: THE CALCULATOR OF OLD

Before calculators, difficult sine, cosine and tangent calculations were simplified with ***logarithm tables***: multiplication becomes ***addition***.

Shaykh Tahir's book ***Nukhbah at-Taqrirat fi Hisab al-Awqat wa Samt al-Qiblah bi al-Lugharitmat*** (1937) teaches how to calculate ***prayer times and the qiblah with logarithms***.

REFERENCES:

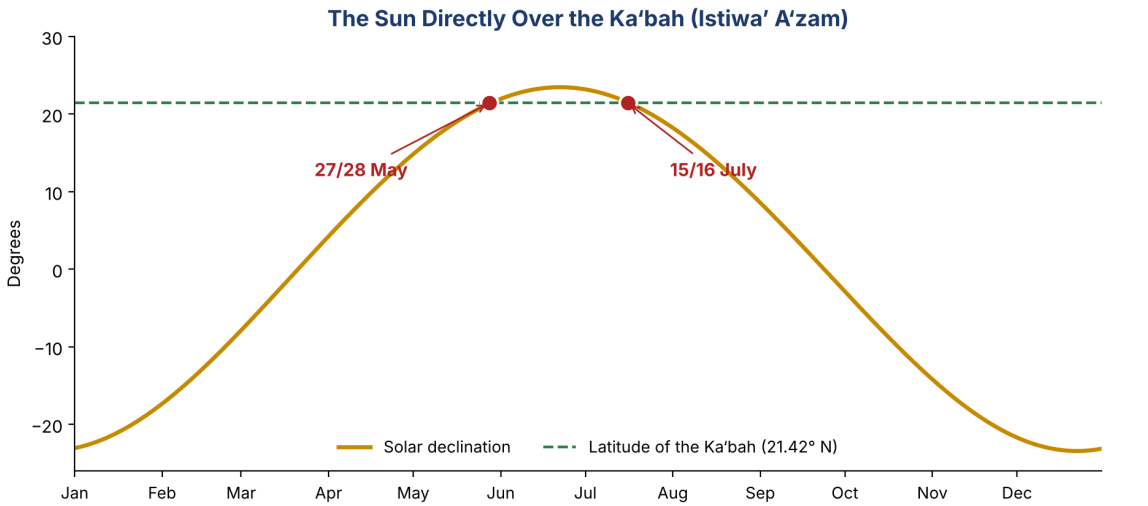
Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

EXAMPLE: GEORGE TOWN	VALUE
Latitude of the place (φA)	c. 5.41° N
Latitude of the Ka'bah (φK)	21.42° N
Difference in longitude (ΔL)	100.33° − 39.83° = c. 60.50°
Calculated qiblah (Q)	c. 291.6° from north

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THE SUN DIRECTLY OVER THE KA'BAH

Twice a year, ***the sun stands directly over the Ka'bah*** at noon in Mecca. This event is called ***istiwa' a'zam***. At that moment, ***the shadow*** of a vertical pole anywhere the sun can be seen points ***directly away from the Ka'bah***.



Approximated with the solar declination formula (Spencer). On those days, at about 12:18 (May) and 12:27 (July) Mecca time, the shadow of a vertical pole points directly away from the Ka'bah. Check exact times with an astronomy authority, e.g. the NOAA Solar Calculator: https://gml.noaa.gov/grad/solcalc/

Figure 4: Solar declination and istiwa' a'zam (approximate).

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HISTORY NOTE: WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

The earth's axis is tilted about ***23.4°***, so the sun's position in the sky (declination) moves between ***23.4° N*** and ***23.4° S*** each year. When the declination equals ***the latitude of the Ka'bah (21.42° N)***, the sun is directly over the Ka'bah at noon in Mecca.

This happens around ***27/28 May*** and ***15/16 July***. In Malaysia it falls in the ***late afternoon*** (around 5 p.m.), because the time difference with Mecca is 5 hours.

REFERENCES:

NOAA Solar Calculator. https://gml.noaa.gov/grad/solcalc/

STEP	CHECKING THE QIBLAH WITH A SHADOW
1	Set up a straight, vertical rod in an open space.
2	Check the istiwa' a'zam time announced by the astronomy authority.
3	At that moment, mark the line of the rod's shadow.
4	The direction from the tip of the shadow to the rod is the qiblah.

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THE TIMES OF PRAYER

SURAH AN-NISA' 4:103

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ فَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ قِيَـٰمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا
ٱطْمَأْنَنتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَـٰبًا مَّوْقُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾

And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/4:103

"Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 4:103.

