

Points of Benefit Regarding Al-Qiblah

Rulings on facing the *Qiblah* in the Prayers

Prepared by
Saleh As-Saleh

Based upon several talks
& *Fatawaas* by our Sh.
Muhammad bin Salih Al-'Uthaimen (*rahimahullaah*)

Transcribed by sis Umm 'Ali, Haleima el Amazighia,
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Rulings on Facing the Qiblah in the Prayers

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. I testify that there is no true god worthy of worship except Allaah and that Muhammad is Allaah's true slave and Messenger.

The subject for this night, the night of the 12th of the month of Safar year 1426 AH corresponding to the night of the 12th of March 2006, is Al-Qiblah and rulings on facing the Qiblah in the prayers.

The Qiblah is the Ka'bah. And when the Prophet (ﷺ: *sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) came to Madeenah - following his migration - he used to direct himself in the prayers in the direction of *Bayt ul-Maqdis* (Jerusalem). Because he used to like to agree with the people of the Book in that where there is no command to do otherwise. Then afterwards, he (ﷺ) was commanded to oppose them and he disliked to agree with them. He stayed facing *Bayt ul-Maqdis* for a period of 16 or 17 months while yearning for Allaah (ﷻ: *Subhanahu wa Ta'aalaa*) to command him to direct himself facing the Ka'bah in the Salaat. This is proven in the verse in Surah Al-Baqarah:

(قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ) [البقرة، ١٤٤].

“Verily! We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's ﷺ) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid-al-Haraam (at Makkah). And wheresoever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction.”
(Al-Baqarah 2:144).

The people were praying in the *Masjid of Qubah* in Madeenah - this was a known place in the city of Madeenah - the Masjid to which Allaah (ﷻ) referred as a *Masjid of Taqwaa* as in Surah At-Tawbah:

(لَمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَّطَّهَرُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ) [التوبة، ١٠٨] (

“Verily, the mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety is more worthy that you stand therein (to pray).” (At-Tawbah 9:108)

So while they were praying *Salaat-us-Subh* (the Salaah of Fajr) a man came from outside Madeenah and said that Quranic revelation had been sent down to the Prophet (ﷺ) and that he was commanded to direct his face in the direction of Al-Ka'bah in Makkah. The people's faces originally were in the direction of Ash-Shaam (the greater Syria area around Jerusalem) so they turned in the other direction with their faces towards the Ka'bah and their backs towards Ash-Shaam. So in this narration, we learn an important benefit:

"A Qur-aan was sent down tonight upon him."

This is a proof that Allaah (ﷻ) is above everything. And in this also there is another important benefit and that is the acceptance of the news of a single person, because the companions turned into the direction of Al-*Qiblah* of Makkah when they heard the news from a single companion. Regarding these news of religious type, the 'Ulamaa say "sufficient is the Khabr - the report - of one person". So if someone tells you that the sun has set - and he is trustworthy – then take by his report and break your fast if you were fasting and make *Salaat-ul-Maghrib*, because the report of a single person in matters of Deen is acceptable.

The question is: What is to be faced?

If the person is able to see the Ka'bah, then it is obligatory upon him to face it itself, in essence. But if he is unable to see it then the obligation is to face its direction. There is a mistake by many people who pray in the Haraam itself: they do not direct themselves to the Ka'bah itself. And this is a great danger because this necessitates the invalidity of their Salaah. As to the person who is unable to see the Ka'bah, then the obligation is to face in its direction.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said to the people in Madeenah: between the East and the West there is *Qiblah*. Why? Because Madeenah falls North of Makkah. Now you try to imagine the directions. Madeenah falls North of Makkah, so therefore if the North is the position of Madeenah, then the direction of the *Qiblah* for the people in Madeenah is between the East and the West.

Therefore if you incline slightly from the exact direction you are still in the wider direction, so this does not harm you. And the more you are far away from the Ka'bah, the wider the direction becomes. And the closer you are, the narrower it becomes. So if the city or town falls to the East of Makkah, then between the North and South there is *Qiblah*. And if your place is to the West of Makkah, then between the North and the South there is *Qiblah*.

