

From the USA, Qiblah is South of East

Qiblah

The word Qiblah in the Quran (2:142-145) means, ‘The direction one faces during the Contact Prayers (Salat).’ This “direction” is towards the Ka’bah (Sacred Masjid) built by Prophet Abraham in Mecca. The Ka’bah serves as an organizational point of reference for Submitters (Muslims) to face towards whenever they observe their Contact Prayers, from wherever they may be around the world.

[2:125] We have rendered the shrine (the Ka’bah) a focal point for the people, and a safe sanctuary. You may use Abraham's shrine as a prayer house. We commissioned Abraham and Ismail: “You shall purify My house for those who visit, those who live there, and those who bow and prostrate.”

From the USA, the direction to face towards the Ka’bah is slightly South of East, not Northeast. This article is to help Submitters understand why South of East is the right direction and not get confused or misled by explanations that advocate a Northeast direction.

Knowing why South of East (henceforth referred to as Southeast for brevity) is the correct direction to face towards the Ka’bah from the USA is easy and does not involve any complex calculations, nor does it require any advanced scientific knowledge. All you need to understand is some basic concepts and God willing, the direction will become obvious to you. To begin with, you must know that the essential difference between the two directions is that the Southeast Qiblah requires you to face directly towards the Ka’bah (at Mecca) along a straight and constant line of direction through the earth. The Northeast Qiblah works on the belief that you can only face the Ka’bah along a path that is above the surface of the earth, and offers alternative methods based on shortest surface distances or following the angle of sight to the sun.

Pages 1-23 provide a detailed explanation of why Southeast is the right direction and why Northeast is not. If you do not wish to study all the details, the Quick Reference Summary on pages 24-30 (no illustrations or verses), can help you get a basic understanding of this subject.

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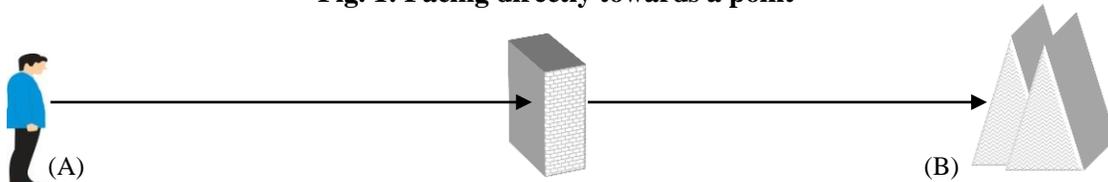
1. All illustrations are indicative and not to scale.
2. ‘Dashed lines’ in all diagrams are to be considered as lines going through the earth.
3. All verses quoted in this document are from ‘Quran, The Final Testament,’ Authorized English Version, Translated from the Original, by Rashad Khalifa, Ph.D. Some verses may be quoted in part to focus on the context relevant to the point being discussed.

Section 1: Directions, routes & facing towards points

A **direction** is essentially a line or path leading from one point to another and this line can be of two shapes. One is a straight line of constant direction, which is the shortest and most direct relationship possible between two points (●—●). The other is a line that is not straight but turns in different directions from the start point to the end point (●—~—●).

To **face towards** a fixed point, you can only do so by looking straight towards it. It is not necessary for you to make eye contact with the point, because the requirement is only to face towards the point, not actually see it. For example, suppose you were looking straight at a mountain in the distance and a wall was constructed in between you and the mountain. Though you would no longer be able to see the mountain, you would still be ‘facing towards it’ along a straight and constant line of direction through the wall (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Facing directly towards a point

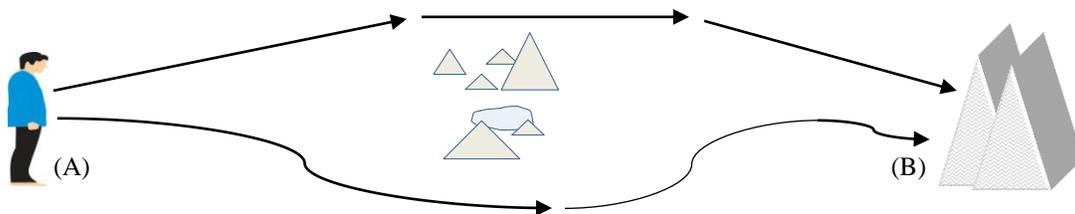


The person at (A) is ‘facing towards’ the mountain (B), even without being able to see it.

It is very important to understand that you cannot face towards a fixed point by turning your face in more than one direction. If you turn your face in any direction other than straight towards the point, you will face other points, but you will definitely not be facing towards the original fixed point any longer.

The only way it is possible to face in multiple directions towards a fixed point, is if you physically move along a path of changing direction towards it. When you move along this path, each time it changes direction, you will also turn and face in that changed direction, until you finally reach the end point. Therefore, what you will really be doing is not facing directly towards the end point, but facing in various directions while travelling along the path leading up to it (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: Facing in many directions on a path leading to a point



If the person physically travels from point (A) to (B), he will face in many different directions along the way before he finally arrives at (B).

A **route** is the total description of the path you physically move or travel along from one point to another. For example, the driving route of a road journey between two cities. This path may be straight or may turn in different directions before reaching the end point.

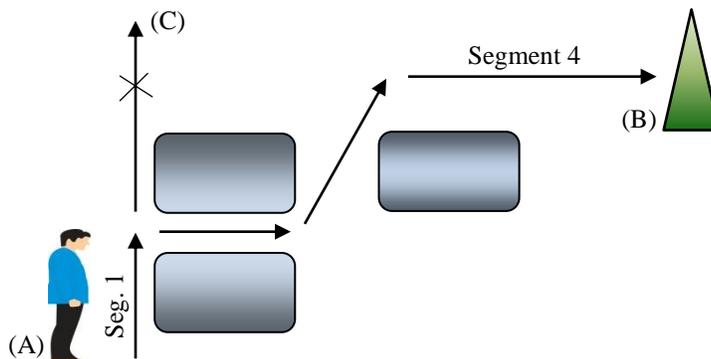
When expressing routes and directions, you have to use the right words to define what you mean because there is a difference between (1) the simple direction between two places and (2) the direction of the physical path of travel between them.

1) The simple direction from one place to another is defined by the positional relationship between the two places along a straight line. For example, ‘from point A, point B is on the right’ or, ‘F is to the west of G’ or, ‘X is south of Y.’ Describing the positional relationship of two places like this is always very simple and minimal as there is always only one straight direction involved. (→ ↗ ↖)

2) If you have to provide the direction/s to physically travel between two places, then it involves more details, as you have to mention all the changes in direction along the path. For example, ‘start out left, then take a right southwards, finally head out east,’ and so on. Each of these changing directions is a ‘direction segment’ of the path, and all these segments together make up the entire route. (— ↘ →)

When defining a route or direction of travel between two points, you have to mention all the direction segments of the path in between. You cannot isolate any one segment of the path and define the entire route by the direction of that segment alone. For example, let us suppose that the path of travel between two places starts out left, then turns right, then diagonally up, and finally right. Because the path starts out left, it doesn’t mean that the direction of the entire route is left. Left is only the *initial direction* of the path of travel between the two places. If someone is just told to go left without being told about the other direction segments, he will never reach the desired destination point. Instead, he will end up at a totally unplanned location (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3: The description of a route must mention all the direction segments of the path



Directing the person at (A) to travel left, then right, then diagonally up, then right is the correct description of the route, as it will get him to point (B).

However, if the person is only told that the direction to (B) is ‘left’ (which is the initial direction of the path), he will end up at point (C), not (B).

Facing towards a city

God willing, let us now apply these definitions to appreciate the difference between just ‘facing towards’ a city versus ‘direction/s of travel’ to it. When you look at the map below (Fig. 4), you will see that the simple direction from Milwaukee to Rochester is almost East along a straight line connecting the two (about 520 miles apart). However, if you had to travel by car from Milwaukee to Rochester, you would not be able to drive in a straight line because the road turns in various directions around lakes and mountains along the way (for about 690 miles).

Fig. 4: Facing directly towards a city v/s direction of a travel path to it



So if you were at Milwaukee and asked to point/face towards Rochester, you would have to face towards the east because that is the actual position of Rochester in relation to Milwaukee. But if you were asked to describe the driving route between Milwaukee and Rochester, you would have to mention all the direction segments in it, something like, ‘120 miles south through Chicago, then east to Cleveland for about 320 miles, and finally northeast about 250 miles to Rochester.’

As you can see, these are two completely different pieces of information. (1) The first is the simple (constant) direction to a city based on its position in relation to the other city. The description of this direction is always basic and easy like, ‘left,’ ‘right,’ ‘southeast,’ etc. - since there is only one straight direction involved. You also don’t need to actually see or travel towards the destination city to be facing towards it. (2) The second is a series of specific instructions to physically move along a path of travel to the end city like, ‘start south, turn right, then head east, then go up northeast,’ and so on. On this path, you will turn/face in many directions before you finally reach the destination city.

Many people do not realize these differences and invariably end up committing the error of defining the direction to a place, not by the simple direction, but by the initial direction of the travel path to it. For example, the initial direction of the route from Milwaukee to Rochester is south as seen in the map above. But if you just face or travel south, there is no way that you will ever face towards Rochester, because Rochester is to the clear east of Milwaukee. This is exactly the same error committed by several people when defining the direction to face towards the Ka’bah. They think that they must face towards Mecca along the initial direction of the physical path of travel over the earth to it. This is a completely incorrect idea and has no basis in the Quran. The same will be discussed in more detail later in this document, God willing.

Just so readers have a completely clear understanding about these differences, below are more examples using cities that are very far apart and quite opposite to each other on Earth.

► From Denver (USA), the direction of Darwin (Australia) is southwest along a straight line connecting the two through the earth (Fig. 5.1). This is simply because Darwin is in a southwest position - more south really - compared to Denver on the other side of the globe. However, the shortest path of travel from Denver to Darwin over the surface of the earth is broadly described as ‘west by northwest; eventually heading southwest.’ So if you were asked where Darwin was or to simply point/face towards it from Denver, what would you do? Would you say that Darwin is west/northwest of Denver? If you did, it would be totally incorrect and misleading because west is only the ‘initial direction’ of many direction segments in the physical path of travel to Darwin over the surface of the earth.* It is also geographically impossible to state that Darwin is west of Denver because the two cities are not even in the same hemisphere on Earth (Fig. 5.2).

► From Tokyo (Japan) to Lima (Peru), the shortest path of travel over the surface of the earth is initially east-northeast and then finally heading southeast for about three fourths of the total distance.* From Vancouver (Canada), the shortest path of travel to Cape Town (South Africa) is also initially east-northeast, finally heading southeast for about three fourths of the total distance. Does this mean that Lima is east or northeast of Tokyo? Can you really say that Cape Town is located east or northeast of Vancouver? It would be useful for readers to verify and appreciate this for themselves.

