

Fatwa From Al-Azhar University, Egypt - 1:

English Translation of the Ruling of the President of the Honorable al-Azhar University, Dr. 'Abdul-Fattah al-Husayniee ash-Sheikh.

In the name of Allah the Merciful to the believers and non-believers in this world, the Merciful to the believers only in the next world

University of al- 'Azhar
Office of the President of the University

Mr. Muhammad Hammadi,

As-Sa/amu Aalaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Thereafter, in reference to the request that was sent to us in which you requested guiding you to the correct direction of al-Qiblah in the city of Montreal -

Kindly note that your request was transferred to Dr. Jamal-ud-Din Al-Fandi, Professor of Astronomy and member of the Islamic Research Convention, and he advised us with the following –

1. The mathematical formulas for the triangular spherical computations are all sound.
2. The application that appeared in your request is wrong, since it was necessary to subtract the resulting figure from 180 degrees in compliance with the mathematical rules.
3. The reasoning shown in your request is scientifically wrong and is discarded. Accordingly, the direction of al-Qiblah in the city of Montreal is at an angle of 180 degrees minus 58 degrees, which is 122 degrees from due north, and it is southeast.

Please accept ample salutations and as-salamu alaikum wwa rahmahtullah wa barakatuh.

President of al-'Azhar University

A.D. Abdul-Fattah 1413AH
Dated 09/09/1992

SRLNO of letter 859
8 September 1992

Fatwa From Al-Azhar University, Egypt – 3:

Translation of the Response of his Eminence, the great Imam, the Shaykh of al- 'Azhar

Al-'Azhar
The Office of the Great Imam
The Sheikh of al-'Azhar

Praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds, and may Allah raise the rank of Prophet Muhammad (may Allah Ta'ala bless him and give him peace) and protect his nation from that which he fears for it. Thereafter,

The letter of the engineer Mr. Muhammad Hammadi from Montreal was received at the office of his Eminence, the Great Imam, and it contained the following:

"Since Islam entered their country, the Muslims in Canada took the southeast as the direction of their Qiblah, and they based their Maharib accordingly.

Ten or fifteen years ago, some brothers introduced that the direction of al-Qiblah should be northeast, because it is the shorter distance of the two to al-Ka'bah. As a result, the Muslims were divided, praying toward two Qiblahs. They were divided despite that it was proven to some of those who ruled with the northeast direction, who retracted their statement, that they were mistaken and despite that all the studies agreed that the first direction (i.e. toward southeast) is correct.

Your Eminence, we hope that you would decisively put a end to this tribulation among the Muslims."

THE REPLY:

Among the pre-requisites for the validity of the prayer (whether optional or obligatory) is to direct oneself toward al-Ka'bah for those who are outside of Makkah, as long as they are safe and are able to do so. This has been confirmed by the Book of Allah, the Sunnah and al-'ijma (consensus).

As to the Book of Allah, in Suratul-Baqarah, 'Ayah 150 –

﴿ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ

شَطْرَهُ. ﴿١٥٠﴾

"So from when so ever thou startest forth, turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; and wheresoever ye are, turn your face in that direction."

What is meant by the Sacred Mosque is al-Ka'bah itself.

As to the Sunnah, it was narrated by Imqm Muslim that the Prophet, (may Allah Ta'ala bless him and give him peace) said – "If you stand up for prayer, perform your complete wudu' then face the Qiblah and say Allahu 'akbar." The 'ijma of the Muslims (i.e., the Muslim scholars) has been established in that regard.

The basis in that it is obligatory to face the Qiblah in prayers is what was narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim from the route of al-Bara' ibn Azib, may Allah reward them, that when the Prophet (may Allah Ta'ala bless him and give him peace), arrived in Madinah, he prayed toward Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) sixteen or seventeen months and that he had liked that his Qiblah was toward al-Bayt. Also, the first prayer he performed was al-Asr and a group of people prayed with him. One of them passed by a group of people in a mosque who were in ruku' in prayer and

be said - "By Allah I bear witness that I have prayed with the Messenger of Allah, toward Makkah. All of them turned toward the House (Ka'bah)."

CASES EXCLUDED FROM FACING AL-QIBLAH

The scholars excluded the obligation of facing the Qiblah two cases of prayers. The first is the case of extreme fear. The second is the case of the optional prayer while traveling while riding an animal.

Upon reviewing what was written on the subject of the direction of the Qiblah in Canada, the rules dictate that the correct direction of the Qiblah is the direction of "**Southeast**". It is the correct continual line of the Qiblah from the location of the Mosque.

As to the shortness of the northeast line, this is usable for traveling to it, but not in taking it as the Qiblah. Allah is the One Who guides and Allah knows best.

This is the fatwa of His Eminence, the Great Imam, the Shaykh of al-'Azhar that we convey to you.

Signed by

The Chairman of the Central Directorate
of the Office of the Great Imam
the Sheikh of al-'Azhar
Muhammad Yusuf 'Afifee.