

Tafseer Al-Baqarah (2: 142-145)

From the Book, Introduction to the Tafseer of the Quran,

**by the Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir, the eminent jurist and statesman, Sheikh
Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah:**

“(142. The fools (idolators, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say: "What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah prayer direction (towards Jerusalem) to which they used to face in prayer." Say (O Muhammad): "To Allah belong both, east and the west. He guides whom He wills to the straight way.”)

(143. Thus We have made you a just Ummah, that you be witnesses over mankind and the Messenger (Muhammad) be a witness over you. And We made the Qiblah which you used to face, only so We know those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad) from those who would turn on their heels. Indeed it was heavy except for those whom Allah guided. And Allah would never make your Imaan (prayers) to be lost (i.e., your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allah is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind.)

(144. Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) 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-Haram (at Makkah). And wherever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction. Certainly, those who were given the Book (i.e., Jews and Christians) know well that, that (your turning towards the direction of the Ka`bah at Makkah in prayers) is the truth from their Lord. And Allah does not overlook what they do).

(145. Verily, even if you were to bring to the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) all the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), they would not follow your Qiblah, nor are you going to follow their Qiblah. And they will not follow each other's Qiblah. Verily, if you follow their desires after that which you have received of knowledge (from Allah), then indeed you would be one of the wrongdoers.)” [Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 142-145]

Allah (swt) clarifies in these Ayaat the following:

1. It seems that these selected Ayaat are not presented in order of revelation, with a **(idolators, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say: "What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah prayer direction (towards Jerusalem) to which they used to face in prayer."**

As the Ayaat were revealed upon RasulAllah (saaw), he ordered the writing of the revelation, and he clarified to the Muslims any Ayah's place in terms of its order in relation to other Ayaat in its Surah. So he (saw) said, «ضعوا هذه الآية في مكان كذا من سورة كذا» **"Put this ayah in such a place within such a Surah."** And so the order of the Ayaat maybe in accordance to the order of revelation or not, according to the wisdom that Allah (swt) saw fit.

death among you and leave wives behind - they, [the wives, shall] wait four months and ten [days]." [Surah al-Baqarah 2:234]. The first Ayah is abrogated by the second Ayah, noting that the second Ayah is before the first Ayah in the order of the Quran i.e. the order in the Quran copy is the reverse of the sequence of Revelation.

(idolators, hypocrites, and Jews) among the people will say: "What has turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah prayer direction (towards Jerusalem) to which they used to face in prayer," and the meaning of this Ayah necessitates that this saying is after the **(Muhammad's) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you."**

The bringing forward and delay is not without a wise purpose, appropriate when accounting for the language of the Arabs. When we scrutinize the matter, we outweigh that the bringing forward was to make prominent the reality of those fools who object to the rule of Allah (swt), for the truthful sincere believers receive the commands of Allah (swt) without the **for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair."** [Surah al-Ahzab 33:36]

Accordingly, Allah (swt) shows in these Ayaat the foolishness of those people who object to the command of Allah (swt) regarding the change in the direction of the Qiblah, and that the issue that demands examination was not that Allah (swt) abrogates a command and brought another command, but the issue that demands inquiry was the objection of the command of Allah (swt). As for the change in the direction of the Qiblah, it is within the domain of Allah (swt), for Allah (swt) is the owner of the East and the West and imposes within His dominion as He pleases. So if he makes the direction to this way or another, then **about what He does, but they will be questioned."** [Surah al-Anbiyyah 21:23]

Thus the command of Allah (swt) is the Truth and the Guidance, such that the one who **way."** So whosoever objects to the command of Allah (swt) and fabricates against it, is a fool

whose reason is in flight and is from those who are destroyed.

light (خفيف khafeef) in reasoning, the rejecter of pondering. In origin “the fool” is lightness (خفة khifah) from their speech (of the Arabs) the light dress (ثوب سفيفه thawb safiyah) i.e. lightly woven (خفيف النسج khafeef un-nasj), and here السّفهاء a(l)s-sufahaao is appended the letters Alif **turned them (Muslims) from their Qiblah prayer direction.**” The fabricators, the foolish, here are the Jews, the hypocrites and the mushrikeen and all those who are counted amongst them.

a direction and it has a Shar'i (Legal) meaning which is the direction to which a Muslim faces during Salah.