Fig. 5.1: Path of constant direction through the earth

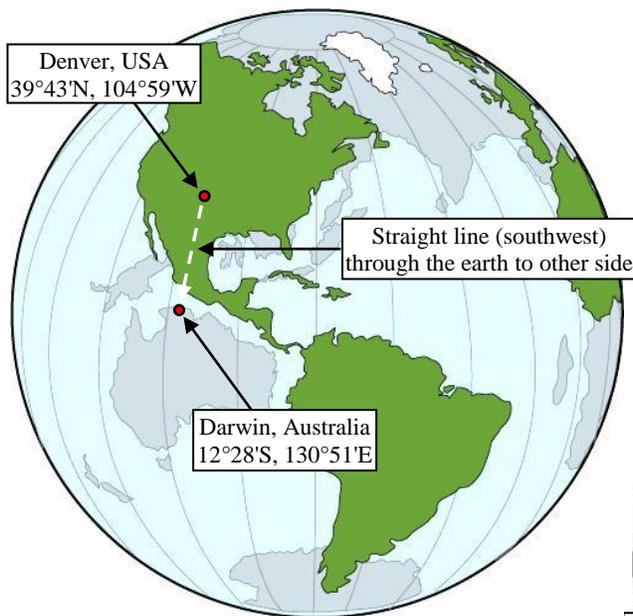


Fig. 5.2: Path of changing direction over the surface of the earth



*Theoretical shortest distance paths of physical travel over the surface of the earth. It does not necessarily mean that airplanes or ships travel exactly along these paths (explained on page 10).

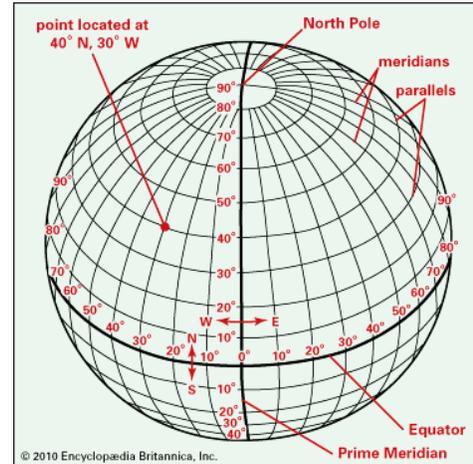
Facing towards Mecca

So as you have seen, expressing the direction to face towards a city from another is an extremely easy and straightforward process. All you need to know is where the two cities are located and the direction is automatically decided by one city's position in relation to the other. The standard system for pin-pointing places on Earth is Latitudes and Longitudes which define a place by its position north or south of the Equator and east or west of the Prime Meridian which passes through Greenwich (Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Latitudes & Longitudes

- ▶ Latitudes (also known as parallels) are horizontal lines expressed as Degrees° North or South of the Equator.
- ▶ Longitudes (also known as meridians) are vertical lines expressed as Degrees° East or West of the Prime Meridian.

Once you have the location coordinates of two cities, you can define the direction between them by their North/South/East/West positions in relation to each other like: Miami is south in relation to Charlotte while from Seattle, its position is southeast. Compared to Los Angeles (USA), Oslo (Norway) is up north on the globe while Santiago (Chile) is down south (Fig. 7.1).



Likewise, Mecca, at Latitude/Longitude $21^{\circ}26'N/39^{\circ}49'E$ (almost opposite to the USA in the northern hemisphere), is geographically **south of east** (southeast) in relation to Key West ($24^{\circ}34'N/81^{\circ}47'W$), the southernmost city of the USA (Fig. 7.2). While Mecca is only 3 degrees south of Key West by latitude, the southward angular difference increases significantly when you compare the relative position of Mecca with other places situated at higher northern latitudes in the USA.

Fig 7.1: Facing towards cities

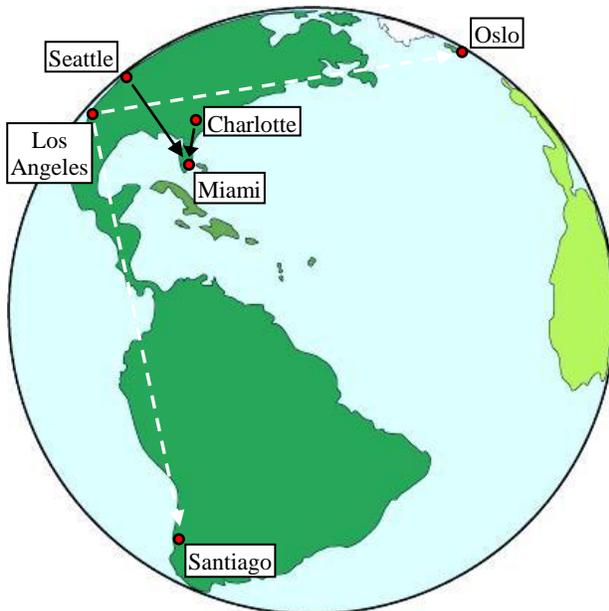
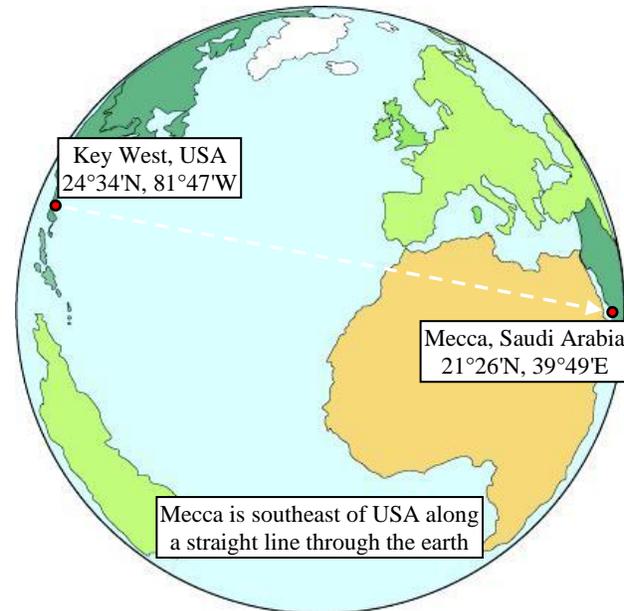


Fig 7.2: Facing towards Mecca



Dashed white lines are lines going through the earth

Section 2: From the USA, Qiblah is South of East (Southeast)

The Contact Prayer (Salat) decreed by God consists of specific actions which includes the requirement to face towards the Ka'bah during the prayer. In the earlier section, it was explained that to 'face towards' a point, you just need to face directly towards its location, regardless of whether you can actually see that point due to distance or anything coming in between you and that point. You do not need to travel towards it to be facing towards it either.

*[2:149] Wherever you go, you shall **turn your face** (during Salat) **towards** the Sacred Masjid. This is the truth from your Lord. GOD is never unaware of anything you all do.*

*[2:150] Wherever you go, you shall **turn your face** (during Salat) **towards** the Sacred Masjid; wherever you might be, you shall **turn your faces** (during Salat) **towards** it. Thus, the people will have no argument against you, except the transgressors among them. Do not fear them, and fear Me instead. I will then perfect My blessings upon you, that you may be guided.*

Southeast Qiblah: Constant path through the earth

From the USA, the direction to face towards Mecca is Southeast along a line of constant direction through the earth. The Qiblah is *not* Northeast, which is based on the incorrect belief that the direction to face towards the Ka'bah must be along a line or path of shortest distance *over* the surface of the earth.

One of the reasons offered in support of this belief is that because humans live on the surface of the earth, the direction to face towards the Ka'bah must also be along a path that is on the surface of the earth. This is actually a point forced out of context and doesn't make any sense at all. The Quran does not indicate anything about facing the Ka'bah along a path that is on the surface of the earth. USA and Mecca are almost opposite to each other in the earth's northern hemisphere. Therefore, any path of travel over the earth's round surface will be curved and multidirectional as you have seen from the examples on page 5. Since multiple directions are involved, it is impossible to face towards the Ka'bah in a constant direction on this path. However, if you insist on facing towards the Ka'bah along a surface path of travel, then think about it in context of the way the Contact Prayer is performed:

When you pray, you do not physically travel towards the Ka'bah, so it does not make sense to even think in terms of praying along a path of travel to it. Yet, if that is how you want to think, then logically you should change your direction during the prayer to match the changes of direction along the way. Your prayer could become something like, one unit north, one unit northeast; one unit east, one unit southeast! Do you think that this is how God has decreed the Contact Prayer to be performed?

Additionally, the Quran gives no indication that our souls or prayers are affected by shortest distances to Mecca or that we cannot face the Ka'bah along imaginary straight lines passing through objects like land, sea, walls etc. coming in between. If that was the case, living closer to Mecca would be better, while praying indoors or from off-surface locations like submarines and airplanes would be illegal! Therefore, from the USA (and Canada), you can most certainly face directly towards Mecca along a straight and constant line of direction bearing southeast through the earth.

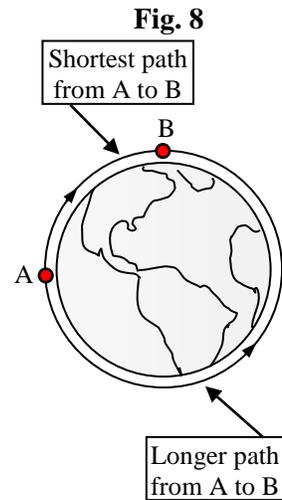
Northeast Qiblah: Changing path over the surface of the earth

Unlike the simple method of directly facing the Ka'bah along a line of constant southeast direction through the earth, the Northeast Qiblah suggests at least two approaches to justify the direction using paths that are above the surface of the earth: (1) Shortest distance travel path based on great circles and (2) Line of sight to the sun over Mecca.

