

An Analysis of Qibla Direction Tolerance According to Sheikh Muhammad Yasin Al-Fadani: A Solution to Qibla Deviation

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ABSTRACT

Determining the Qibla direction is a crucial aspect of performing the prayer (salat), particularly for Muslims living far from the Kaaba. Issues arise regarding whether one must face the exact structure of the Kaaba ('ayn al-Ka'bah) or if merely facing its general direction (jihat al-Ka'bah) is sufficient. This study aims to analyze the concept of Qibla direction tolerance according to Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani as a solution to Qibla deviation, specifically within the context of mosques in the Nusantara (Malay Archipelago) region. This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method, examining the works of Sheikh Yasin alongside both classical and contemporary literature related to Islamic astronomy (ilmu falak). The results show that Sheikh Yasin proposes two scopes for the Qibla direction: jihat al-kubra (up to 180°) and jihat al-sughra (up to 90°), with a maximum tolerance of 45° to the right and left of the ideal direction. This view demonstrates the flexibility within classical Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) regarding the limitations of measurement tools and observation methods in the past. Nevertheless, Sheikh Yasin consistently emphasizes the importance of Islamic astronomy and the mastery of scientific methods to determine a more accurate Qibla direction. In conclusion, Sheikh Yasin's perspective provides room for shari'i (legal) tolerance in determining the Qibla direction, while simultaneously emphasizing the urgency of utilizing modern technology to achieve greater precision in religious practices.

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ABSTRAK

Penentuan arah kiblat merupakan aspek penting dalam pelaksanaan ibadah salat, khususnya bagi umat Islam yang berada jauh dari Ka'bah. Persoalan timbul terkait keharusan menghadap tepat ke bangunan Ka'bah ('ain al-Ka'bah) atau cukup mengarah secara umum (jihatul Ka'bah). Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep toleransi arah kiblat menurut Syekh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani sebagai solusi terhadap kemelencengan arah kiblat, khususnya dalam konteks masjid-masjid di wilayah Nusantara. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka, mengkaji karya Syekh Yasin dan literatur klasik maupun kontemporer terkait ilmu falak. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Syekh Yasin mengemukakan dua cakupan arah kiblat: jihadul kubra (hingga 180°) dan jihadul sughra (hingga 90°), dengan toleransi maksimal 45° ke kanan dan kiri dari arah ideal. Pandangan ini menunjukkan fleksibilitas dalam hukum fikih klasik terhadap keterbatasan alat ukur dan pengamatan masa lampau. Meskipun demikian, Syekh Yasin tetap menekankan pentingnya ilmu falak dan penguasaan metode ilmiah untuk menentukan arah kiblat yang lebih akurat. Kesimpulannya pandangan Syekh Yasin memberi ruang toleransi syar'i dalam penentuan arah kiblat, sekaligus menekankan urgensi pemanfaatan teknologi modern untuk mencapai ketepatan yang lebih tinggi dalam praktik ibadah.

INTRODUCTION

Facing the qiblah is essentially about determining direction, specifically the direction toward the Kaaba in the city of Mecca. When praying, Muslims are required to face the qiblah as a sign of unity and submission in worship. This direction is important because the Kaaba serves as a unifying symbol for Muslims around the world. Although it may seem technical,

facing the qiblah is fundamentally one of the requirements for a valid prayer.¹

For Muslims who can see the Kaaba directly or live near the city of Mecca, determining the direction of the qibla is not difficult. However, for Muslims who are far from the Kaaba, the question arises as to whether they must face the Kaaba itself (*'ain al-Ka'bah*) or whether it is sufficient to face the general direction of Mecca (*jihadul ka'bah*).² Consequently, for Muslims living far from the city of Mecca, not facing the Kaaba during prayer renders their prayers invalid.³

For Muslims living in areas far from the Kaaba, some flexibility is required in determining the direction of the qibla. This flexibility is often referred to as the tolerance margin for the qibla direction. The physical movements performed during prayer can cause slight shifts in the direction one faces toward the qibla. This tolerance is intended to facilitate the body's positioning when facing the qibla, especially during acts of worship that require this specific orientation. While methods for determining the direction of the qiblah in the modern era have become increasingly advanced and accurate, in practice it is certainly not easy to align one's body precisely with such exact calculations.⁴

Not only does the precision of aligning one's body have its limitations, but the instruments used to determine the direction of the Qibla also have limitations in terms of accuracy;

¹Shofwatul Aini, "Uji Akurasi Rasd Al-Qiblat Global Sebagai Metode Penentuan Arah Kiblat," *Al-Ahkam Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 7, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 57–71, <https://doi.org/10.22515/alahkam.v7i1.5412>.

²Syaikh Imam al-Qurthubi, *al-Jamī' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, terj. Ahmad Hotib Fathurrahman, jil. II (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2007), 393–394.