2. Then Allah (swt) informs us that the command is for Him, before and after, not a reversal of His rule, and that He is the Master of favor and kindness. So, just as He favored the Muslims by responding to His Messenger (saaw) and making al-Bayt ul-Haram their Qiblah, Allah swt favored the Ummah of Muhammad (saaw) and by making her an Ummah of justice over other peoples, a witness over all the people. So Allah (swt) made her by this description the just Ummah i.e. the Ummah of justice to be worthy as a witness over all people, wherein justice is the basic requirement for witness.

As for (الأمة الوسط) in the Arabic language, it is the best and the best from the people in justice.

According to the "Language of the Arabs": The middle of a thing is the most favored of it and its best is, just as the middle of the pasture is better than both its sides of it and thus the saying "The best of the matters is its middle."

thus we made you a just Ummah” i.e. most just, and the master of the language adds "This is the interpretation of middle and its reality and its meaning."

Thus the meaning of the Ayah is that the Islamic Ummah will be a just witness over other nations, as it conveyed Islam to them. The Ayah came in the Form of Information (صيغة الإخبار Seeghatul Akhbaar), though it is with the Meaning of Demand (معنى الطلب Ma'anat Talab) from Allah (swt) of the Islamic Ummah to convey Islam to other nations, and if it did not do so, it **“to be a witness over humankind”** just as RasulAllah (saaw) is an evidence over the **the Rasul is a witness over you.”**

This is from the aspect of the Islamic Ummah being a just witness over other nations after Islam in terms of conveying Islam to those nations. From another aspect, the Ummah is a just witness over other nations before Islam, in terms of the conveying by the previous Prophets of the Messages of their Lord for their people, as stated in the hadeeth: «جيء النبي يوم القيامة ومعه الرجل والنبي معه الرجلان وأكثر من ذلك فيدعى قومه فيقال لهم هل بلغكم هذا؟ فيقولون: لا. فيقال له: هل بلغت قومك؟ فيقول: نعم. فيقال له: ومن يشهد لك؟ فيقول: محمد وأمته. فيدعى محمد وأمته فيقال لهم: هل بلغ هذا قومه؟ نعم. فيقال: وما علمكم؟ فيقولون: جاءنا نبينا محمد فأخبرنا أن الرسل قد بلغوا فذلك قوله تعالى وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا «A Prophet will arise on Judgment Day, along with a single man with him, and the prophet will arise with only two men and more than that his people will be called and it will be said to them, did these convey to you? They will say: No. Then it will be said to him: Did you convey to your people? He will say: Yes. It will be said to him: And who is a witness for you? He will say: Muhammad and his Ummah. So Muhammad and his Ummah will be asked and it will be said to them: Did he convey to his people? They

will say: Yes. It will be said: What of your information? They will say: Our Prophet Muhammad (saaw) came to us and informed us that the messengers have conveyed and **Messenger may be a witness over you.**”

So the Islamic Ummah is a just witness: on other nations after Islam and before Islam, in the manner described above.

Similarly, Allah (swt) also informs us of the wisdom of imposing the first Qiblah on the Muslims, which is facing the Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, which was to distinguish those who are obedient to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saaw), those who have surrendered to His command and are led by Him so faced their Qiblah as commanded by Allah (swt), from those for whom obedience of the command of Allah (saaw) and the command of His Messenger (swt) is a burden, if it either opposes the custom to which they are used or the desire which their hearts bear. So, Allah (swt) commanded His Messenger (saaw) to where he faces in his Salah and that is towards Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa although he was in Makkah. It was burdensome, except for those who Allah (swt) guided, to face Al-Aqsa and turn away from the Kaaba which was in their midst, which they glorified, made pilgrimages to and which they considered as of the Deen of Ibrahim (as). The facing towards Al-Aqsa in the Salah instead of Al-Baytul Al-Haraam was huge for all, except those who were guided by Allah and were led by Allah (swt) they faced Al-Aqsa, obedient and submissive to the command of their Lord, whom Allah (swt) was pleased and who were pleased with Allah (swt).