Northeast (Approach 1): Shortest distance path based on great circles

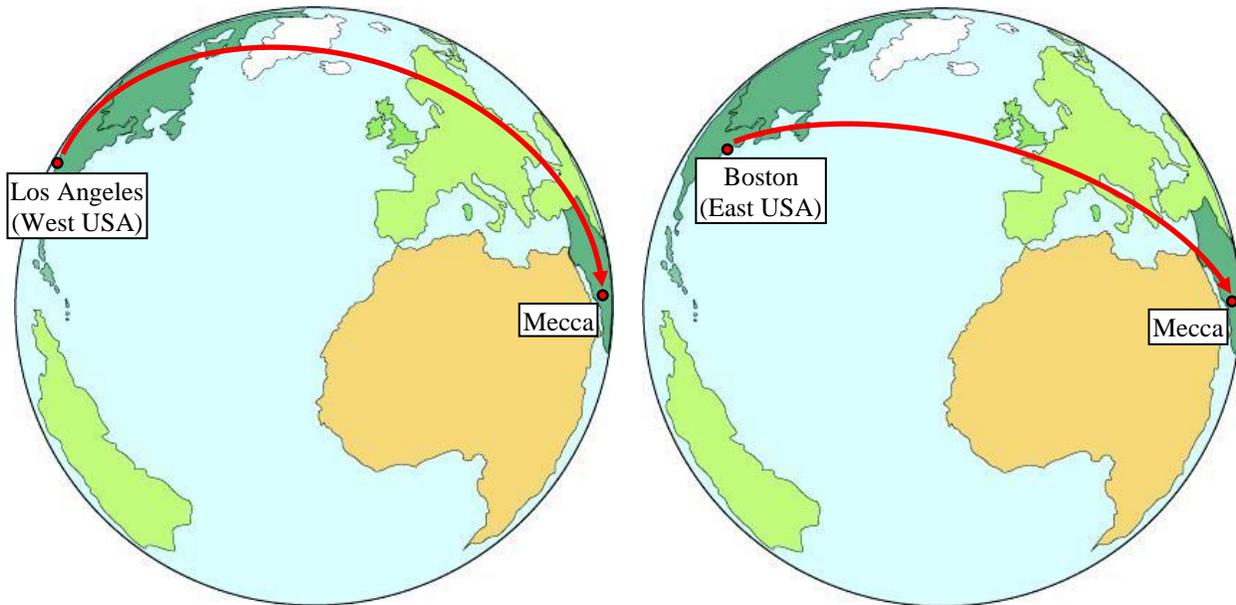
Following a shortest distance travel path over the earth is based on the system of great circles used in planning navigational routes. A Great Circle is any circle around the surface of a sphere whose plane divides the sphere into two equal halves. The Earth's Equator (Latitude 0°) is an example of a great circle as its plane divides the earth into two equal north and south hemispheres.

Between two points on a great circle, you will always have two paths in opposite directions connecting the two points. One path will be of a shorter distance and one will be longer (Fig. 8). (If the two points are exactly opposite to each other on the sphere, then both the paths will be of equal distance, obviously.) For this discussion, we are only concerned with the path that is of a shorter distance on a great circle.



On a great circle from the USA passing through Mecca, the path *initially* starts out in a north/northeast or east/northeast direction, passes through or below Greenland, then turns downwards southeast for the *majority* of the total distance to Mecca (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9: Great circle paths from USA to Mecca



Initial direction from Los Angeles is north-northeast. From Boston, it is east-northeast. The initial north or east bearing depends on which point you start out from in the USA. The final direction from USA to Mecca on a great circle is **always Southeast**.

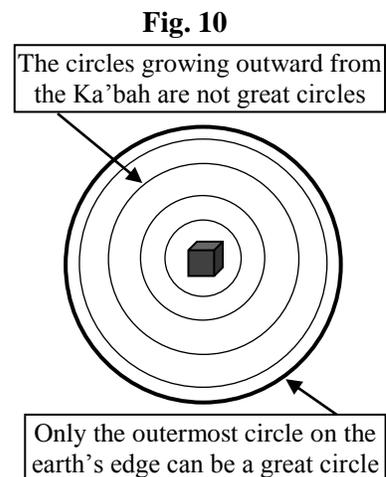
Now because the shorter arc from the USA starts out in a northeast bearing, people think that northeast should be the direction to face towards the Ka’bah. However, it does not work this way because as you have learned earlier on page 3, the direction to face towards a city cannot be defined by the initial direction of the path of travel to it. To provide a true and complete travel direction towards a city, you have to mention all the direction segments involved or the traveler will have no idea where to arrive. Therefore, when describing the shortest surface path between the USA and Mecca along a great circle, you have to make known that while the path starts out northeast, it later bears southeast and continues to head southeast for the *longer* section of the total path to Mecca. So just for argument sake, if a travel path must be defined by only one direction segment, shouldn’t the USA-Mecca path be defined as ‘Southeast,’ considering the fact that the dominant portion of the path always bears southeast whichever point in the USA you start out from?

Additionally, whether you are describing a path of constant direction through the earth or a shortest surface path of changing direction, the final direction is always the same for both. Like in the case of USA-Mecca, the direction of the path through the earth is southeast throughout while over the surface, the path initially heads northeast but finally bears southeast. So again, if this path must be defined by any one direction, won’t it be more appropriate to define it by its final direction, considering that southeast is the common factor in both paths and exactly where you will arrive whichever type of path you choose to work with? (Incidentally, you may have realized that on a path which is straight, there is no initial, middle or final direction. Since the direction is always constant, the description of this path from any point on it is always the same.)

Unfortunately, not everyone is inclined to accept that there is no clear basis for facing the Ka’bah along the initial direction of a great circle. Two reasons often offered in defense are: (a) When people congregate for prayer, they form circles around the Ka’bah, which signifies that you can face in the direction of a great circle. (b) You follow a ‘great circle direction’ for prayer because that is how airplanes fly over shortest distance paths.

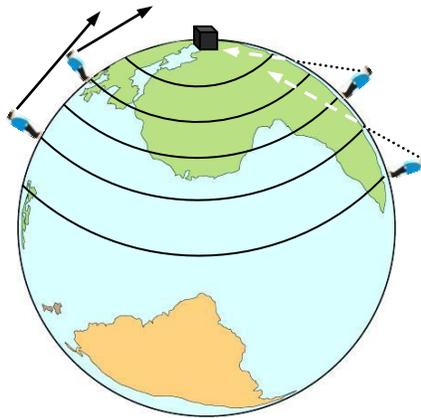
(a) Circles around the Ka’bah: Yes, it is correct that people form rows of circles around the Ka’bah when they congregate for prayer. As more people come into the area, the rows of circles increase outwards. But these are regular circles, not great circles. The only great circle possible in this context is the outermost one that will go around the surface edge of the earth (Fig. 10).

So what happens to all the other innumerable circles that are not great circles in-between? How does this one great circle of so many other circles become the single justification to use great circles to find the direction to face towards the Ka’bah?



This argument also disregards the fact that the world is a spheroid, not flat. In reality, if people stood on these imaginary circles growing outwards from around the Ka’bah to the edge of the earth, they would not be able to face straight towards it beyond a point, but would face into space instead (Fig. 11, next page). The only way they can face towards the Ka’bah from these locations is along a straight line through the earth; which is just what this article is all about!

Fig. 11: Facing Ka’bah from the earth’s surface



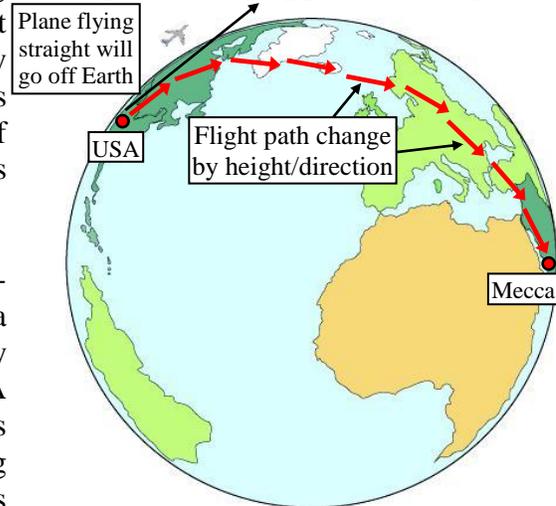
The circles growing outward from around the Ka’bah are regular circles, not great circles.

If people were to theoretically stand on these circles, since the earth round, their vision would soon start facing towards space, not the Ka’bah (like the people on the left). If they want to face towards the Ka’bah, the only way to do so is by facing along a straight line through the earth (like the people on the right).

(b) Path of an airplane: When people talk about following a ‘great circle direction’ for prayer because that is how airplanes fly, they should know what they are saying because that it not how it works in reality. When flying over large distances, an airplane – a 20th century invention – does not fly in a smooth arc the way it may appear in a typical illustration depicting a shortest distance/great circle path between two cities.

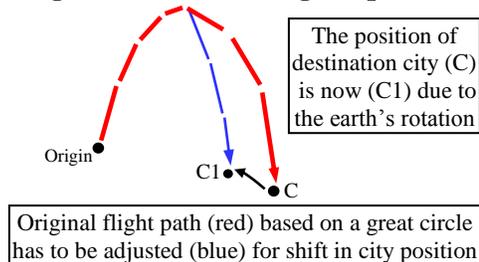
An airplane flies straight, and if it keeps flying straight, it will go away from the earth. To prevent it from flying off into space and to maintain a steady course over the earth’s round shape, an airplane has to constantly adjust its flight path along a series of smaller paths of changing heights and directions (Fig. 12).

Fig. 12: Changing path of an airplane



Also, the earth is constantly rotating counter-clockwise ↺ (approx. 970 mph at 21°N where Mecca is located). So theoretically, even if a plane could fly along a smooth great circle arc drawn between USA and Mecca, it cannot land at the drawn end point as Mecca will have shifted 10-15000 miles away during the 12-16 hour flying time by then. An airplane has to also account for this and make vertical/horizontal changes in its flight path accordingly (Fig. 13).

Fig. 13: Shift from original position

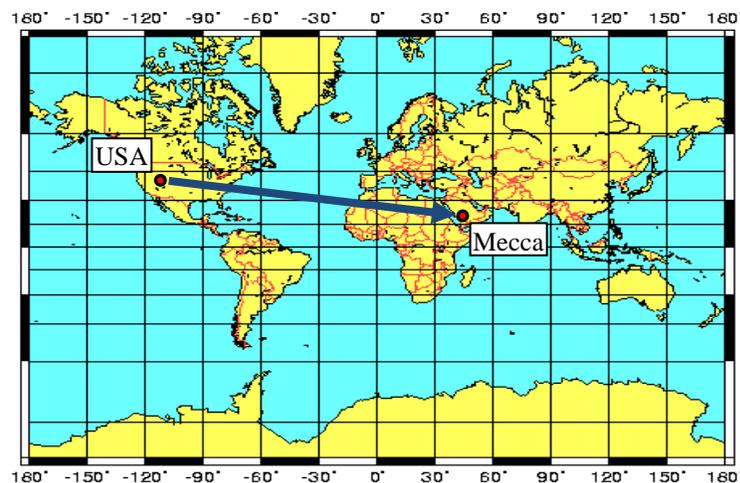


This clearly shows us that while a great circle is helpful in outlining a broad travel route or course, it cannot be called a ‘direction’ all by itself as there are many paths and directions involved. (A study of great circles, rhumb lines and waypoints used in planning navigation/routes can help you understand this better.)

Flat maps: Before we move on to discuss the second method offered for a northeast Qiblah (i.e. angle of sight to the sun), it is useful to know a bit about the role of flat maps in showing the relationship between places on Earth.