And this is from the Mercy of Allaah (ﷻ) upon us for making things easy because targeting the essence of the Ka'bah from far away is something very difficult, rather it may be not possible. And so Allaah (ﷻ) made it easy upon us and He made it an obligation for us to face the *Jihaa* - the direction. We go in the direction of the *Qiblah*.

Facing the *Qiblah* is a condition for the validity of the Salaah, except in three cases:

The first exception: Incapacity.

For example, an ill person who can not move and no one can direct him to the *Qiblah*. Then in this case, he directs himself in the direction of his face and the evidence for this is the saying of Allaah (ﷻ):

(فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ) [التغابن، ١٦].

"And fear Allaah to the best of your ability." (At-Taghaabun 64: 16)

And also the saying of Allaah (ﷻ):

(لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا) [البقرة، ٢٨٦].

"Allaah does not burden a soul beyond its scope." (Al-Baqarah 2:286)

And also because of the Prophet's (ﷺ) saying:

"And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can."

[See Bukhari, vol.9, no. 391].

The second exception: Fear - Al-Khawf.

If the person is frightened from something, running away from an enemy for example, and the path he takes is opposite to the direction of the *Qiblah*, then in this case his facing of the *Qiblah* drops because Allaah (ﷻ) says in Surah Al-Baqarah:

(حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ * فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ) [البقرة، ٢٣٨، ٢٣٩]

"Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawaat (the prayers) especially the middle Salaat (i.e. the best prayer 'Asr). And stand before Allaah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salaat (prayers)]. And if you fear (an enemy), perform Salaat (pray) on foot or riding." (Al-Baqarah 2: 238, 239)

This also may fall under the same exception mentioned earlier, meaning incapacity, because the one who is running away from his enemy is unable to face the *Qiblah*. And if he would stop to face the *Qiblah*, then his enemy may take him over.

The third exception: The optional prayer while travelling.

The traveller may initiate his prayer by directing himself to the *Qiblah*, then goes with the direction of his face on his mount, whether in a car, on a camel, on a horse, boarding a plane, and on a ship. The Prophet (ﷺ) did that when he prayed the optional prayers. But he did not pray the Fard - the obligatory one - on his mount. And the wisdom from this is making the *Naafila* (the optional prayer) easy for people to conclude and to conduct. If it is possible on the other hand, like when someone is in a train, and it is not difficult for him to direct himself towards the *Qiblah*, then he does so - even in the optional prayer. But if it is difficult, then he takes the direction of his face.

What is the way to verify the direction of the *Qiblah*? What is the way to know the *Qiblah*?

If the person is in a city or town he may verify the *Qiblah* by way of the Masaajid (the mosques), because the direction of the mosques are in the direction of the *Qiblah*. And if he is travelling on a journey, he may use the sun and the moon as his marks for direction towards the *Qiblah*, because the sun and the moon arise from the East and set in the West.

So, if he is in an area which is exactly North of Makkah, and he intends to direct himself to the *Qiblah*, then he puts the direction of the rising of the sun to his left. And if he is exactly South of Makkah, he takes the direction of the sunrise to his right. And if he is exactly West of Makkah, then he makes the direction of the sunrise in front of him. And if he is exactly East of Makkah, then he puts it behind him. This is during the daylight.

What about during the night? In this case he takes the mark of the stars. For example, one of those stars is the North Star - the clear one. So, if you were in the East of Makkah, then the North Star will be to the back of your right ear. And if you were North, then you stand with the North Star behind you, and you position yourself according to the North Star for other directions.

Important rulings concerning the *Qiblah*.

First, the one who is incapacitated and cannot face the *Qiblah* and has no one to direct him to it in Salaah, then he may pray in the direction of his face, even though the *Qiblah* may be in the opposite direction.

Second, with respect to the person on a journey it is better for him to initiate his Salaah, open his Salaah, by directing himself to the *Qiblah*. Then he directs himself in the direction of his face while he is on his mount (car, or in a plane). If a person is in a plane and wants to perform Nafl-Prayer, then he may do so on his chair in any direction the plane goes.