³Muhamad Syazwan Faiz et al., *Python for Islamic Astronomy: Modern Computational Approaches to Hijri Calendar, Qibla, and Prayer Times* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003649120>.

⁴Muthmainnah Muthmainnah and Fattah Setiawan Santoso, "Pemanfaatan Sains Dan Teknologi Dalam Pengukuran Arah Kiblat Di Indonesia," *Ulumuddin : Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 10, no. 2 (December 29, 2020): 149–62, <https://doi.org/10.47200/ulumuddin.v10i2.441>.

consequently, a certain degree of deviation when facing the Qibla is unavoidable. Therefore, this tolerance makes it easier for Muslims living far from the city of Mecca to perform their daily prayers.⁵

As for the Muslim communities of the past who lived far from the city of Mecca, before the advent of modern technology, constellations could be used to determine direction because their movements are regular and predictable. Some constellations frequently used as navigational guides include: the Southern Cross (for south), Orion (for west), the Big Dipper and Little Dipper (for north), and Scorpio (for east).⁶ In astronomy, the constellations Ursa Major and Orion are often used to determine the direction of the qibla. Of the two, Orion is used more frequently because its shape is easily recognizable in the sky. To find the Orion constellation, simply look for the three stars aligned in a straight line: *Mintaka*, *Alnilam*, and *Alnitak*. This row of stars can serve as a guide by drawing a straight line toward the west, especially just after sunset or around midnight. However, this method does not completely rule out the possibility of errors in calculating the direction of the qibla.⁷

According to Sheikh Muhammad Yasin's view regarding flexibility in the direction of the qiblah, as outlined in his book titled "*Syarah Šamarāt al-Wasīlah*," it is stated that the qibla direction for Muslims living far from the city of Mecca, according to the Hanafi scholars, is determined in two ways: first, by performing al-jihad al-kubro, and second, by

⁵Ravik Walhidayah and Ismail Ismail, "Penentuan Azimut Kiblat Masjid Kampus UIN Sultanah Nahrasiyah Lhokseumawe Menggunakan Rumus Segitiga Bola Berbasis Python," *Astroislamica: Journal of Islamic Astronomy* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2025): 276-94, <https://doi.org/10.47766/astroislamica.v4i2.6012>.

⁶Muhammad Awaludin, "Etnoastronomi Perbintangan Masyarakat Lombok," *Astroislamica: Journal of Islamic Astronomy* 3, no. 2 (December 1, 2024): 211-32, <https://doi.org/10.47766/astroislamica.v3i2.3862>.

⁷Arwin Juli Rakhmadi et al., "Frequency-Based Analysis of Mosque Qibla Errors in Medan," *Al-Hilal: Journal of Islamic Astronomy* 7, no. 1 (2025): 37-50, <https://doi.org/10.21580/AL-HILAL.2025.7.1.24203>.

performing *al-jihad al-sugra*. As for *al-jihad al-sugra*, it has a deviation of 180° , while the second, *al-jihad al-sugro*, has a deviation of 90° .⁸

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that deviations in the qibla direction on the island of Lombok are still within acceptable limits. With advancements in technology for calculating the qibla direction, it has been revealed that many mosques in Lombok do indeed have inaccuracies in their orientation relative to the physical location of the Kaaba ('ain al-ka'bah). Although the opinion of Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani is still considered valid, when viewed in light of current modern calculation methods, the results demonstrate a higher level of accuracy. Based on the tolerance for qibla deviation proposed by Sheikh Muhammad al-Fadani, this serves as a basis for mosques that have not yet reconstructed their qibla direction; therefore, this paper is important for examining the concept of qibla direction tolerance as proposed by Sheikh Muhammad al-Fadani.

METHOD

This study employs a literature review, in which data and information were obtained from journals, books, and other sources. The method used in this study is a qualitative method, in which the data obtained is described and examined, then analyzed using the concept of double movement before being presented. This study aims to explain Sheikh Muhammad al-Fadani's concept of tolerance regarding the qibla direction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Biography of Sheikh Muhammad Al-Fadani

Sheikh Muhammad Yasin bin Muhammad Isa al-Fadani was a prominent scholar of the Shafi'i school of thought, known by the titles Abu al-Faidh Alamuddin, al-'Allamah, and al-Jalil.

⁸Syekh Muhammad Yasin bin Isa al-Fadani al-Makki, *Syarah Šamarāt al-Wasilah*, (Mesir: Dār al-Thaba"ah, t.t.), 55.