The objective of flat maps is to project the whole world in a manner that all the land and sea areas can be seen together at one time on one plane. To do this, a few adjustments have to be made for the curvature of the earth, resulting in some distortion in the shape of the oceans and continents, especially nearer the poles. Once the earth is projected on a flat plane, all relationships between places will obviously be shown as straight lines on it. As you can see from the map below (where the lines of Latitude and Longitude are aligned to meet at right angles), Mecca is clearly southeast of USA (Fig. 14). On such a map, even the necessary distortion of the earth will not affect the constant southeast line of direction to Mecca.

Fig. 14: Mercator (Flat) Map



One of the arguments presented in defense of the Northeast Qiblah is that since the earth is round, only a round projection of the earth can be used to explain directions. (Where this idea came from, nobody knows.) To demonstrate this, they take a flat map and place a straight pointing object like a pencil on it and then ask you to think about where it would point if the flat map was bent down to take the round shape of the earth. If you do this, obviously the pointer will face straight out into space and not towards Mecca or any city on Earth. This is common sense and nothing to be impressed about because it doesn't tell the story correctly. A flat map and spherical projection work in two different ways. A flat map is an independent model to depict the whole world in one plane and clearly shows the positional relationship (and straight direction) between two places on Earth. Using a round projection of the earth and applying great circle concepts to a flat map is an unfair and misleading representation. Mecca *is* southeast of USA on Earth whichever projection you use, and this fact cannot be changed or disguised.

All the same, since there are different views about the validity or accuracy of using flat maps to establish the Ka'bah direction, readers may make their own studies and conclusions accordingly. The Southeast Qiblah advocated by this article works on the straightforward logical concept of directly facing Mecca's position along a path of constant direction through the earth. By God's grace, it is a self-supporting argument with basis from Quran and therefore does not need to refer to or depend on flat map representations either way.

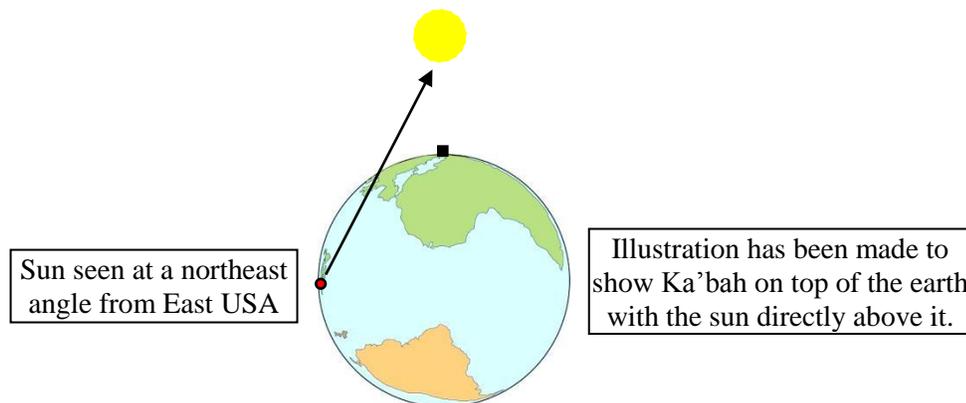
Northeast (Approach 2): Line of sight to the sun over Mecca

The other method offered for a Northeast Qiblah does not depend on great circles, but uses the position of the sun to determine the direction for prayer instead. It works on the premise that to face towards something, you must be able to establish a direct line of sight to it. If you cannot do this, then you must look at a reference point directly above it and the resulting direction or angle of sight to that point will be the direction to face towards what you originally wanted to face.

Since the earth is round, you can only make a direct line of sight to anything on its surface up to a certain distance. From the USA, it is impossible to do this with Mecca. As a result of this, the method asks you to look at the sun when it is positioned exactly above Mecca and concludes that the resulting direction or angle of sight to the sun is the direction to face towards Mecca.

Going by this idea, the sun comes up exactly above Mecca twice a year on about May 27/28 and July 15/16. (Imagine a line rising 90° straight up from the Ka'bah connecting to the sun). If you look towards the sun from the USA at the corresponding local US time on these two days, it will be visible in the northeast sky (Fig. 15). Because the sun is seen in a northeast direction/position in the sky, people have concluded that northeast is the direction to face towards Mecca from the USA!

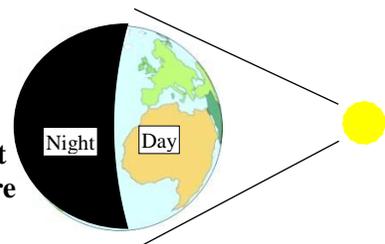
Fig. 15: Angle of sight to the sun



System drawbacks: While this concept may appear to be a scientifically appropriate method to establish the Qiblah from the USA, it is actually not a very practical method and has some inherent limitations and inconsistencies in its application as explained ahead.

As you will probably know, a point above the surface of sphere can only be seen from one half of the sphere on which side the point is. For example, at any time, the sun can only be seen from one half of the earth's surface. It is impossible to see the sun from both sides of the earth simultaneously, which is how we have night and day (Fig. 16). Therefore, when this method asks you to look at the sun when it is directly above Mecca, it immediately draws attention to the constraint that this method can only be applied from half the earth and only on two particular days. But that's not all...

Fig. 16: Seeing a point above a sphere

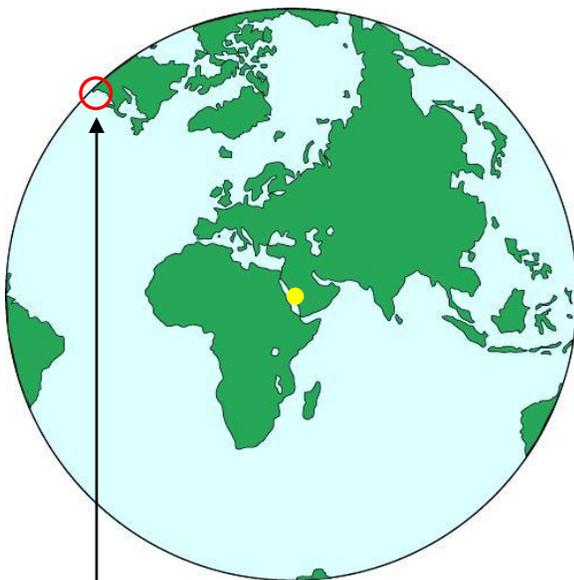


To understand the limitations of this method better, let us divide the earth into two hemispheres with Mecca at the center of one of them. When the sun is positioned exactly over Mecca, it can be seen from anywhere within the hemisphere that has been created around Mecca, but never from the other side. As you can see from the illustration below showing Mecca at the center of the projection (Fig. 17.1), almost all of the USA falls outside this ‘hemisphere of Mecca.’ Only a tiny portion of northeast USA comprised of Maine and barely New Hampshire and Massachusetts can observe the sun when it is over Mecca on May 27/28 or July 15/16. Additionally, the local US time for viewing the sun from these locations is just within a few minutes after sunrise, which helps us appreciate that this is not a very convenient and globally consistent method to determine the direction to face towards Mecca from the USA.

Next comes the problem of how the rest of the USA will apply this approach, since it cannot see the sun when it is exactly over Mecca on these two days. For this, the method suggests that the Qiblah can alternately be determined by observing the shadow of the sun when it comes exactly above Mecca’s antipode on another two days in the year instead!

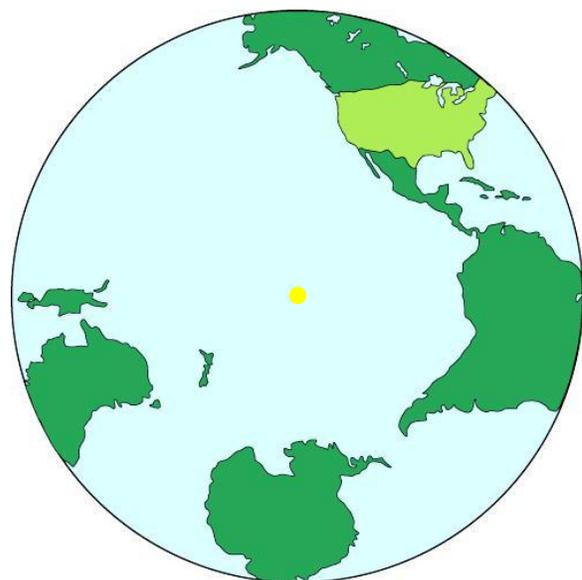
Mecca’s antipode, which is the point diametrically opposite to it on Earth, is located in the South Pacific at approximately 21°26’S/140°10’W. On January 13 and November 28, the sun is directly above this point (Fig. 17.2). According to the method, at the corresponding local US time (which will be approximately between 1 and 4 p.m.), you should face towards the shadow of the sun and that will be the northeast direction to face towards Mecca. If you cannot see the shadow, then you must put your back towards the sun and you will be facing northeast towards Mecca.

Fig. 17.1: Area of the earth covered by sun over Mecca



Only a minor portion of east USA can see the sun when it is exactly over Mecca.
View time for Augusta/Boston:
May 28: 5:18 a.m. (Sunrise is 5:01/5:13)
July 16: 5:27 a.m. (Sunrise is 5:10/5:22)

Fig. 17.2: Area of the earth covered by the sun over Mecca’s antipode



Except for the tiny portion on the east side, all of USA can see the sun when it is over Mecca’s antipode between about 1 & 4 p.m.

For someone who doesn't know the difference, this stretch in the method can appear workable, but in reality it does not prove anything and has been introduced out of nowhere without the remotest basis from Quran. If you want to try this method, you have to be sure that you have your back facing exactly towards the sun because the sun covers a wide area. People at different points can imagine they have their backs rightly aligned to the sun but may not all get the same direction. And if it's a cloudy day and you can't see the sun at these two days/moments to get a shadow, then you're really stuck because you will have to wait a long, long time to try this again.

In any case, regardless of whether you get a shadow to give you some direction, this roundabout antipode approach cannot originally determine the direction of prayer. You cannot suddenly decide to put your back to the sun when it is over Mecca's antipode and conclude that the direction of your shadow is facing towards Mecca. To claim this, you have to already know where Mecca is first. If you already know where Mecca is, what is the sense of using this method to tell you which way is Mecca? If you face towards a shadow that you know is pointing northeast to Mecca, or put your back to the sun to make yourself face northeast, then you have not achieved anything. You have already decided that the direction to face towards Mecca is northeast based on some previous information, and you are only applying this method to convince yourself that this is the direction for prayer.