But if he intends to perform the Fareedah Prayer and the plane would not arrive to its destination before the end of the prescribed time, then in this case he prays in the

plane and directs himself to the *Qiblah* to the best of his ability. And he should not delay the Salaah beyond its prescribed time, because this is forbidden.

For example, you are in a plane after the commencement of Salaatul 'Asr time, and you are going from West to East and you fear that if you delay the Salaah, then the sun will set before your arrival to the airport. In this case you pray the Salaah on its time and direct yourself to the *Qiblah* to the best of your ability because Allaah (ﷻ) said:

(فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ) [التغابن، ١٦].

"And fear Allaah to the best of your ability." (At-Taghaabun 64: 16)

What is the ruling of slight inclination away from the direction of the *Qiblah*?

This does not affect the Salaah in places other than in Al-Masjid Al-Haraam. In the Sacred Mosque, however, and with the possibility of seeing the Ka'bah, if you incline away from it then your Salaah is nullified because the obligation is to direct yourself to the essence of the Ka'bah itself. But if you are far away and it is not possible to see the Ka'bah or there is hardship in seeing it, then in this case this slight inclination is not harmful.

What about in case the Masjid itself is inclined away from the direction of the *Qiblah*?

Here, if the inclination does not take the person totally off the direction, then it is not harmful. But if it takes him totally off from the direction of the *Qiblah*, for example, if he is directing himself to the direction of South, while the *Qiblah* is in the direction of the East, there is no doubt that in this situation the direction of the Masjid must be adjusted, or the person must direct himself in the direction of the *Qiblah*, even though he may differ from the direction of the Masjid itself.

What about if a person prays to other than the direction of the *Qiblah*, meaning the Ka'bah?

Case 1: situation where it is not possible to know the *Qiblah*. For example, a person is on a journey and the sky is very cloudy and he does not know the positions of the stars at night and there is no one to ask about the *Qiblah* and so he is unable to know its direction. In this case he prays by exerting the effort to the best of his ability. Then if afterwards it becomes known to him that he prayed to other than the *Qiblah*, then there is nothing upon him.

Case 2: It is possible to ask about the *Qiblah*, as in a town or a city where there are Muslims, but the person was negligent and careless. Then he must make up the prayers which he made in a direction other than the direction of the *Qiblah*, whether he learns of his mistake before the end of the prescribed time or afterwards. However if the inclination is slight, then there is nothing harmful.

Case 3: If someone says that he rented a house or a home, and he prayed therein for ten years or so, and afterwards it became apparent that he prayed to other than the Ka'bah direction, then in this case he should make up Salaah, because he was negligent. He should have asked. And the ruling is that the one who abandons the command is not sinful if he abandons it due to ignorance, but it is a must upon him to make it up, in this case the Salaah.

Case 4: A group of people praying in a Masjid and in the *Qiblah* of the Masjid there is a bathroom area, is the Salaah valid?

The answer is yes, it is valid because of the Hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ):

"The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform Tayammum, therefore anyone of my followers can pray wherever the time of a prayer is due." [See Bukhari, vol. 1, no. 331]

However, there could be some bad smells coming out from these places, which may affect the person in the prayer and distract him.

Case 5: In some situations during the winter time, they put some electric heaters, or the like facing the front row, is this lawful or disliked?

The scholars (*rahimahumullaah*) disagreed regarding the prayers in the direction of fire. Some considered this *makrooh*'- disliked. Others didn't. Those who considered it to disliked, argued that in this there could be resemblance to those people who worshipped the fire, from the Magians and the like. However, it is known that those who worshipped the fire, they worshipped the one that had flames. This entails that the flameless fire is not to be disliked. And people need these electrical heaters during the winter times.

And Allaah, the Most High, Knows Best

Note: These points of benefit regarding this matter were based upon the discussions of our Shaykh (*rahimahullaah*), in more than one of his classes.

All Praise is due to Allaah, and may Allaah's Salaah and Salaam be upon our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his pure household, the noble companions, and those who follow on their Path. Aameen,

Saleh As-Saleh

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