

are, turn your faces in its direction. Those who were given the scripture know well that that is the truth from their Lord, and Allah is not unaware of what they do.

Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): ﴿We see the turning of your face [for guidance] towards heaven﴾ that is, We see you frequently turning your face in all directions, longing and waiting for revelation with instructions to turn towards the Kaaba. It mentions ﴿your face﴾ and not “your gaze”, to convey a sense of great eagerness and because turning of the face implies turning of the gaze.

﴿now We will turn you﴾ that is, We will direct you, as you are under Our protection

﴿to a qibla that will please you﴾ that is, that you will love, namely the Kaaba. This is indicative of the virtue and high status of the Prophet (ﷺ), as Allah (ﷻ) hastened to please him. Then He told him in clear terms to face towards it: ﴿So turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque﴾. The word translated here as ﴿face﴾ refers to the front of the body

﴿wherever you are﴾ on land or sea, east or west, north or south
 ﴿turn your faces in its direction﴾ that is, towards it.

This highlights the fact that facing the Kaaba is a condition of validity for all prayers, obligatory and supererogatory, and that if it is possible to face it directly, then one must do so, otherwise facing its general direction is sufficient; turning away from it (whilst praying) invalidates the prayer, because the command to do a thing is a prohibition of its opposite. As Allah mentioned above the People of the Book and others objecting to that, and referred to their argument, here He states that the people of knowledge among them know that you are following the truth and the command of your Lord in that regard, because they find this in their scripture. Therefore their objection stems from stubbornness and wrongdoing, because they know that they are in the wrong. So do not concern yourself with that, for a