In fact, when you think about it, to define the position of a city by its antipode is to mentally consider a straight and direct line connecting the two points through the earth, isn't it? How come proponents of this method have no problem working with a point thousands of miles opposite and 'under' Mecca through the earth's surface just to face the sun's shadow, but find it difficult to follow the easy and straightforward method to face directly towards Mecca along a constant (and shortest) line through the earth? Why should you need to observe the sun or its shadow on only two/four different moments in a year to get the direction to face towards Mecca when you can simply face directly towards its known and fixed location on Earth – anytime and from anywhere? Which approach for the Qiblah makes most sense to you now?

Using the sun to determine the Qiblah has no basis from Quran

So far, we have seen how the angle of sight to the sun and/or its shadow does not provide a consistent, comprehensive approach to determine the Qiblah. But while we have discussed the method, let us see if the Quran provides any basis to use the sun to determine the direction to face towards the Ka'bah in the first place!

[6:96] At the crack of dawn, He causes the morning to emerge. He made the night still, and He rendered the sun and the moon to serve as calculation devices. Such is the design of the Almighty, the Omniscient.

[6:97] And He is the One who made the stars to guide you during the darkness, on land and on sea. We thus clarify the revelations for people who know.

[10:5] He is the One who rendered the sun radiant, and the moon a light, and He designed its phases that you may learn to count the years and to calculate. GOD did not create all this, except for a specific purpose. He explains the revelations for people who know.

[16:16] And landmarks, as well as the stars; to be used for navigation.

We see in the Quran that God has designed the sun and the moon to serve as timing devices so that we know when to start and end our religious practices. God also tells us that He made the stars for navigation. But nowhere in the Quran does God say that we must use the sun, moon or stars to determine the direction to face towards the Ka'bah.

When we journey towards a place, we may need to refer to some signposts or other 'landmarks' to navigate us towards our destination. Just like we refer to landmarks on the ground, we can also use the sun, moon and stars as 'celestial marks' to help us with our bearings and keep us on the right track along our path of travel. But before we can use anything as a navigation reference, we have to know where our start and end points are, and work out a path of travel between them first. Can you just look into the stars for the direction towards a destination without having any idea about the destination's position? No, obviously not. Similarly, can a pilot work out a route from the USA to Mecca just by looking at the position of the sun on a particular day, or are routes worked out by using known geographical data such as Latitudes and Longitudes and the positional relationship between places?

Therefore, to work out a direction or path of travel from one city to another, you have to know where the two cities are located first. This has absolutely *nothing* to do with the sun. After you have worked out a viable travel path between them, you can - if you need to - use the sun, moon or stars as navigation references along the way. For example, if you wanted to do a quick check that you were generally heading towards the east on your journey, you could take reference from the relevant stars at night or the sun in the day as it rises from the east towards its zenith at noon (18:17). Of course, cosmic objects had greater significance in the earlier days, whereas today you have modern navigation tools to keep you precisely on track.

Once again, nowhere in the Quran does it say that you must use the sun to originally determine the direction to face towards the Ka'bah. In matters of 'directions,' the sun can be used effectively as a navigation tool but only *after* you have already worked out the direction towards your destination using scientific methods. It will not help to claim that the scholars of many centuries ago used the sun to determine the Qiblah because a closer check indicates that none of them categorically confirmed their theories. Also missing is the relevant basis from Quran and it seems very unlikely that back then they meant these methods to be applied for the USA! Perhaps some people have rushed into interpolating some of these ideas without considering all these factors which show that the sun over Mecca is not a thorough approach to get the US Qiblah.

Some arguments even feature the North Pole or Pole Star with directions and angles from them to justify the Northeast Qiblah. Just like the idea of using the sun over Mecca's antipode has come absolutely out nowhere, these are also elements that have been forced in without any basis from the Quran. If God wanted us to use the North Pole or the sun over Mecca as key factors in determining the Qiblah, He would have told us in the Quran. Instead, God has told us to use the Ka'bah as a *focal point* and face towards it. There are no theoretical travel routes, great circle paths, initial directions or any other such conditions to be considered. If anyone insists on making the sun his or her focal point instead of the Ka'bah, then they should seriously consider the consequences of disobeying or misrepresenting an instruction from God.

[2:125] We have rendered the shrine (the Ka'aba) a focal point for the people, and a safe sanctuary. You may use Abraham's shrine as a prayer house. ...

Logic and verification: When examining different explanations, researchers must check for sound logic and basis from Quran (17:36). For example, consider how you would apply the concept of facing the sun over Mecca if you were on a spaceship above Earth, at a point where Mecca was on the opposite side, completely out of your view. From this position, for sure you cannot establish a direct line of sight to Mecca. So would you just face directly towards Earth or would you wait for the sun when it comes up exactly over Mecca someday? Which is the most logical, consistent, and universally applicable Qiblah approach according to you?

If you chose to face straight towards Earth instead of the sun, then you will be facing directly towards Mecca along a straight and constant line of direction through the earth. This is exactly what this article is explaining; that to face towards Mecca, just look straight towards its location, even if the line of direction passes through the earth. It is interesting to note that for a couple of thousand miles radius around the Ka'bah, almost everyone seems okay to face directly towards Mecca along imaginary straight lines through walls, mountains etc. Yet when it comes to the USA Qiblah, the same people cannot seem to face directly towards Mecca along a straight line through the earth but want to follow a multi direction path above the earth to it. Where does the Quran indicate that you have to face the Ka'bah by following a shortest distance travel path over the surface of the earth?

Understand the difference

God tells us that the essence of His scripture is straightforward and that He wants for us convenience, not hardship in practicing His religion (2:185, 3:7). This means that the religion is designed to be easy to understand and practice by all generations, not keep them in a state of doubt and confusion. A Qiblah method that is complex, needs a higher level of technical understanding; cannot be applied from all locations, and is physically not verifiable at almost all times throughout the year, just doesn't fall into this pattern. It is very easy to learn and practice the Contact Prayers (Salat), so why should it be any different with knowing how to face towards the Ka'bah?

The essential reason why people are stuck on the idea of facing the Ka'bah along the initial direction of a surface path of travel is because they think that their souls and prayers function in the same manner as their human bodies. Because our bodies cannot see or physically travel to locations through the earth does not mean that our souls and prayers face the same restrictions to make contact with God (17:1, 39:42). Our souls operate in a different dimension in relation to our bodies which we cannot really comprehend at this time. Remember that the Ka'bah is only a focal point of reference to turn towards. You don't travel towards it when you pray, nor do you need to think in those terms for you to be worrying about how your soul or prayers reach out to God. If people can understand this, God willing, it will be easy for them to abandon the incorrect idea of working with paths that are above the earth to determine the Qiblah from the USA.

Reminder example

Imagine that the entrance to your bedroom is on the north side of the house while the kitchen is on the east side. To get to the kitchen from your bedroom, you have to walk towards the north and then turn right towards the east. So if you were inside your bedroom and you were asked to point/face towards the kitchen from there, what would you do? Would you just point/face east towards the kitchen's location or would you point north towards the bedroom entrance because that is the initial direction of the physical path of travel to your kitchen? Obviously you would just point east; because you don't need to see or physically move towards the kitchen to simply point out or define its position in the house!

Section 3: Confirmation of the Southeast Qiblah with God's authorization

The world is now on the threshold of embracing God's perfect system of Submission (Islam), so it is vital that all the practices of the religion are established correctly for the masses to follow. As part of this process, God has blessed the human race by sending a consolidating messenger in this era to confirm various aspects of the religion so that all doubts and differences are removed once and for all. Rashad Khalifa, God's Messenger of the Covenant (3:81, 33:7), has confirmed Southeast as the direction to face towards the Ka'bah from the USA. It is the responsibility of Submitters to unhesitatingly follow the Qiblah pointed out by God's messenger and continue to establish this direction for future generations.

Correct Contact Prayer: www.masjiduntucson.org/submission/practices/salat/

Purification of Islam: www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/appendices/introduction.html

Messenger of the Covenant: www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/appendices/appendix2.html

[24:54] Say, "Obey GOD, and obey the messenger." If they refuse, then he is responsible for his obligations, and you are responsible for your obligations. If you obey him, you will be guided. The sole duty of the messenger is to deliver (the message).

[33:36] No believing man or believing woman, if GOD and His messenger issue any command, has any choice regarding that command. Anyone who disobeys GOD and His messenger has gone far astray.

Beware of God's enemies

As always, Satan will try to confuse and divert people away from the truth. Readers are cautioned to carefully examine the Northeast Qiblah explanations offered and not get misled by clever sounding presentations into facing Northeast instead of Southeast. In particular, they should be careful of arguments by those who claim to be messengers of God after Rashad Khalifa. False messengers are agents of Satan and Submitters must reflect upon the serious risk involved in accommodating or leaning towards them, no matter how knowledgeable they may appear (11:113).

Just think about it. Does it make sense that God will send a messenger to unite all the religions into one purified religion for the whole world, only to have another messenger come along a couple of years later to change or 'correct' what the earlier messenger confirmed and practiced himself? Nowhere in the Quran do we see any example of a messenger who was sent to correct what any previous messenger explained and confirmed.

With the advent of God's Messenger of the Covenant, God's global religion of Islam has been restored to its original pristine purity. People should be appreciative of this and get on with practicing the religion correctly to save their souls. False messengers are incapable of providing any information whose application is critical to the soul. At best, they have occasionally shown some interesting properties about the Quran's awesome mathematical structure. Should the masses really want to know about it, or can comfortably comprehend this advanced mathematical information, the fact is that none of it is essential to apply for salvation. The most ridiculous part is that these false messengers got all their original guidance from what Rashad Khalifa made known and are now trying to correct or change his work with their own understanding!

False Messengers Condemned

[6:93] *Who is more evil than one who fabricates lies and attributes them to GOD, or says, "I have received divine inspiration," when no such inspiration was given to him, or says, "I can write the same as GOD's revelations"? If only you could see the transgressors at the time of death! The angels extend their hands to them, saying, "Let go of your souls. Today, you have incurred a shameful retribution for saying about GOD other than the truth, and for being too arrogant to accept His revelations.*

Also keep in mind that Dr. Rashad Khalifa's mother tongue was Arabic and he had vast experience with the English language by living in the USA for many years. This, along with his understanding of the traditional/corrupted version of Islam, provided the perfect platform for him to bring out the true meaning of the Quran, free from traditional bias and understanding. Sure, other people will also have good knowledge of Arabic, but do you want to risk following someone else's opinion and understanding of Quran over the "Authorized English Version of Quran" by God's messenger (49:1)? Take an objective look and God willing you will notice the wisdom and clarity that makes it distinct from others (<http://quranbrowser.submission.info/>).

To give you an idea, let us see how Dr. Khalifa's version exposes a surreptitious attempt by Satan to confound the meaning of specific verses dealing with the direction to face the Ka'bah.

Rashad Khalifa

[2:144] ... Henceforth, you shall turn your face towards the Sacred Masjid. Wherever you may be, all of you shall turn your faces towards it. ...
[2:149] **Wherever you go**, you shall turn your face (during Salat) towards the Sacred Masjid. ...