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HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 612

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو غَسَّانَ الْمِسْمَعِيُّ، وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذٌ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ هِشَامٍ - حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي، عَنْ قَتَادَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي أَيُّوبَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «إِذَا صَلَّيْتُمُ الْفَجْرَ فَإِنَّهُ وَقْتٌ إِلَى أَنْ يَطْلُعَ قَرْنُ الشَّمْسِ الأَوَّلُ ثُمَّ إِذَا صَلَّيْتُمُ الظُّهْرَ فَإِنَّهُ وَقْتٌ إِلَى أَنْ يَحْضُرَ الْعَصْرُ فَإِذَا صَلَّيْتُمُ الْعَصْرَ فَإِنَّهُ وَقْتٌ إِلَى أَنْ تَصْفَرَّ الشَّمْسُ فَإِذَا صَلَّيْتُمُ الْمَغْرِبَ فَإِنَّهُ وَقْتٌ إِلَى أَنْ يَسْقُطَ الشَّفَقُ فَإِذَا صَلَّيْتُمُ الْعِشَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ وَقْتٌ إِلَى نِصْفِ اللَّيْلِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said: **"When you pray Fajr, its time lasts until the first edge of the sun rises. When you pray Zuhr, its time lasts until 'Asr comes. When you pray 'Asr, its time lasts until the sun turns yellow. When you pray Maghrib, its time lasts until the twilight disappears. When you pray 'Isha', its time lasts until half the night."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Ghassan al-Misma'i and Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Mu'adh (ibn Hisham), from his father (Hisham ad-Dastuwa'i), from Qatadah, from Abu Ayyub (al-Maraghi), from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Mosques and Places of Prayer, Hadith No. 612.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:612a

PRAYER ON TIME

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 527

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْوَلِيدِ، هِشَامُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ الْوَلِيدُ بْنُ الْعَيْزَارِ أَخْبَرَنِي قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَمْرٍو الشَّيْبَانِيَّ، يَقُولُ حَدَّثَنَا صَاحِبُ، هَذِهِ الدَّارِ وَأَشَارَ إِلَى دَارِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَىُّ الْعَمَلِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ «الصَّلاَةُ عَلَى وَقْتِهَا». قَالَ ثُمَّ أَىٌّ قَالَ «ثُمَّ بِرُّ الْوَالِدَيْنِ». قَالَ ثُمَّ أَىٌّ قَالَ «الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ». قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي بِهِنَّ وَلَوِ اسْتَزَدْتُهُ لَزَادَنِي.

TRANSLATION:

Abu ‘Amr ash-Shaybani said: The owner of this house — pointing to the house of ‘Abdullah (ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه) — told us: I asked the Prophet ﷺ: **“Which deed is most beloved to Allah?” He said: “Prayer at its proper time.”** I asked: “Then what?” He said: “Then kindness to parents.” I asked: “Then what?” He said: “Striving in the way of Allah.” He said: He told me these, and had I asked for more, he would have told me more.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Walid Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, from Shu‘bah, from al-Walid ibn al-‘Ayzar, from Abu ‘Amr ash-Shaybani, from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Times of Prayer, Chapter on the Virtue of Prayer at Its Time, Hadith No. 527.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:527

Prayer times are set by ***the position of the sun***. Astronomers like Shaykh Tahir calculated these times for each place, so that Muslims could ***pray on time***. His book ***Jadawil Pati Kiraan*** (1938) contains tables for this purpose.

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THE NEW MOON AND ASTRONOMICAL CALCULATION

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:189

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِىَ مَوَٰقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَٱلْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ ٱلْبِرُّ بِأَن تَأْتُوا۟ ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِن ظُهُورِهَا وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَأْتُوا۟ ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَٰبِهَا ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the new moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj." And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:189

Allah says: ***"They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:189.