Then, Allah (swt), with His compassion and mercy for the believers, accepted from them their prayers to Al-Aqsa, before they turned their Qiblah towards Makkah. The Muslims were afraid that their Salah towards the first Qiblah were not accepted as their Salah towards the second Qiblah, the Ka'abah, so Allah (swt) blessed them with its acceptance and favored **Merciful towards mankind.**”

of the Unseen beyond the reality perceived by you and this is by Contextualization (قرينة) [Surah Hashr 59:22]. So nothing prevents the knowledge of Allah (swt) about something which is not apparent for the people, because Allah (swt) knows beforehand its occurrence **(tests) those of you who performed Jihad and knows (tests) those who are patient**” [Surah Aali-Imran 3:142] i.e. until what Allah (swt) knows of your situation in Jihad and in patience, is disclosed to you.

know" as a matter of metaphor for إضمار "concealment" which is a necessitated evidence for the correctness of the occurring, uttered phrase, when accounting for the Contextualization of the Knowledge of Allah (swt) of the Unseen.

Islam through attachment to the Qiblah of their forefathers and مِنْ "of" is for contrast, to allow **Allah knows the one who means mischief from the one who means good**” [Surah Al-Baqarah 2:220], so the one who means good as opposed to the one who means mischief. **We know those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels.**” So it contrasts "those who would turn on their heels" as opposed to "those who

followed the Messenger.”

before its change and this is a metaphorical inference because Imaan is the reason for the acceptance of Salah. So, if there is no Imaan, Salah is not accepted, even if all its **of righteousness, and perform the Salah and give Zakah, they will have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.**” [Surah al-Baqarah 2:277]

And in the Hadith, **قالوا: يا رسول الله فكيف بالذين ماتوا وهم يصلون إلى بيت المقدس؟ فنزلت** **"that when the Messenger of Allah (saaw) faced the Qiblah –the Ka'bah, they said, "O Messenger of Allah, what of means that their Salah is accepted as a favor from Allah (swt) and mercy.**

3. Allah (swt) clarifies that He responded to RasulAllah (saaw) by directing him to a Qiblah other than Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. The Jews began saying: Muhammad opposes us yet he follows our Qiblah! So he (saaw) desired that Allah (swt) directs him to face the Kaaba, the house that was built by Ibrahim (as) and from where he called the Arabs to Imaan. Bukhari and Muslim narrated in their Sahih that Baraa' said: **صلينا مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد قدومه المدينة ستة عشر شهراً نحو بيت المقدس، ثم علم الله هوى نبيه صلى الله عليه وسلم فنزلت قد نرى تقلب وجهك في السماء فلنولينك قبلة ترضاها فول وجهك شطر المسجد الحرام وحيث ما كنتم فولوا وجوهكم شطره** "We prayed with RasulAllah (saaw) after his arrival to Madinah for sixteen months towards Baytul Maqdis (Al-**“Verily, We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's) 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-Haram (at Makkah).”** So the Qiblah was changed to Al-Baytul ul-Haraam and after the revelation of this Ayah, the Muslims left performing Salah towards Al-Maqdis and began Salah facing towards the Al-Baytul ul-Haraam. And Abu Dawood narrated from Anas (ra): **انه لما نزلت هذه الآية على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من رجل ببني سلمة فناداهم وهم ركوع في صلاة الفجر نحو بيت المقدس: ألا إن القبلة قد حوت إلى الكعبة فمالوا كلهم** "that when this Ayah was revealed upon RasulAllah (saaw) a man of Bani Salamah turned and called to them, whilst they were in Rukuu in Salah of Fajr facing Al-Bayt UI-Maqdis, "not there, the Qiblah has changed to the Ka'aba," so all of them turned their Ruku' to the Kaaba."

It is derived from that that a Singular Narration (خبر الواحد) is evidence for Legal Rulings (احكام شرعية) and it is not said that it is abrogation by single narration of the First Qiblah, **heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you.”** So, indeed what happened was that the conveyance of the Legal Ruling to those performing Salah, was accomplished by a Singular Narration and it is obligatory to follow as it is, as is clear in its appearance within Usool.

Masjid ul-Haraam (the Sacred Mosque) without the Ka'abah is evidence that is obligatory to observe the direction without the eye and that is because the Al-Masjid ul-Haraam encloses **Masjid Al-Haram to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa.”** Indeed RasulAllah (saaw) was taken on the Night

Journey from Makkah and not from inside Al-Masjid ul-Haraam itself! It follows from this that Al-Bayt ul-Haraam (the Sacred House), the Kaaba, is a Qiblah for those who see it and know its direction by sight. The direction of the Sacred Mosque is sufficient as a Qiblah for the residents of the Sacred Precinct, who do not see the Kaaba, but they know the direction of the Sacred Mosque and so this is for each of those knowing its direction, such as RasulAllah (saaw) who knew by Revelation, even if he did not live in the Sacred Precinct. And in the direction of the Sacred Land - Makkah – is enough as a Qiblah for the other regions.

changes it to the past tense, as long as it relates to an event in the past or in the recent past. **tight**". Surah al-Hijr: 97, i.e. I knew.

