

# Ruling On Pointing the Feet Toward the Direction of Qiblah

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

## Question

What do the respected scholars say regarding the following: What is the ruling on pointing the feet towards the Holy Kaba? Zaid claims that pointing the feet towards the Qiblah in a general situation, especially while sleeping, is permissible and he argues this based on the following:

1. An ill person will offer his salah pointing his feet towards the Qiblah.
2. It has been commanded to point the feet of the one close to death towards the Qiblah.
3. The same is commanded for when the ritual bath is given to the deceased.
4. When carrying the dead body, if his feet face the Qiblah, there is no issue.

Because we have been instructed to point the feet towards the Qiblah in these situations, it becomes evident that this isn't such an act that has been prohibited in the Shari'ah. Therefore, the feet can be spread towards the Qiblah in any situation. Please guide us in this matter.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

The Holy Kaba holds immense respect and importance in the religion of Islam. It is counted from amongst the Sha'air Ullah (Signs of Allah). It is the religious responsibility of every Muslim to pay it respect. One of the ways of demonstrating respect is to avoid pointing the feet towards it. For this reason, the Jurists have stated that without any valid Shari'ah excuse, to point the feet towards the Holy Ka'bah is Makruh and prohibited as this is disrespecting it.

Allah Almighty states in the *Holy Quran*:

﴿وَمَنْ يُعْظِمِ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ﴾

Translation from Kanz-ul-Iman: and whosoever respects the symbols of Allah; so, this is from the piety of the hearts.

(Part 17, Surah Al-Hajj, Verse 32)

It is stated in *Tanwir al-Absar* (with its explanation *Durr al-Mukhtar*):

کرہ (مدرجلیہ فی نوم او غیرہ الیہا) ای عمد الانہ اساءة ادب

(*Tanwir al-Absar Ma'a Durr al-Mukhtar*, Vol. 2, pp. 515-516, Publ. Peshawar)

A'la-Hazrat, Imam Ahmed Raza Khan علیہ الرحمہ states:

کعبہ معظمہ (قبلہ) کی طرف پاؤں کر کے سونا، بلکہ اُس طرف پاؤں پھیلانا، سونے میں ہو خواہ جاگنے میں، لیٹے ہو خواہ بیٹھے میں، ہر طرح ممنوع و بے ادبی ہے۔

Translation: Sleeping in the state that the feet are pointing towards the Qiblah, rather having the feet spread towards that direction whether it be while asleep or in a wakeful state while lying down or while sitting, in every case is prohibited and disrespectful.

(*Fatawa Razawiyah*, Vol. 23, p. 385, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

To deem it permissible (without any dislike) to spread the feet towards the Ka'bah (in any state, especially while sleeping) based on the rulings mentioned by Zaid is absolutely wrong. The details for the rulings mentioned by Zaid are as follows:

(1) The ill pointing his feet towards the Qiblah:

The Shara'i ruling is that if an ill person isn't capable of offering salah while standing, or while sitting, he must offer salah with gestures while lying down. When lying, he is given the option to face the Qiblah either by turning on his right or left side or on his back. However, the second method (laying on the back) is preferred. But when offering salah in this way, the ill person will try his utmost to retract his feet from the Qiblah by raising his knees. If one isn't capable of this, then he is excused.

It becomes clear from this explanation that Shari'ah specifically addressed the situation in which the feet were pointing at the Qiblah and commanded to retract the feet. Zaid is basing his conclusion on such a ruling which contradicts his initial claim. Furthermore, the situation in which an ill person is excused is of extreme ailment and difficulty, which is commonly found as a reason for ease in Shari'ah rulings. Therefore, to extrapolate rulings on general situations from specific and exceptional cases is incorrect.

Regarding the salah of an ill person, it is stated in *Durr al-Mukhtar*:

(وإن تعذر القعود أو ما مستلقيا) على ظهره (ورجلاه نحو القبلة) غير أنه ينصب ركبتيه لكرامة مد الرجل إلى القبلة ويرفع رأسه يسيرا ليصير وجهه إليها (أو على جنبه الأيمن) أو الأيسر ووجهه إليها (والأول أفضل) على المعتمد

(Radd al-Muhtar Ma'a Durr al-Mukhtar, Book of Salah, Chapter of Salah of the ill, Vol. 2, p. 99, Publ. Beirut)

It is stated in *Durar al-Hukkam*:

وفي المجتبى وينبغي للمستلقي أن ينصب ركبته إن قدر حتى لا يمد رجليه إلى القبلة

(Durar Ul Hukkam, Book of Salah, Chapter of Salah of the ill, Vol. 1, p. 129, Publ. Dar Ihya al-Kutub al-Arabiyyah)

