

guidance deliberately, out of stubbornness. Such people included the Jews and Christians, the people of the first Book, who disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ) despite having certain knowledge (that he was a true Prophet); their disbelief did not stem from ignorance. Hence Allah (ﷻ) told him: «Even if you were to bring to those who were given the scripture every kind of sign» that is, every kind of proof and evidence to support what you say and explain what you are calling them to «they would not follow your qibla» that is, they would not follow you, because following his qibla is indicative of following him. This is mentioned because the reason for the argument was the issue of the qibla. They adopted this stance because they were stubborn; they knew the truth but they turned away from it. Signs are only of benefit to one who is seeking the truth but is somewhat confused, in which case clear signs may explain the matter to him. As for the one who has decided not to follow the truth, there is no hope for him.

Moreover, there were already some differences among them, as some of them did not follow the qibla of others. So there is nothing strange in them not following your qibla, O Muhammad (ﷺ), when they are enemies filled with real envy.

«nor would you follow their qibla». This is more eloquent than saying “do not follow their qibla”, because that implies that it is natural for the Prophet (ﷺ) to be different from them, hence it is impossible for him to do that.

Similarly, as the truth had become clear on the basis of certain evidence, there was no need to bring an answer to their specious argument, because there is no end to such arguments and because it is easy to see that they are flawed, as it is known that everything that is contrary to clear truth is false. Therefore discussion of their specious arguments is not necessary.

«If you were to follow their desires» – the verse mentions «their desires» and not “their religion” because what they are following is