Allah also says (9:36): ***"Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve [lunar] months"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 9:36.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1909 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAYH)

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ زِيَادٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ يَقُولُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَوْ قَالَ قَالَ أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَتِهِ، وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَتِهِ، فَإِنْ غُبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ شَعْبَانَ ثَلاَثِينَ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ — or Abu al-Qasim ﷺ — said: **"Fast when you see it (the new crescent), and break your fast when you see it. If it is hidden from you, complete the count of Sha'ban as thirty days."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam (ibn Abi Iyas), from Shu'bah, from Muhammad ibn Ziyad, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Fasting, Hadith No. 1909. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1081).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1909

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1913

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حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، حَدَّثَنَا الأَسْوَدُ بْنُ قَيْسٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ ابْنَ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنَّهُ قَالَ «إِنَّا أُمَّةٌ أُمِّيَّةٌ، لاَ نَكْتُبُ وَلاَ نَحْسُبُ الشَّهْرُ هَكَذَا وَهَكَذَا». يَعْنِي مَرَّةً تِسْعَةً وَعِشْرِينَ، وَمَرَّةً ثَلاَثِينَ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“We are an unlettered nation; we neither write nor calculate. The month is like this and like this”** — meaning sometimes twenty-nine days and sometimes thirty.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shu‘bah, from al-Aswad ibn Qays, from Sa‘id ibn ‘Amr, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Fasting (Kitab as-Sawm), Hadith No. 1913; also narrated by Muslim (No. 1080).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1913

HISTORY NOTE: SIGHTING AND CALCULATION

Shaykh Tahir was among ***the pioneers of calculation (hisab)*** for determining the start of the Hijri months in Malaya.

Scholars have discussed the relationship between ***rukyah*** (sighting the new moon) and ***hisab***. Today many authorities use ***both***: calculation to predict, and sighting to confirm.

REFERENCES:

Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

RUKYAH (SIGHTING)	HISAB (CALCULATION)
Seeing the new moon by eye or telescope	Calculating the positions of the moon and sun.
Depends on the weather	Does not depend on the weather.
Mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhari 1909	Helps predict when the new moon can be seen.

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THE AL-IMAM MAGAZINE

Al-Imam was a reformist Malay-language magazine in Jawi script, published in ***Singapore*** from ***23 July 1906*** to ***December 1908 — 31 issues*** in all. It was inspired by the magazine ***al-Manar*** in Egypt.

HISTORY NOTE: FOUNDERS AND EDITORS

According to Biblioasia (National Library of Singapore), al-Imam was founded by ***Syed Shaykh al-Hadi*** (Book 49) with Arab and Malay scholars and merchants, supported by ***Shaykh Muhammad Salim al-Kalali***. Shaykh Tahir is named as their fellow reformer.

Wikipedia names Shaykh Tahir as the ***editor*** of al-Imam. Al-Imam printed ***about 5,000 copies*** — the largest print run of any Malay newspaper before the Second World War.

REFERENCES:

Biblioasia (NLB), "Sumbangan Arab". https://biblioasia.nlb.gov.sg/files/pdf/vol-5/issue-4/v5-issue4_SumbanganArab.pdf
Wikipedia, "Tahir bin Jalaluddin". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tahir_bin_Jalaluddin

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A GROUP INVITING TO GOOD

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:104

وَلۡتَكُن مِّنكُمۡ أُمَّةٞ يَدۡعُونَ إِلَى ٱلۡخَيۡرِ وَيَأۡمُرُونَ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِ وَيَنۡهَوۡنَ عَنِ ٱلۡمُنكَرِۚ وَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلۡمُفۡلِحُونَ ١٠٤

And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, and those will be the successful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:104

"And let there be [arising] from you a nation inviting to [all that is] good". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:104.

Al-Imam called Malay society to ***education, rational thought*** and ***a return to the Qur'an and Sunnah***. The issue of 17 November 1906, for example, carried a question of jurisprudence about ***mawlid gatherings***.

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THE REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE KAUM MUDA

Shaykh Tahir, Syed Shaykh al-Hadi and their companions were known as the ***Kaum Muda*** (the Young Group) — those who called for ***reform (islah)***.

Allah asks (39:9): ***"Are those who know equal to those who do not know?"*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 39:9.

HISTORY NOTE: THE CALL OF THE KAUM MUDA

The Kaum Muda stressed ***modern education*** alongside religious knowledge, ***the Malay language*** as a language of learning, and ***ijtihad*** based on the Qur'an and Sunnah.

A University of Malaya study describes Shaykh Tahir as ***a pioneer of the islah movement in Malaysia*** and a figure of ***the Malay Islamic awakening***.

REFERENCES:

University of Malaya journal, a study of Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin's debates.
https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JAT/article/download/8707/6196/18078

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TEACHING IN JOHOR, PERAK AND PENANG

Shaykh Tahir served as a teacher, examiner and head of religious institutions in several states.

YEAR	ROLE
1900 CE	Cloth merchant in Ipoh; qiblah examiner for mosques in Perak.
1901 CE	Taught the judges of the Johor courts.
Not stated	Head of Madrasah Haji Mohd Taib, Muar.
1914 CE	Teacher and examiner in Johor religious schools.
1920 CE	Head of Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyyah, Penang.
Not stated	Mufti of Perak for three years.