[2:150] **Wherever you go**, you shall turn your face (during Salat) towards the Sacred Masjid; wherever you might be, you shall turn your faces (during Salat) towards it. ...

Other translation

[2:144] ... Henceforth, turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you all may be, turn your faces towards it (during contact prayer). ...
[2:149] **From wherever you come forth**, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque (during contact prayer) ...

[2:150] **From wherever you come forth** turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you all may be turn your faces towards it (during contact prayers) ...

Since there can be only one principle that must be applied for the direction to face towards the Ka'bah, Dr. Khalifa's use of the expression 'wherever you go' is most appropriate as it applies to (1) any location you are at (stationary); (2) any location you are going to (travelling); or (3) any location you have gone to (stationary/travelling). On the other hand, the expression 'from wherever you come forth' will typically mean to refer to a traveling situation only. Satan has used 'from wherever you come forth' instead of 'wherever you go,' because that is the only way to force in the idea of facing the Ka'bah along a path of travel. (Remember that the Northeast Qiblah is based upon the idea of facing the Ka'bah along the initial direction of a travel path.)

Even if you give benefit of doubt to the translation 'from wherever you come forth,' God has countered it in advance by placing the expression 'wherever you might be' *after* it in verse 2:150. This completely overrides the idea of facing towards the initial direction of a travel path because 'wherever you might be,' applies to *any* point on a path or *any* location. At some point, the initial northeast direction will cease to exist and you will 'go forth' southeast on the path. Obviously, there can only be one standard to be followed and only one direction to face towards the Ka'bah from the USA. God cannot be telling you to face northeast and southeast at the same time in the same verse, so which direction do you think the verse is telling you to face?

Actually, if Satan tried to say something like “whichever direction you start out, face that way throughout,” it might have at least given some license to keep facing along the initial northeast travel direction, even after the path turns southeast to Mecca. But since the Arabic won’t support it, making so much of a glaring change would expose the corruption instantly. By God’s grace, the expression ‘wherever you go/may be’ used by Rashad Khalifa is straightforward and applies from anywhere. On the other hand, the expression ‘from wherever you come forth’ has gone and restricted itself to only a path of physical travel from the USA, as this approach is irrelevant for directions from other locations to Mecca anyway. Why will future generations accept that part of a verse specifically applies to the Qiblah from the USA but not the rest of the world?

Another misrepresentation of the three Qiblah direction verses (2:144/149/150) is the inference drawn from the Arabic word *Shatr*. The word *Shatr* means (1) towards/in the direction of, or (2) half of [a thing]. While Dr. Khalifa has applied the straightforward meaning ‘towards,’ Satan has tried to draw a connection with ‘half of,’ as that is perhaps the only way to justify using the Sun-over-Mecca method to determine the Qiblah from the USA. (Remember that the sun method is based on the idea of establishing a line of sight to the sun when it over Mecca, because it is impossible to establish a direct line of sight to the Ka’bah from places opposite to Mecca on the other *half* of the earth.) As explained earlier on pages 12-15, using the sun to determine the Qiblah has no support from the Quran and is not a very practical system for the masses to follow either. On what basis should future generations imagine and accept that ‘half of a thing’ means, “A Qiblah method meant for only one half of the earth on the USA side?”

[3:7] He sent down to you this scripture, containing straightforward verses—which constitute the essence of the scripture—as well as multiple-meaning or allegorical verses. Those who harbor doubts in their hearts will pursue the multiple-meaning verses to create confusion, and to extricate a certain meaning. None knows the true meaning thereof except GOD and those well founded in knowledge. They say, "We believe in this—all of it comes from our Lord." Only those who possess intelligence will take heed.

Obeying the messenger is obeying God

Apart from false messengers, there are also those among Satan’s soldiers whose egos prevent them from appreciating the blessing of having a messenger of God come and settle matters for the world once and for all. Though they may not claim to be messengers themselves, these people constantly look for opportunities to challenge and prove Rashad Khalifa wrong while assuming that they have the right knowledge and authority to change what God wanted to confirm through His messenger (34:5).

One of their favorite but extremely poor arguments is that by following the Qiblah confirmed by God’s messenger means that you are idolizing him. This is despite their knowing from the Quran that it is a direct command from God to unhesitatingly trust and obey His messengers (4:80, 33:36, 57:25, 81:21). While they actually offer weak and disoriented explanations about the Qiblah and other topics themselves, they do not think that it is idolatry to advocate their own opinions over the opinions of God’s messenger. Weak and unsuspecting souls sometimes get impressed by their arrogance or eloquence which Satan cashes in on by taking the chance that these victims will not adequately counter check to see through the deception (63:4). As with dealing with false messengers, people must consider the serious risk involved in not supporting God’s messenger outright and leaning towards God’s enemies (58:22).

[63:4] When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies; beware of them. GOD condemns them; they have deviated.

[4:115] As for him who opposes the messenger, after the guidance has been pointed out to him, and follows other than the believers' way, we will direct him in the direction he has chosen, and commit him to Hell; what a miserable destiny!

*[49:1] O you who believe, do not place your opinion above that of **GOD** and His messenger. You shall reverence **GOD**. **GOD** is Hearer, Omniscient.*

Learning from history

It is noteworthy that one of the examples from history which God has put in the Quran for us to learn from, specifically deals with unhesitatingly following the Qiblah pointed out by His messenger (2:142-145). As mentioned in the footnote for verses 2:142-145, at one time angel Gabriel instructed Prophet Muhammad to change the existing Qiblah and face towards Jerusalem instead of Mecca. This incident turned out to be a critical test to distinguish between the hypocrites with doubts in their hearts and true Submitters who unhesitatingly obeyed the messenger. A little reflection shows that we are in a similar situation today where people must either uphold the Southeast Qiblah confirmed by God's Messenger of the Covenant for the USA, or pursue their own opinions and prejudices to face northeast instead.

Abolition of Bigotry and Prejudice

[2:142] The fools among the people would say, "Why did they change the direction of their Qiblah?" Say, "To GOD belongs the east and the west; He guides whoever wills in a straight path."*

[2:143] We thus made you an impartial community, that you may serve as witnesses among the people, and the messenger serves as a witness among you. We changed the direction of your original Qiblah only to distinguish those among you who readily follow the messenger from those who would turn back on their heels. It was a difficult test, but not for those who are guided by GOD. GOD never puts your worship to waste. GOD is Compassionate towards the people, Most Merciful.

Qiblah Restored to Mecca

[2:144] We have seen you turning your face about the sky (searching for the right direction). We now assign a Qiblah that is pleasing to you. Henceforth, you shall turn your face towards the Sacred Masjid. Wherever you may be, all of you shall turn your faces towards it. Those who received the previous scripture know that this is the truth from their Lord. GOD is never unaware of anything they do.

[2:145] Even if you show the followers of the scripture every kind of miracle, they will not follow your Qiblah. Nor shall you follow their Qiblah. They do not even follow each others' Qiblah. If you acquiesce to their wishes, after the knowledge that has come to you, you will belong with the transgressors.

* Footnote 2:142-145: "Qiblah" is the direction one faces during the Contact Prayers (Salat). When Gabriel conveyed to Muhammad the command to face Jerusalem instead of Mecca, the hypocrites were exposed. The Arabs were strongly prejudiced in favor of the Ka'bah as their "Qiblah." Only the true believers were able to overcome their prejudices; they readily obeyed the messenger.

The Best Community

By God's grace, all matters of the religion essential for salvation are now clarified. It is a great blessing for the world to have the correct information from God and be saved from the doubts and distortions which Satan is always trying to propagate. You have to trust God and know that He will not mislead you through His messenger; nor take him away until he has completed his task as that would defeat the purpose of sending him in the first place (5:19, 5:67, 16:35). Submitters are also immensely blessed to never have to refer to the Hadith books for any explanation about the religion, whereas most discussions by traditional Muslims (including some good ones for Southeast), have felt the need to make references to them.

Lastly, Submitters must realize that they have the responsibility of supporting God's messenger. If there is a group of people who claim to follow God's messenger but don't uphold his Qiblah or any of his teachings, then it is the duty of Submitters not to compromise and follow these people's Qiblah, just to maintain a sense of dignity or communal harmony with them (60:1, 58:22, 68:8-9). Those who obey God and His messenger are the righteous and best community of God, even if they are in the minority (3:110). It is for the other people to come and seek acceptance among God's true community/congregation of Submitters, not the other way around!

*[2:256] There shall be no compulsion in religion: **the right way is now distinct from the wrong way.** Anyone who denounces the devil and believes in GOD has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.*

End Note: Debates over the correct Qiblah from the USA and Canada have been going on for many years. I have discussed this topic several times and examined many presentations available on the internet. While most Southeast presentations well explain why it is the right direction, I found that there was less information available that provides an analysis and counter argument to show why Northeast is wrong. For example, you have seen how the idea of using the sun to originally determine the Qiblah is not practical, nor has support from Quran. This right off eliminates a major approach for the Northeast Qiblah. Some of the Northeast concepts and projections have also been presented out of context, which many people may not have realized.

Islam is being rapidly restored in the USA, so a panicked Satan is just working hard to prevent the truth from being established as more and more people embrace total 'Submission to God Alone.' The trick is to spot and expose what Satan is trying to hide from everyone. Therefore, I thought it would be useful to have a comprehensive paper on this subject that can help Submitters be better prepared to explain or discuss it with others. I have tried to keep it simple with focus on logic and basis from Quran (which is what most people will relate to), rather than a hi-end technical presentation with advanced mathematical calculations and scientific diagrams.

While all my thanks go to God for this opportunity to strive in His cause, I would like to acknowledge the support of my two dear sisters in submission – Karen J., for her dedicated research work, and Leila Allameh, for her easy-to-follow illustrations.

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Knowing which way is southeast from USA/Canada using a magnetic compass

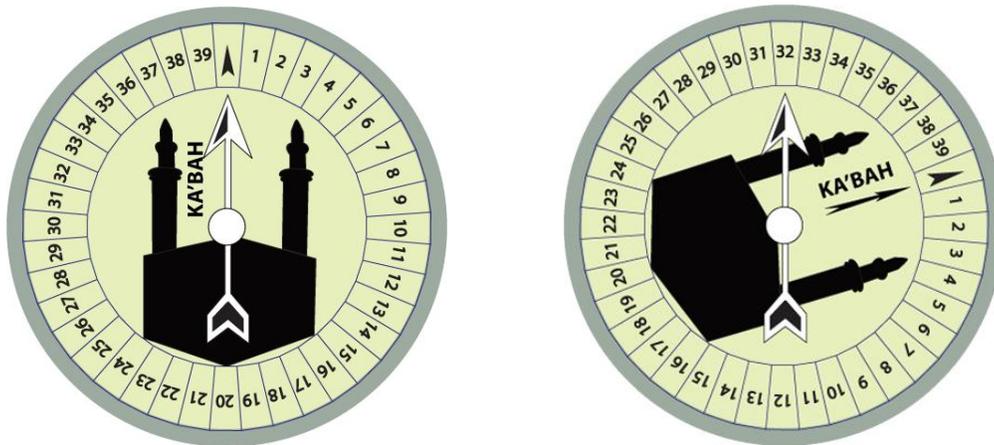
A convenient way of knowing which way to face towards Mecca from different cities around the world is by using a Magnetic Qiblah Compass. A Qiblah compass is essentially a standard magnetic compass, with a series of numbers around its border, and a Ka'bah arrow or 'minaret' printed on its dial. The numbers represent different cities (see the instruction booklet), while the Ka'bah arrow is the direction which the compass will point you to face towards.

