50412 - He is living in Germany – should he fast with the European Islamic Society or with Saudi?

the question

We are living in Germany and the problem is that the imam of one mosque says “We will fast with Saudi” but in another mosque they said, “We will fast following the European Islamic Society which supposed to have undertaken the mission to watch for the moon.” What is your opinion? May Allaah reward you with good?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

If the European Islamic Society depends on sighting the moon, then it is better for you to follow them with regard to starting and ending the fast.

There is an ancient and well known difference of scholarly opinion concerning this matter – should each land have its own sighting or should everyone follow those who see the moon even if the sightings differ from one country to another? This difference of opinion is permissible and is based on ijtihaad, and there is no sin on anyone if he follows one of these two opinions, according to the evidence that becomes clear to him. Perhaps the more correct view is that the difference in sightings is relevant in this issue. We have explained the evidence for this view in the answer to question no. 50487.

Among the evidence that supports that is the report narrated by Muslim (1819) from Kurayb, that Umm al-Fadl bint al-Haarith sent him to Mu’aawiyah in Syria. He said: I came to Syria and did her errand, then the new moon of Ramadaan came when I was in Syria, and I saw the new moon on Thursday night. Then I came to Madeenah at the end of the month and ‘Abd-Allaah ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) asked me about the new moon. He said: “When did you see the new moon?” I said: “We saw it on Thursday night.” He said: “Did you see it?” I said: “Yes, and the

people saw it, and they fasted, and Mu’aawiyah fasted.” He said: “But we saw it on Friday night, and we will carry on fasting until we complete thirty days or we see it.” I said: “Is not the sighting and fasting of Mu’aawiyah sufficient for you?” He said: “No; that is what the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) enjoined upon us.”

This indicates that when lands are far apart, each land has its own sighting, and it is not obligatory for everyone to fast when one land sees the moon.

And Allaah knows best.