

DETERMINING THE DIRECTION OF QIBLAH

Q : 4- (1) Dear Maulana, your lecture on June 6, 1997 at MCA, increased our knowledge and Iman. May Allah give you great reward Ameen! I would like to thank you for visiting MCA Santa Clara.

Dear Maulana, we need your Fatwa on the following three Fiqhi issues:

- 1) The time of Salah al-Zuhr (what is the beginning, the end of the Zuhr time and what is the definition of Zawal?)
- 2) The Qiblah's direction (Should the Qiblah be identified by the strict directions West, East, North and South only? Are other directions such as northeast and south-west also considered? Should the shortest direction to Makkah be considered as a reference to define Qiblah?)
- 3) The means to measure the Salah time and the direction of Qiblah (Is there any wrong in using Watches, Prayer Calendars and Compasses to identify Salah time and Qiblah's direction?)

Your fatwa attached with opinions of the four Mazhabs and Ijma is highly appreciated.

A: I received your faxed letter, with certain questions, the answers of which are given below:

- 1) The time of Zuhr prayer begins immediately after Zawal, Zawal means the decline of the sun towards the west during its daily orbit.
- 2) The Qiblah is not necessarily identified by the strict direction of west, east etc. but it can also be in the north-east or north-west according to the geographical position of each place. We should try to ascertain the exact direction of Qiblah, however, an approximate direction may also serve the purpose of Salah??? so much so that deviation from the exact direction of Qiblah upto 45 degree is held to be negligible which means that if somebody offers Salah to a direction which is within 45 degree from the exact direction of Qiblah, Salah will be acceptable.
- 3) There is no bar against using watches, compasses or calendars to identify Salah time and Qiblah's direction in so far as they are correctly designed, and accurate.

Contemporary fatawa