4. Indeed Allah (swt) informs us that the Jews and Christians know that this change from the First Qiblah to the Second Qiblah is the Truth, because they are certain that Muhammad (saaw) is the Prophet mentioned in their books, who would pray to two Qiblahs, so they perceive that what he recites from his Lord is the Truth, in which there is no doubt.

Then Allah (swt) concluded the Ayah by saying that He knows what they know and He does not overlook it and accounts them for it, as well as for what they deny regarding RasulAllah (saaw), whether it is the change to the new Qiblah or other than that. Allah (swt) will hold them accountable and punish them with the punishment that they deserve, for Allah **does not overlook anything of what they do.**"

scholars of the People of the Book - rabbis and priests – with the Contextualization (قرينة) so these are the scholars of the People of the Book, who read it and know whatever is in it.

5. Allah (swt) makes clear in the last verse that the rabbis and priests referred to in the previous verse will never follow the Qiblah of Muslims, whatsoever the evidence held before them, because they did not violate the Qiblah through doubt removed by evidence or confirmation - for they know this in their Books - rather they do not follow it through sheer stubbornness and arrogance, and are the like of those whom evidence does not benefit. And, here arises the question: how do some of them believe? This is because the Ayah is about the scholars at the time of the RasulAllah (saaw), who denied stubbornly and arrogantly, and did not believe, despite knowing that it is the Truth. This does not include other than them from the common ranks of Jews and Christians and does not deny the possibility of Imaan within some of them.

Then Allah (swt) informs His Messenger (saaw) that he will not follow their Qiblah for he (saaw) is upon the Truth, and the Truth that was revealed upon him does not follow their desires. And at the same time, neither of them will ever follow the other Qiblah and each of them clings to his Qiblah, without clear conclusive evidence for that, and so he will not change, no matter what evidence was brought before him.

And thus, Allah (swt) addresses His Messenger (saaw) that if he were to follow their desires by following their religion after the Truth that came to him, then he would be of the oppressors who misplace the Truth.

Scripture." Here the Laam (ل) is the preposition for an oath.

“they will not follow your Qiblah” the answer to the oath is obstructively preventing a conditional answer, because in origin the oath (Laam of Qasm) is a preposition for the conditionality **إن** (if). Thus the answer to the oath is rendered without a condition, according to the language, and in particular because **فا** (ف) of continuity does not exist in the answer.

“And they will not follow each other's Qiblah.” Both these denials are more emphatic **“they will not follow your Qiblah”** because it is in verbal form whereas the nominal form is more emphatic in denial. And in this is an indicating evidence that the number of Jews and Christians becoming Muslim since his mission (saaw) is much greater than either the Muslims apostatizing to Christianity and Judaism or the Jews becoming Christians or the Christians becoming Jews.

“Verily, if you follow their desires” **أن** (that) here is that of supposition with the **“their desires”** here refers to what they said to RasulAllah (saaw): "Go back to our Qiblah, so we believe in you and we will follow you," such was their deception, may Allah (swt) curse them.

“then you would be one of the wrongdoers” **إن** (then) is the supposition of the extent of the great oppression that the believer would partake in, if he were to follow the Qiblah of the Jews or Christians. So the meaning is: you O Muhammad (saaw) would partake in a great injustice if imposed upon and followed their Qiblah, after what came to you of knowledge. So this is to indicate the severity of the oppression in following the Qiblah of the Jews and Christians, as the Truth is to follow that Qiblah which Allah (swt) clarified for His Messenger (saaw), which is towards the Sacred Mosque.

“nor are you going to follow their Qiblah.” Qiblah is in the singular form even there are two, one Qiblah for the Jews and one Qiblah for the Christians. **بتابع قبلتيهم** "follow their two Qiblahs" is rejected because their two Qiblahs are brought together in invalidity and so both became one and in particular it is a better comparison with the singular "your Qiblah" in His **“nor are you going to follow their Qiblah.”**