Source: Penang State Mufti Department (2022). https://mufti.penang.gov.my/index.php/awam/senarai-penerbitan/553-buku-edisi-khas-pfst-ilmuwan-falak-2022/file

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MAKE THINGS EASY

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 69

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو التَّيَّاحِ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «يَسِّرُوا وَلاَ تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلاَ تُنَفِّرُوا».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Make things easy and do not make them difficult; give glad tidings and do not drive people away."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Yahya ibn Sa'id, from Shu'bah, from Abu at-Tayyah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Chapter on the Prophet ﷺ Choosing Suitable Times for Advice, Hadith No. 69.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:69

Carefully calculated astronomy ***makes things easy*** for the Ummah: they need not be in doubt about ***prayer times and the qiblah***.

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DISAGREEING WITH COURTESY

Shaykh Tahir took part in several ***scholarly debates***, including with his fellow student ***Haji Abu Bakar al-Muari***. An Arabic article on the question of ***the prayer before Friday*** appeared in the ***Pengasuh*** magazine in 1921 — the magazine led by Tok Kenali (Book 46).

Allah says (16:125): ***"argue with them in a way that is best"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 16:125.

HISTORY NOTE: HIS BOOKS OF DEBATE

His writings in these debates include ***Ini Huraian Yang Membakar Taman Persuraian Haji Bakar*** (Cairo, 1932) and ***Ta'yid Tadhkirah*** (Penang, 1953). He sent his book to scholars in ***Mecca and Egypt*** for review.

The University of Malaya study says ***Rashid Rida*** and several scholars of Mecca and Cairo supported his view.

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HIS BOOKS ON ASTRONOMY

SURAH YA-SIN 36:38–40

وَٱلشَّمۡسُ تَجۡرِي لِمُسۡتَقَرّٖ لَّهَاۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقۡدِيرُ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡعَلِيمِ ٣٨

And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.

وَٱلۡقَمَرَ قَدَّرۡنَٰهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَٱلۡعُرۡجُونِ ٱلۡقَدِيمِ ٣٩

And the moon - We have determined for it phases, until it returns [appearing] like the old date stalk.

لَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ يَنۢبَغِي لَهَآ أَن تُدۡرِكَ ٱلۡقَمَرَ وَلَا ٱلَّيۡلُ سَابِقُ ٱلنَّهَارِۚ وَكُلّٞ فِي فَلَكٖ يَسۡبَحُونَ ٤٠

It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/36:38-40

"It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 36:38.

BOOK	YEAR AND CONTENTS
Natijah al-'Umur	1936 CE — calculation and the calendar.
Nukhbah at-Taqrirat fi Hisab al-Awqat wa Samt al-Qiblah bi al-Lugharitmat	1937 CE — prayer times and the qiblah with logarithms.
Jadawil Pati Kiraan	1938 CE — logarithm tables for prayer times and the qiblah.
Al-Qiblah 'ala Nusus 'Ulama' ash-Shafi'iyyah	1951 CE — the qiblah according to Shafi'i texts.

Source: Penang State Mufti Department (2022). Wikipedia gives different dates for some of these books (for example Pati Kiraan, 1941 CE).

These books made Shaykh Tahir ***a pioneer of modern astronomy*** in pre-independence Malaya.

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THE SHEIKH TAHIR ASTRONOMY CENTRE

Shaykh Tahir's name lives on in ***the Sheikh Tahir Astronomy Centre (Pusat Falak Sheikh Tahir)*** at ***Pantai Acheh, Penang***. Its foundation stone was laid in ***June 1988***, and it was officially opened on ***9 October 1991 (30 Rabi' al-Awwal 1412 AH)*** by his son, ***Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir***.

SURAH AL 'IMRAN 3:190

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱخْتِلَٰفِ ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ لَءَايَٰتٍ لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:190

"in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 3:190.

HISTORY NOTE: A PLACE FOR SIGHTING THE NEW MOON

The centre is ***an Islamic astronomy centre*** and one of the places where ***the new moon is observed*** to determine the start of Ramadan and Shawwal.

Its location on Penang's west coast gives a wide view of ***the western horizon*** — important because the new moon is seen in the west after sunset.