Why is offering salah while lying on the back better? The reason for this is mentioned in *al-Binayah Sharh al-Hidayah* as follows:

(لأن إشارة المستلقي تقع إلى هواء الكعبة) هذه إشارة إلى أوجه المعقول، أراد أن المستلقي على قفاه إذا أو ما يقع إيماءه إلى هواء الكعبة، وقد علم أن شرط المصلي أن يصلي إلى القبلة، والصلاة بالإيماء ماله فعل غير الإيماء والإيماء أن يقع إلى الكعبة بما قلنا، ألا ترى أنه لو حققه لذلك سجودًا كان إلى القبلة

(Al-Binayah Sharh al-Hidaya, Book of Salah, Chapter of The Salah of the ill, Vol. 2, p. 641, Publ. Beirut)

(2) Pointing the feet towards the Qiblah at the time of death:

The Shari'ah has guided us that when one is close to his death and the signs of death start to appear, it is sunnah to turn him on his right side and make him face the Qiblah. Another way is to lay him on his back and slightly raise his head so it can be towards the Qiblah as well. However, if having him face the Qiblah will cause

him pain, he should be left as is.

Once again, Zaid is basing his argument on such a ruling in which following the sunnah method will not necessitate the feet pointing towards the Qiblah. When having the body lay on his back, Shari'ah isn't aiming at having the feet towards the Qiblah, but rather on having the face towards the Qiblah. That is why his head should be slightly raised. Here, the Shari'ah could have commanded to raise the knees as well but didn't because of the delicacy of the situation, as every sensible person can understand. Further, understand through this that Shari'ah encourages the person in this state to recite kalima, but even then, it has advised not to command him to recite, rather the people around him should recite it. So, to have him raise his knees is a cause of difficulty for him, which is a cause for leniency in rulings.

The method of laying a person close to his death has been mentioned in *Jawharah al-Nayyirah*:

وإذا احتضر الرجل ووجهه وجهه إلى القبلة على شقه الأيمن) هذا هو السنة والمختار أنه يوضع مستلقيا  
على قفاه نحو القبلة لأنه أيسر لخروج روحه

(Al Jawharah al Nayyirah, Book of Salah, Chapter of Funeral, Vol. 1, p. 101, Publ. Al-Matab'ah al-Khayriyah)

It is stated in *Bahar-e-Shari'at*:

جب موت کا وقت قریب آئے اور علامتیں پائی جائیں، تو سنت یہ ہے کہ دہنی کروٹ پر لٹا کر قبلہ کی طرف موٹھ کر دیں، اور یہ بھی جائز ہے کہ چپٹ لٹائیں اور قبلہ کو پاؤں کریں کہ یوں بھی قبلہ کو موٹھ ہو جائے گا، مگر اس صورت میں سر کو قدرے اونچا رکھیں اور قبلہ کو موٹھ کرنا دشوار ہو کہ اس کو تکلیف ہوتی ہو، تو جس حالت پر ہے، چھوڑ دیں۔

Translation: When the time of death comes close and its signs start to appear, it is sunnah to lay the person on his right side and turn him towards the Qiblah. It is also allowed to lay him on his back and turn his feet towards the Qiblah as in this way, the face will also be towards the Qiblah. But in this situation, the head should be kept higher. If turning his head towards the Qiblah causes pain, he should be left in whichever state he is in.

(Bahar-e-Shari'at, Sect. 4, p. 808, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madinah, Karachi)

In regard to Talqin, it is stated in '*Inayah Sharh al-Hidaya*:

(ولقن الشهادتين) تلقينها أن يقال عنده وهو يسمع، ولا يقال له قل لأن الحال صعب عليه فربما يمتنع عن ذلك والعياذ بالله

(Al- 'Inayah Sharh al-Hidaya, Book of Salah, Vol. 2, p. 103, Publ. Dar al-Fikr)

Difficulty is a reason for leniency. It is stated in *Al-Ashbah Wa al-Nazair*:

القاعدة الرابعة: (المشقة تجلب التيسير) -- قال العلماء: يتخرج على هذه القاعدة جميع رخص الشرع وتخفيفاته

(Al-Ashbah Wa al-Nazair, Vol. 1, pp. 245- 246, Publ. Dar al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, Beirut)

(3) The feet of the deceased pointing to the Qiblah when being given the ritual bath:

How should the deceased be laid when giving it the ritual bath?

**Sharai Ruling:** According to *اصح* (*the most correct opinion*), there is no specification on this. Therefore, do whatever is easier at that moment. Whether he is laid north to south or east to west, both are allowed.