Using this compass is very easy - here's how: First let the compass needle settle to its natural rest position, then rotate the compass to match the desired city number with the head of the needle. After you have done this, the direction which the Ka'bah arrow/minaret points to is the direction which you must face towards Mecca.

Is your Qiblah compass making you face northeast from USA/Canada? To date (2011), most Qiblah compasses available in North America will make you face north/northeast from USA and Canada. To check if your Qiblah compass is set up like this, match the number of a US or Canadian city with the compass needle as per the normal procedure. Most instruction booklets are standardized to have numbers between 31 and 1 for US and Canadian cities. Use these two numbers itself as they represent the two sides of the USA and Canada.

If the Ka'bah arrow/minaret is pointing somewhere between the same direction as the compass needle point (left diagram) to about 80° to its right (right diagram), then you are using a Qiblah compass which is calculated to make you face north/northeast from the USA and Canada.

Fig. 18: Qiblah compass pointing north to northeast from USA/Canada



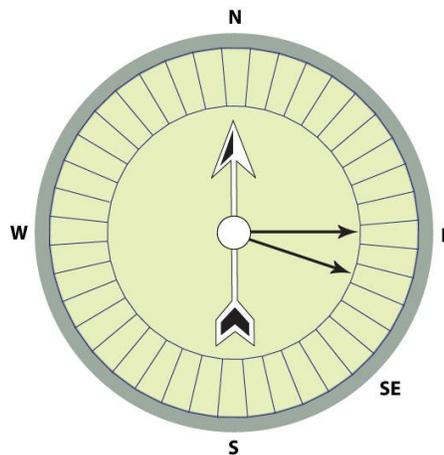
Can you use a northeast compass to know which way is southeast? With the establishment of God's purified religion well under way (9:33, 61:9, 110:2), God willing, future Qiblah compasses will soon start shipping with the instruction booklets standardized to point you Southeast from the USA and Canada. In the meanwhile, even if your existing Qiblah compass is set for northeast, you can continue to use it to tell you which way is southeast from wherever you are or you can just use a regular magnetic compass separately. See the next page to know how.

Finding the general direction of southeast with a magnetic compass:

First let the compass needle settle at its natural rest position as always. (Ignore all the numbers if you are using a Qiblah compass.) A compass needle will always point north which is actually the natural or 'magnetic' north of the earth.* Once the needle is settled, obviously, 90° perpendicular to its right will be East. Slightly southward beyond that will be southeast. 

If you are using a normal magnetic compass, it will not have numbers like a Qiblah compass but will have probably have markings like N, NE, E, SE, S... on its border. To find east/southeast, just follow the same procedure as above where 90° to the right of the needle's rest position will be east and slightly south of that will be southeast. To be more accurate, you can rotate the compass to align the 'N' with the needle and follow the east/southeast markings thereof (Fig 19).

Fig. 19: Using any magnetic compass to find the general direction of south of east



Important: When using magnetic compasses, always place them on a flat surface like the floor or wooden table, and keep them away from metallic objects like computers, steel furniture, keys and strong electromagnetic fields. Metallic objects greatly affect the natural position of a compass needle and your orientation may become incorrect without your realizing it. If you want to be sure, take a reading from a couple of different places in the room.

*Additional information - good to read once: The magnetic or natural north of the earth (where a compass always points), is different from the true or geographical north represented by maps, longitudes, poles, etc. The earth has a magnetic field around it and a compass always points to the field's north point. Due to the tilt of the earth's axis around which it rotates and the earth's shifting magnetic field, there is a variation between the magnetic north and geographical north of the earth. This variance is known as Magnetic Declination and varies from place to place. Though the variation across the huge expanse of the USA and Canada can go up to about 30° east or west of the geographical north at some locations, don't let it worry you too much. God knows your intention and you are applying the right principle to determine the Qiblah. However, if you want to be more exacting to account for magnetic declination, several internet sites have the information to help you adjust your compass reading for your location. For example, try: www.thecompassstore.com/whatisdec.html; www.thecompassstore.com/comwitaddec.html; www.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomagmodels/Declination.jsp
Auto southeast angle software calculator from USA/Canada: www.masjiduntucson.org/ptime/ .

From the USA, Qiblah is South of East

Quick Reference Summary

(To understand better with illustrations, see detailed version on pages 1-23)

Qiblah

The word Qiblah in the Quran (2:142-145) means, ‘The direction one faces during the Contact Prayers (Salat).’ This “direction” is towards the Ka’bah (Sacred Masjid) built by Prophet Abraham in Mecca. The Ka’bah serves as an organizational point of reference for Submitters (Muslims) to face towards whenever they observe their Contact Prayers, from wherever they may be around the world.

From the USA, the direction to face towards the Ka’bah is slightly South of East, not Northeast. The essential difference between the two directions is that the South of East Qiblah requires you to face directly towards the Ka’bah (at Mecca) along a straight and constant line of direction through the earth. The Northeast Qiblah works on the belief that you can only face the Ka’bah along a path that is above the surface of the earth, and offers alternative methods based on shortest surface distances or following the angle of sight to the sun. (South of East will henceforth be referred to as Southeast for brevity).

Direction

A **direction** is essentially a line or path leading from one point to another and this line can be of two shapes. One is a straight line of constant direction, which is the shortest and most direct relationship possible between two points. The other is a line that is not straight but turns in different directions from the start point to the end point.

Facing towards a point

To **face towards** a fixed point, you can only do so by looking straight towards it. It is not necessary for you to make eye contact with the point, because the requirement is only to face towards the point, not actually see it.

You cannot face towards a fixed point by turning your face in more than one direction. If you turn your face in any direction other than straight towards the point, you will face other points, but you will definitely not be facing towards the original fixed point any longer. The only way it is possible to face in multiple directions towards a fixed point, is if you physically move along a path of changing direction towards it. When you move along this path, each time it changes direction, you will also turn and face in that changed direction, until you finally reach the end point. Therefore, what you will really be doing is not facing directly towards the end point, but facing in various directions while travelling along the path leading up to it.

Route

A **route** is the total description of the path you physically move or travel along from one point to another. When expressing routes and directions, you have to use the right words to define what you mean because there is a difference between (1) the simple direction between two places and (2) the direction of the physical path of travel between them.

1) The simple direction from one place to another is defined by the positional relationship between the two places along a straight line. Describing the positional relationship of two places is always very simple and minimal as there is always only one straight direction involved.

2) If you have to provide the direction/s to physically travel between two places, then it involves more details, as you have to mention all the changes in direction along the path. Each of these changing directions is a 'direction segment' of the path, and all these segments together make up the entire route.

When defining a route or direction of travel between two points, you have to mention all the direction segments of the path in between. You cannot isolate any one segment of the path (like say the initial direction), and define the entire route by the direction of that segment alone.

Because people don't realize these differences, they invariably commit the error of defining the direction to a place, not by the simple direction, but by the initial direction of the travel path to it. Likewise with the Qiblah, people think that they must face towards Mecca along the initial direction of the physical path of travel over the earth to it. This is a completely incorrect idea and has no basis in the Quran.

Facing Southeast towards Mecca

Expressing the direction to face towards a city from another is an easy and straightforward process. Once you have the location coordinates of two cities, you can define the direction between them by their North/South/East/West positions in relation to each other.

Mecca, at Latitude/Longitude 21°26'N/39°49'E (almost opposite to the USA in the northern hemisphere), is geographically **southeast** in relation to Key West (24°34'N/81°47'W), the southernmost city of the USA. While Mecca is only 3 degrees south of Key West by latitude, the southward angular difference increases significantly when you compare the relative position of Mecca with other places situated at higher northern latitudes in the USA.

Southeast Qiblah: Constant path through the earth

The Contact Prayer (Salat) decreed by God consists of specific actions which includes the requirement to face towards the Ka'bah during the prayer. From the USA, the direction to face towards Mecca is Southeast along a line of constant direction through the earth. The Qiblah is *not* Northeast, which is based on the incorrect belief that the direction to face towards the Ka'bah must be along a line or path of shortest distance *over* the surface of the earth.

Since USA and Mecca are almost opposite to each other in the earth's northern hemisphere, any path of travel over the earth's round surface will be curved and multidirectional. Since multiple directions are involved, it is impossible to face towards the Ka'bah in a constant direction on this path. The Quran does not indicate anything about facing the Ka'bah along a path that is on the surface of the earth. When you pray, you do not physically travel towards the Ka'bah, so it does not make sense to even think in terms of praying along a path of travel to it. Additionally, the Quran gives no indication that our souls or prayers are affected by shortest distances to Mecca or that we cannot face the Ka'bah along imaginary straight lines passing through objects like land, sea, walls etc. coming in between.

Northeast Qiblah: Changing path over the surface of the earth

The Northeast Qiblah suggests at least two approaches to justify the direction using paths that are above the surface of the earth:

Northeast (Approach 1): Shortest distance path based on great circles

A Great Circle is any circle around the surface of a sphere whose plane divides the sphere into two equal halves, like the Earth's Equator (Latitude 0°). On a great circle from the USA passing through Mecca, the path *initially* starts out in a north/northeast or east/northeast direction, passes through or below Greenland, then turns downwards southeast for the *majority* of the total distance to Mecca.

Because the shorter arc from the USA starts out in a northeast bearing, people think that northeast should be the direction to face towards the Ka'bah. However, it does not work this way because the direction to face towards a city cannot be defined by the initial direction of the path of travel to it. To provide a true and complete travel direction towards a city, you have to mention all the direction segments involved or the traveler will have no idea where to arrive. Therefore, when describing the shortest surface path between the USA and Mecca along a great circle, you have to make known that while the path starts out northeast, it later bears southeast and continues to head southeast for the *longer* section of the total path to Mecca.

Great Circle

Two reasons often offered in defense of using great circles are:

(a) When people congregate for prayer, they form circles around the Ka'bah, which signifies that you can face in the direction of a great circle.