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Penang Travel Tips, "Pusat Falak Sheikh Tahir". https://mail.penang-traveltips.com/pusat-falak-sheikh-tahir.htm

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KNOWLEDGE THAT IS INHERITED

Shaykh Tahir's son, ***Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir***, became ***Governor (Yang di-Pertua Negeri) of Penang*** (1989–2002). Yet Shaykh Tahir's greatest legacy is ***knowledge***: methods of calculation used and renewed by the astronomers after him.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 100 (MUTTAFAQ 'ALAIH)

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي مَالِكٌ، عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرِو بْنِ الْعَاصِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لاَ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ انْتِزَاعًا، يَنْتَزِعُهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ، وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ، حَتَّى إِذَا لَمْ يُبْقِ عَالِمًا، اتَّخَذَ النَّاسُ رُءُوسًا جُهَّالاً فَسُئِلُوا، فَأَفْتَوْا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، فَضَلُّوا وَأَضَلُّوا». قَالَ الْفِرَبْرِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا عَبَّاسٌ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ عَنْ هِشَامٍ نَحْوَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنهما said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from His servants, but He takes away knowledge by taking away the scholars, until, when no scholar remains, people take ignorant leaders. They are asked and they give rulings without knowledge; so they go astray and lead others astray."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Imam Malik, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'As رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Knowledge, Hadith No. 100. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2673).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:100

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Knowledge is taken away with ***the death of scholars***. Shaykh Tahir's astronomy was not lost because it was ***written in books*** and ***carried on by institutions*** such as the astronomy centre.

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ESTABLISHED REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:36

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart - about all those [one] will be questioned.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:36

"do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge". Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:36.

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, INTRODUCTION NO. 5 — FROM IMAM MUSLIM'S OWN INTRODUCTION

وَحَدَّثَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُعَاذٍ الْعَنْبَرِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي ح، وَحَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ مَهْدِيٍّ، قَالاَ حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ خُبَيْبِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، عَنْ حَفْصِ بْنِ عَاصِمٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ كَذِبًا أَنْ يُحَدِّثَ بِكُلِّ مَا سَمِعَ».

TRANSLATION:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"It is enough of a lie for a person to narrate everything he hears."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from 'Ubaydullah ibn Mu'adh al-'Anbari, from his father Mu'adh ibn Mu'adh; and from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Mahdi, both from Shu'bah, from Khubayb ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Hafs ibn 'Asim. In the following narration, Imam Muslim narrates it with a connected chain: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah, from 'Ali ibn Hafs, from Shu'bah, with the same chain, from Hafs ibn 'Asim, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in the Introduction to Sahih Muslim, Hadith No. 5; the connected narration through Abu Hurairah is in the Introduction, narration 7 (sunnah.com/muslim/introduction/7).

GRADE: SAHIH — Imam Muslim placed it in the Introduction to Sahih Muslim and narrated it with a connected chain through Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:5

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STATEMENTS AND THEIR STATUS

STATEMENT	STATUS
He was born in December 1869.	Established; the day is given as 7 (Penang Mufti Dept.) or 9 December (UM study).
He was the editor of al-Imam.	Stated by Wikipedia; Biblioasia names al-Hadi as the earliest editor.
He studied 16 years in Mecca.	Stated by the Penang Mufti Dept.; the starting year is not given.
He was Mufti of Perak.	Given as three years; the years are not stated.
The year of Pati Kiraan.	1938 (Mufti Dept.) or 1941 (Wikipedia).
He died on 26 October 1956.	Established in many sources.

REFLECTION — HONOURING WITHOUT EXAGGERATING

An astronomer teaches us ***precision***: every figure must be ***checked***. We honour Shaykh Tahir by being ***honest*** about differences between sources.

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HIS DEATH AND LEGACY

Shaykh Tahir died on ***26 October 1956 CE***, and was buried in ***the Jalan Baru Cemetery, Kuala Kangsar, Perak***.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1 — THE FIRST HADITH OF AL-ARBA'IN AN-NAWAWIYYAH

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الزُّبَيْرِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَنْصَارِيُّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيُّ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنَ وَقَّاصٍ اللَّيْثِيَّ، يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ بْنَ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، يَقُولُ «إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَا نَوَى، فَمَنْ كَانَتْ هِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى دُنْيَا يُصِيبُهَا أَوْ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ يَنْكِحُهَا، فَهِجْرَتُهُ إِلَى مَا هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi said: I heard 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه say on the pulpit: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"Actions are only by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly gain he would attain, or for a woman he would marry, his emigration is for that to which he emigrated."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, from Muhammad ibn Ibrahim at-Taymi, from 'Alqamah ibn Waqqas al-Laythi, from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Revelation, Hadith No. 1 (the first Hadith of Sahih al-Bukhari); also narrated by Muslim (No. 1907).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3461

