50522 - They live in Holland – with whom should they start fasting?

the question

I live in Holland, and the people differed concerning the first day of Ramadaan. Some fasted with Egypt, and some waited until the announcement came from the Arabian Peninsula. What is the correct view?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

According to sharee'ah, the onset of Ramadaan cannot be proven except by sighting the new moon, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Fast when you see it and break the fast when you see it." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1909; Muslim, 1081. There is no room for the use of astronomical calculations in proving the onset of the month.

Undoubtedly the moon sighting varies from one country to another – especially those that are far away from one another. The dispute is not about differences in moon sighting, for no one disputes that. Rather the dispute is whether the differences in moon sighting have any effect on proving that Ramadaan has begun from one country to another.

Secondly:

If Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries have an Islamic organization or council to whom they can refer and depend on their moon sighting to confirm that the month has begun and ended, then the Standing Committee has issued a fatwa stating that this council comes under the same ruling as an Islamic government for those Muslims, so they must follow them with regard to the beginning and end of the month.

The details of this are given in the answer to question no. 1248.

But if they do not have an Islamic organization, there is no sin on them if they follow a country that they trust, which follows the moonsighting according to sharee'ah, not astronomical calculations, so they start and end the fast with that country.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about a person who was staying in Spain during Ramadaan and fasted according to the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries. He replied:

What you have mentioned about your fasting with us and breaking the fast with us, because you are staying in Spain during Ramadaan, there is nothing wrong with that and there is no sin on you. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Fast when you see it (the new moon) and stop fasting when you see it, and if it is cloudy and you cannot see it, then complete the number of days as thirty." This is general in meaning and applies to all of the ummah. The Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries is most deserving to be followed because they strive to rule according to sharee'ah – may Allaah increase them in guidance – and because you are staying in a country which is not ruled by Islam and its people do not pay any attention to Islamic rulings. End quote.

Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn Baaz, 15/105

For more information please see the answers to questions no. 1226, 12660 and 1602.

And Allaah knows best.