Zaid is basing his argument on such a matter regarding which there is no specification in Shari'ah (due to many factors such as place of bathing, the situation of the deceased, etc.). Rather the matter is left in the hands of the people, whatever they feel is best in their circumstance, they should do. Therefore, Zaid basing his argument on an option that he specified himself and Shari'ah gave no specification about, then trying to prove his claim through that is incorrect.

It is stated in *Fatawa 'Alamgiri*:

وكيفية الوضع عند بعض أصحابنا الوضع طولا كما في حالة المرض إذا أراد الصلاة بإيماء ومنهم من اختار الوضع كما يوضع في القبر والأصح أنه يوضع كما تيسر

(Fatawa 'Alamgiri, Book of Salah, Vol. 1, p. 158, Publ. Dar al-Fikr)

The Imam of Ahl al-Sunnah, Imam Ahmed Raza Khan رحمة الله عليه was

asked:

میّت کو نہلانے کے لیے جو تختے پر لٹائیں، تو شرقاً وغرباً لٹائیں کہ قبلے کو ہوں، یا جنوباً شمالاً کہ دہنی کروٹ کو ہو؟

Translation: When bathing the deceased, should the platform which he is laying on be placed east to west so such that it faces the Qiblah or north to south so the Qiblah may be his right side?

To this, he رحمة الله عليه replied:

تو آپ رحمة الله عليه نے جواباً ارشاد فرمایا: سب طرح درست ہے، مذہبِ اصح میں اس باب میں کوئی تعیین و قید نہیں، جو صورت میسر ہو اُس پر عمل کریں۔

Translation: All methods are correct. According to the most correct opinion, there is no specification or restriction regarding this in the Shari'ah. Whichever method is suitable, that should be acted on.

(Fatawa Razawiyyah, Vol. 9, p. 91, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

(4) The feet of the deceased pointing to the Qiblah when being carried in the casket:

**Sharai Ruling:** The head should be towards the front when carrying the funeral because it is the most honorable part of the body and keeping it in front is a way of honoring it. Therefore, wherever the funeral is heading, the head should be in that direction.

**Explanation:** The funeral procession moves in a particular direction, hence, considering the honor of the head, Shari'ah commanded to keep it towards the front. Therefore, whether the funeral procession is moving towards the Qiblah or in the opposite direction, the head should be kept in front. If we were also commanded to not let the feet point towards the Qiblah in this situation, it would pose great difficulty for those participating in the funeral procession, as navigating the direction of the Qiblah while passing through various alleys and pathways is extremely challenging. Therefore, due to necessity, no prohibition was mentioned in this regard. However, this leniency remains limited to situations of difficulty and cannot be generalized.

In *Bada'i al-Sana'i*, it is stated regarding carrying of the funeral:

ويقدم الراس في حال حمل الجنازة، لانه من اشرف الاعضاء فكان تقديمه اولى ولان معنى الكرامة في التقديم

(Bada'i al-Sana'i, Book of Salah, Vol.1, p. 309, Publ. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, Beirut)

It is stated in *Fatawa Razawiyyah*:

میت کو کسی طرف لے جانا ہو، بہر حال سر آگے کی طرف رہے۔

Translation: Regardless of which direction the funeral is being taken, the head should remain towards the front.

(Fatawa Razawiyyah, Vol. 9, p. 425, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

The excuse granted due to necessity is limited to necessity. It is stated in *Al-Ashbah Wa al-Nazair*:

الضرورات تبيح المحظورات-- ما ابيح للضرورة يقدر بقدرها

(Al-Ashbah Wa al-Nazair, p. 87, Publ. Karachi)

Translation: Necessity permits prohibitions. Whatever is permitted due to necessity remains limited to necessity.

It is for this reason that wherever there is no hardship for the deceased, the default ruling is given that the feet must not point towards the Qiblah. It is stated in *Bahar-e-Shari'at*:

جب جنازہ رکھا جائے، تو یوں نہ رکھیں کہ قبلہ کو پاؤں ہوں یا سر، بلکہ آڑا رکھیں کہ دہنی کروٹ قبلہ کو ہو۔

Translation: When the funeral (casket) is being placed, do not place it in such a way that the feet or the head point to the Qiblah, rather put it vertically so the right side can face the Qiblah.

(Bahar-e-Shari'at, Vol. 4, p. 844, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madina, Karachi)

It becomes very clear from these details that for Zaid to base his conclusion on these rulings is from the category of Qiyas Ma'a Al-Fariq (flawed analogy). Therefore, it is only appropriate that he tells Shari'ah rulings under the guidance of reliable scholars so the correct information may reach the people. This method is safe and is the true servitude of Islam. May Allah Almighty enable us to act accordingly. آمین.

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ knows best.)

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