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَاصِمٍ الضَّحَّاكُ بْنُ مَخْلَدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي كَبْشَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً، وَحَدِّثُوا عَنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَلاَ حَرَجَ، وَمَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَلْيَتَبَوَّأْ مَقْعَدَهُ مِنَ النَّارِ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr رضى الله عنهما reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“Convey from me, even if it is a single verse. And narrate from the Children of Israel, there is no harm (in it). And whoever lies about me deliberately, let him take his seat in the Fire.”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu ‘Asim ad-Dahhak ibn Makhlad, from al-Awza‘i, from Hassan ibn ‘Atiyyah, from Abu Kabshah as-Saluli, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, Hadith No. 3461.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3461

A LEGACY FOR US

LEGACY	LESSON FOR US
Checking the qiblah	Worship needs accurate knowledge.
Astronomy books with logarithms	Mathematics can serve religion.
Methods of calculation	Science helps, not replaces, the Shari'ah.
The al-Imam magazine	Media for reform and education.
The Sheikh Tahir Astronomy Centre	Knowledge carried on by institutions.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: The sun and moon are for reckoning time (10:5; 55:5).

Second: The stars are guides (6:97; 16:16).

Third: Seek knowledge even far away and for long (Sahih Muslim 2699).

Fourth: Combine religious knowledge and calculation (Sahih al-Bukhari 71).

Fifth: Face al-Masjid al-Haram with knowledge (2:144).

Sixth: Check the qiblah with the sun's shadow (istiwa' a'zam).

Seventh: Pray on time (4:103; Sahih Muslim 612; Sahih al-Bukhari 527).

Eighth: The new moon marks the times of worship (2:189; 9:36; Sahih al-Bukhari 1909, 1913).

Ninth: Call to good as a community (3:104).

Tenth: Make things easy for the Ummah (Sahih al-Bukhari 69).

Eleventh: Argue in the best way (16:125).

Twelfth: Check every figure and every report (17:36).

CONCLUSION

Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin taught that ***careful calculation*** is also ***worship***, because it helps Muslims face the qiblah and pray on time. The next book of **Tracing the Scholars of Islam**, in sha' Allah, will tell the story of ***Syed Shaykh al-Hadi***, his fellow reformer in the al-Imam magazine. And Allah knows best.

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GLOSSARY AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GLOSSARY

TERM	MEANING
Falak	The science of the positions and motions of heavenly bodies.
Hisab	Calculating the positions of the moon and sun.
Rukyah	Sighting the new moon.
Istiwa' a'zam	The sun directly over the Ka'bah, twice a year.
Declination	The sun's position north or south of the celestial equator.
Logarithm	A mathematical method that simplifies calculation.
Spherical trigonometry	Calculating angles and sides of triangles on a sphere.
Kaum Muda	The reform (islah) group in the Malay world.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. According to verse 10:5, why did Allah determine the courses of the sun and moon?

2. Why did the qiblah of old mosques need to be checked?

3. What happens at istiwa' a'zam, and how does it help find the qiblah?

4. What role did the al-Imam magazine play in the reform movement?

5. How do sighting and calculation help each other?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: On the next istiwa' a'zam, check the qiblah of your home with the shadow of a vertical rod.

Activity 2: Use your city's coordinates and the formula in Figure 3 to calculate the qiblah with a scientific calculator.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

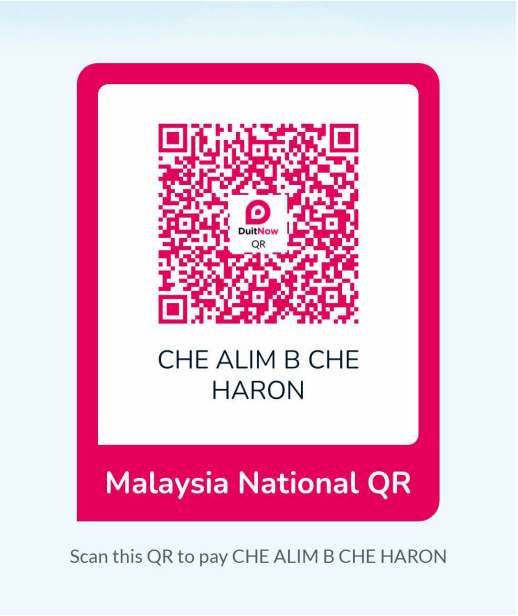
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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