

Arab Republic of Egypt

Ministry of Awqaf

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Changing the *Qiblah* (Direction of Prayer): Lessons and Insights

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, Who says in His Ever Glorious Book to His Prophet, “**Your Lord will surely give you so much that you will be well satisfied.**” I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. May Allah’s Peace and Blessings be upon him, his Household, Companions and upon those who follow their path to the Day of Judgment.

There is no doubt that changing the *Qiblah* (direction of Prayer) was one of the most important events in the life of our Prophet (PBUH), the lives of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) and the history of our Muslim nation. Our Prophet (PBUH) continued to pray towards Al-Aqsa Mosque for sixteen months, but he hoped that his *Qiblah* would be towards the first house of worship established for people on earth; the Sacred House of Allah in Mecca. Therefore, the Prophet (PBUH) used to keep looking into the heaven in contemplation, hoping that this wish will be achieved. Upon this, the Divine Grace descended as the Almighty Allah said, “Many a time We have seen you [Prophet] turn your face towards Heaven, so We are turning you towards a prayer direction that pleases you. Turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces to it.”

This incident implied great lessons, including: highlighting the standing of the beloved Prophet (PBUH) and showing his great status with his Lord,

as the Almighty Allah blessed His Prophet by fulfilling his wish as Allah said, **“So We are turning you towards a prayer direction that pleases you,”** and said, **“Your Lord will surely give you so much that you will be well satisfied.”**

These lessons also imply that: showing of reality of the hypocrite people at every time and place, and warning against their evil, as the Glorious Qur'an spoke of their skepticism in the matter of changing the Prayer direction, when they said: **“What has turned them away from the prayer direction they used to face?”** Upon this, the response came from the Heavens as Allah replied them saying, **“Say, ‘East and West belong to God. He guides whoever He will to the right way.’”**

The lesson of perfect response to Allah and His Messenger (PBUH) is evident in the response of the people of the *Qibaa* Mosque, as when they were informed that the Prophet (PBUH) had been commanded to turn his face in Prayer towards the Ka'bah they turned themselves also to it while they were still in their prayer, a matter manifesting their strong faith. Ibn Umar said, “While the people were performing the Fajr prayer in Qubā' Mosque, someone came saying: ‘Tonight, (a portion of the) Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH), and he was ordered to face the Ka'bah, so face it.’ They faces were facing the Levant, so they turned towards the Ka'bah.”

The true believers were absolutely certain that everything that the Prophet (PBUH) brought was an undoubtful truth, as they asserted: We hear and we obey. They turned during their prayers to the Ka'bah without hesitation, in response to Allah's command, without even waiting until they complete their prayers! Instead, they immediately changed their direction while they were in their *Rukou'* (bowing down).

One of the lessons drawn from changing the direction of Prayer (*Qiblah*) is to show the status of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the heart and conscience of the

nation. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the second mosque founded in the earth, and the third sacred mosque next to the two Holy Mosques. Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) once asked the Prophet (PBUH) saying, "O Messenger Allah's! Which mosque was first built on the surface of the earth?" He said, "The Holy Mosque (in Mecca)." I said, "Which was built next?" He replied "Al-Aqsa mosque." Al-Aqsa Mosque is also the land of resurrection. Once, Maymuna Bint Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "O Prophet of Allah, tell us about *Bayt al-Maqdis*." So he said, "The land of resurrection and gathering. Visit it and pray in it since praying one prayer in it is like a thousand prayers in other Mosques" It is also the destination of the Prophet (PBUH) on the Night of *al-Israa and al-Mi'raj*.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds; may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his companions and followers:

Among the lessons drawn from this occasion is showing the goodness of the nation of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as this nation will be a witness over all other nations. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Noah and his nation will come (on the Day of Resurrection and Allah will ask (Noah), 'Did you convey (the Message)?' He will reply, 'Yes, O my Lord!' Then Allah will ask Noah's nation, 'Did Noah convey My Message to you?' They will reply, 'No, no prophet came to us.' Then Allah will ask Noah, 'Who will stand a witness for you?' He will reply, 'Muhammad and his followers (will stand witness for me).' So, I and my followers will stand as witnesses for him (that he conveyed Allah's Message).' That is, (the interpretation) of the Statement of Allah: "Thus we have made you a just and the best nation that you might be witnesses over mankind."

How much do we need to learn from the incident of changing the *Qiblah* the lesson of changing from bad morals to good ones, and from everything that displeases Allah, the Almighty, to everything that pleases Him and achieves us happiness in this world and the Hereafter. We need to turn from evil to what is good, from selfishness to altruism, from stinginess to generosity and giving, from attachment to the world to the preparation for the Hereafter, from ignorance to knowledge, from discontent to satisfaction and patience, and from despair to hope.

O Allah, protect our homeland and raise its flag high among all countries
of the world!