Answer: These are regular circles, not great circles. The only great circle possible in this context is the outermost one that will go around the surface edge of the earth. One circle cannot be a reason when there are so many other circles involved.

(b) You follow a 'great circle direction' for prayer because that is how airplanes fly over shortest distance paths.

Answer: When flying over large distances, an airplane does not fly in a smooth arc the way it may appear in a typical illustration depicting a shortest distance/great circle path between two cities. An airplane flies straight, and if it keeps flying straight, it will go away from the earth. To prevent it from flying off into space and to maintain a steady course over the earth's round shape, an airplane has to constantly adjust its flight path along a series of smaller paths of changing heights and directions.

In view of this we can appreciate that while a great circle is helpful in outlining a broad travel route or course, it cannot be called a 'direction' all by itself as there are many paths and directions involved.

Northeast (Approach 2): Line of sight to the sun over Mecca

The other method offered for a Northeast Qiblah works on the premise that to face towards something, you must be able to establish a direct line of sight to it. If you cannot do this, then you must look at a reference point directly above it and the resulting direction or angle of sight to that point will be the direction to face towards what you originally wanted to face.

Since the earth is round, you can only make a direct line of sight to anything on its surface up to a certain distance. From the USA, it is impossible to do this with Mecca. As a result of this, the method asks you to look at the sun when it is positioned exactly above Mecca and concludes that the resulting direction or angle of sight to the sun is the direction to face towards Mecca.

Going by this idea, the sun comes up exactly above Mecca twice a year on about May 27/28 and July 15/16. If you look towards the sun from the USA at the corresponding local US time on these two days, it will be visible in the northeast sky. Because the sun is seen in a northeast direction/position in the sky, people have concluded that northeast is the direction to face towards Mecca from the USA!

This is not a very practical method because only a tiny portion of northeast USA can observe the sun when it is over Mecca on these dates. Additionally, the local US time for viewing the sun from these locations is just within a few minutes after sunrise, which helps us appreciate that this is not a very convenient and globally consistent method to determine the direction to face towards Mecca from the USA.

Since most of the USA cannot apply this method on those two days, the method suggests that the Qiblah can alternately be determined by observing the shadow of the sun when it comes exactly above Mecca's antipode on another two days in the year instead!

Mecca's antipode, which is the point diametrically opposite to it on Earth, is located in the South Pacific at approximately 21°26'S/140°10'W. On January 13 and November 28, the sun is directly above this point. According to the method, at the corresponding local US time (which will be approximately between 1 and 4 p.m.), you should face towards the shadow of the sun and that will be the northeast direction to face towards Mecca. If you cannot see the shadow, then you must put your back towards the sun and you will be facing northeast towards Mecca.

This is not legal. You cannot suddenly decide to put your back to the sun when it is over Mecca's antipode and conclude that the direction of your shadow is facing towards Mecca. To claim this, you have to already know where Mecca is first. If you already know where Mecca is, what is the sense of using this method to tell you which way is Mecca? If you face towards a shadow that you know is pointing northeast to Mecca, or put your back to the sun to make yourself face northeast, then you have not achieved anything. You have already decided that the direction to face towards Mecca is northeast based on some previous information, and you are only applying this method to convince yourself that this is the direction for prayer.

Using the sun to determine the Qiblah has no basis from Quran

We see in the Quran that God has designed the sun and the moon to serve as timing devices so that we know when to start and end our religious practices. God also tells us that He made the stars for navigation. But nowhere in the Quran does God say that we must use the sun, moon or stars to determine the direction to face towards the Ka'bah.

When we journey towards a place, we may need to refer to some signposts or other 'landmarks' to navigate us towards our destination. Just like we refer to landmarks on the ground, we can also use the sun, moon and stars as 'celestial marks' to help us with our bearings and keep us on the right track along our path of travel. But before we can use anything as a navigation reference, we

have to know where our start and end points are, and work out a path of travel between them first. Only after you have worked out a viable travel path between them, you can - if you need to - use the sun, moon or stars as navigation references along the way.

Ka’bah – focal point

If God wanted us to use the North Pole or the sun over Mecca as key factors in determining the Qiblah, He would have told us in the Quran. Instead, God has told us to use the Ka’bah as a *focal point* and face towards it. There are no theoretical travel routes, great circle paths, initial directions or any other such conditions to be considered.

Understand the difference

The essential reason why people are stuck on the idea of facing the Ka’bah along the initial direction of a surface path of travel is because they think that their souls and prayers function in the same manner as their human bodies. Because our bodies cannot see or physically travel to locations through the earth does not mean that our souls and prayers face the same restrictions to make contact with God (17:1, 39:42). Our souls operate in a different dimension in relation to our bodies which we cannot really comprehend at this time. Remember that the Ka’bah is only a focal point of reference to turn towards. You don’t travel towards it when you pray, nor do you need to think in those terms for you to be worrying about how your soul or prayers reach out to God. If people can understand this, God willing, it will be easy for them to abandon the incorrect idea of working with paths that are above the earth to determine the Qiblah from the USA.

Flat maps

The objective of flat maps is to project the whole world in a manner that all the land and sea areas can be seen together at one time on one plane. To do this, a few adjustments have to be made for the curvature of the earth, resulting in some distortion in the shape of the oceans and continents, especially nearer the poles. However, on such a map, even the necessary distortion of the earth will not affect the constant southeast line of direction to Mecca.

A flat map and spherical projection work in two different ways. A flat map is an independent model to depict the whole world in one plane and clearly shows the positional relationship (and straight direction) between two places on Earth. You cannot use a round projection of the earth and apply great circle concepts to a flat map

Confirmation by God’s Messenger of the Covenant

God has blessed the human race by sending a consolidating messenger in this era to confirm various aspects of the religion so that all doubts and differences are removed once and for all. Rashad Khalifa, God’s Messenger of the Covenant (3:81, 33:7), has confirmed Southeast as the direction to face towards the Ka’bah from the USA.

Correct Contact Prayer: www.masjiduntucson.org/submission/practices/salat/

Purification of Islam: www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/appendices/introduction.html

Messenger of the Covenant: www.masjiduntucson.org/quran/appendices/appendix2.html

Dr. Rashad Khalifa’s mother tongue was Arabic and he had vast experience with the English language by living in the USA for many years. This, along with his understanding of the traditional/corrupted version of Islam, provided the perfect platform for him to bring out the true

meaning of the Quran, free from traditional bias and understanding. Sure, other people will also have good knowledge of Arabic, but do you want to risk following someone else's opinion and understanding of Quran over the "Authorized English Version of Quran" by God's messenger (49:1)?

Beware of God's enemies

Satan will always try to confuse and divert people away from the truth. Be careful of Satan's soldiers who are out to destroy the truth established by God's messenger. It does it make sense that God will send a messenger to unite all the religions into one purified religion for the whole world, only to have another messenger come along a couple of years later to change or 'correct' what the earlier messenger confirmed and practiced himself. Nowhere in the Quran do we see any example of a messenger who was sent to correct what any previous messenger explained and confirmed.

An example of misrepresentation by Satan of the three Qiblah direction verses (2:144/149/150) is the inference drawn from the Arabic word *Shatr*. The word *Shatr* means (1) towards/in the direction of, or (2) half of [a thing]. While Dr. Khalifa has applied the straightforward meaning 'towards,' Satan has tried to draw a connection with 'half of,' as that is perhaps the only way to justify using the Sun-over-Mecca method to determine the Qiblah from the USA.

Learning from history

It is noteworthy that one of the examples from history which God has put in the Quran for us to learn from specifically deals with unhesitatingly following the Qiblah pointed out by His messenger (2:142-145). At one time angel Gabriel instructed Prophet Muhammad to change the existing Qiblah and face towards Jerusalem instead of Mecca. This incident turned out to be a critical test to distinguish between the hypocrites with doubts in their hearts and true Submitters who unhesitatingly obeyed the messenger. A little reflection shows that we are in a similar situation today where people must either uphold the Southeast Qiblah confirmed by God's Messenger of the Covenant for the USA, or pursue their own opinions and prejudices to face northeast instead.

The Best Community

By God's grace, all matters of the religion essential for salvation are now clarified. It is a great blessing for the world to have the correct information from God and be saved from the doubts and distortions which Satan is always trying to propagate. You have to trust God and know that He will not mislead you through His messenger; nor take him away until he has completed his task as that would defeat the purpose of sending him in the first place (5:19, 5:67, 16:35).

Submitters must also realize that they have the responsibility of supporting God's messenger. If there is a group of people who claim to follow God's messenger but don't uphold his Qiblah or any of his teachings, then it is the duty of Submitters not to compromise and follow these people's Qiblah, just to maintain a sense of dignity or communal harmony with them (60:1, 58:22, 68:8-9). Those who obey God and His messenger are the righteous and best community of God, even if they are in the minority (3:110). It is for the other people to come and seek acceptance among God's true community/congregation of Submitters — not the other way around!

Knowing which way is southeast from USA/Canada using a magnetic compass

A convenient way of knowing which way to face towards Mecca from different cities around the world is by using a Magnetic Qiblah Compass. To date (2011), most Qiblah compasses available in North America will make you face north/northeast from USA and Canada. To check if your Qiblah compass is set up like this, match the number of a US or Canadian city with the compass needle as per the normal procedure. Most instruction booklets are standardized to have numbers between 31 and 1 for US and Canadian cities. Use these two numbers itself as they represent the two sides of the USA and Canada.

If the Ka'bah arrow/minaret is pointing somewhere between the same direction as the compass needle point (left diagram) to about 80° to its right (right diagram), then you are using a Qiblah compass which is calculated to make you face north/northeast from the USA and Canada. With the establishment of God's purified religion well under way (9:33, 61:9, 110:2), God willing, future Qiblah compasses will soon start shipping with the instruction booklets standardized to point you Southeast from the USA and Canada.

In the meanwhile, even if your existing Qiblah compass is set for northeast, you can continue to use it to tell you which way is southeast from wherever you are. First let the compass needle settle at its natural rest position as always. A compass needle will always point north which is actually the natural or 'magnetic' north of the earth. Once the needle is settled, obviously, 90° perpendicular to its right will be East. Slightly southward beyond that will be southeast.

Important: When using magnetic compasses, always place them on a flat surface like the floor or wooden table, and keep them away from metallic objects like computers, steel furniture, keys and strong electromagnetic fields. Metallic objects greatly affect the natural position of a compass needle and your orientation may become incorrect without your realizing it. If you want to be sure, take a reading from a couple of different places in the room.

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www.thecompassstore.com/whatisdec.html; www.thecompassstore.com/comwitaddec.html;

www.ngdc.noaa.gov/geomagmodels/Declination.jsp

Auto southeast angle software calculator from USA/Canada: www.masjiduntucson.org/ptime/ .