The name al-Fadani refers to his family's origins in Padang, West Sumatra, while al-Makki indicates that he resided and taught in Mecca. He is also often referred to as asy-Syafi'i due to his expertise in the Shafi'i school of thought. Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani is known as a figure with a brilliant scholarly reputation. Since his thirties, his expertise in various disciplines has been widely recognized by the scholarly community. Not only did he possess a deep mastery of Islamic sciences, but he was also proficient in mathematics, demonstrating the breadth of his scholarly knowledge. His expertise is particularly prominent in the fields of Islamic astronomy and cosmology, in addition to his complete mastery of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence and the rules of Islamic jurisprudence.⁹

In the field of hadith, Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani's expertise encompasses both the science of hadith itself and the science of isnad, which was his specialty. In addition, Sheikh Yasin was also known as an expert in Arabic literature and linguistics, further cementing his reputation as an encyclopedic scholar with mastery across various fields of knowledge. The depth of his understanding and the breadth of his knowledge made Sheikh Yasin al-Fadani one of the most prominent Muslim intellectuals of his time. His ability to integrate various disciplines—ranging from Islamic jurisprudence to the natural sciences—demonstrates a brilliance of thought that is rarely found.¹⁰

Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani possesses a strong scholarly lineage in the fields of Islamic astronomy and cosmology, which he acquired through prominent teachers at

⁹Sinta, Halimah B, and Andi Muhammad Akmal, "ANALISIS PEMIKIRAN SYEKH YASIN AL-FADANI TENTANG HISAB RUKYAT TRADISIONAL," *HISABUNA: Jurnal Ilmu Falak* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 14-39, <https://doi.org/10.24252/hisabuna.v4i1.32485>.

¹⁰Reza Akbar, Aslan Aslan, and Riza Afrian Mustaqim, "Qibla Direction Calculation Methods in Islamic Astronomy References in Indonesia," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 2 (December 31, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v22i2.20422>.

the Grand Mosque in Mecca. One of his primary teachers in this field was Sheikh Muhammad Thahir bin Jalaluddin al-Falaki al-Jawi al-Makki, a Javanese astronomer who settled in Mecca and was known as an expert in the astronomical calculation of prayer times (*awqat*). From Sheikh Muhammad Thahir, Sheikh Yasin studied various classical works on astronomy, such as "*Sullam al-Nayyirain*" by Sheikh Muhammad Manshur al-Batawi and "*Al-Durr al-Aniq*" by Sheikh Ahmad al-Qusyashi.

Sheikh Yasin's scholarly lineage in astronomy also traces back to Sheikh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, a Minangkabau scholar who served as Grand Imam of the Grand Mosque and was an expert in astronomical mathematics. Through Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, he mastered the methods for calculating the direction of the qibla, eclipses, and determining the Hijri month. This chain of knowledge then connects to the classical Islamic astronomical tradition developed by Ibn Shatir (a 14th-century astronomer) and Ulugh Beg (a Timurid astronomer who compiled famous star tables).

In addition, Sheikh Yasin also studied Islamic cosmology (*hai'ah*) under Sheikh Abdullah al-Faruqi al-Hindi, an Indian scholar who taught Islamic astronomical texts such as *Nihayat al-Sul* by al-Marginani and *Al-Tadhkirah fi Ilm al-Hai'ah* by Nasiruddin al-Tusi. This chain of transmission connects him to the scholarly legacy of Islamic astronomy from major observatories such as Maragha and Samarkand. Through his profound mastery of the sciences of falak and *hai'ah*, Sheikh Yasin al-Fadani became the primary authority on matters of *hisab rukyah*, the determination of prayer times, and the Hijri calendar in the Two Holy Cities. He passed this expertise on to his students, including scholars from the Nusantara region who later disseminated the science of astronomy in traditional Islamic boarding schools. Sheikh Yasin's astronomical chain of transmission has become one of the most authoritative in the modern Islamic world, bridging the classical Islamic

astronomical tradition with contemporary scientific developments.¹¹

Sheikh Yasin was known as a prolific scholar who authored numerous books. In the field of astronomy, he wrote several commentaries on his teacher's work titled *Tsamarat al-Wasilah*, including *al-Khamilah*, *Jani ats-Tsimar*, and *Syarah Manzhumat Manazil al-Qamar*. In the field of Ushul Fiqh, his works include *Bughyatul Musytaq*, a commentary on the book *al-Luma'* by Sheikh Abu Ishaq, as well as *al-Fawaid al-Janiyyah*, which is a marginal note (explanatory notes) on the book *al-Mawahib as-Saniyyah*. Meanwhile, in the field of sanad studies, some of his works include *Mathma' al-Wujdan fi Asanid Syekh Umar Hamdan*, *al-Maslak al-Jali*, as well as an unpublished manuscript titled '*Uqud al-Lujain fi Ijazah asy-Syaikh Ismail Zein*, consisting of 12 large volumes, and there are other works as well.

Sheikh Muhammad Yasin bin Sheikh Muhammad Isa al-Fadani al-Makki passed away on the night of Friday, the 28th of Dhu al-Hijjah 1410 AH, or 1990 CE. His passing was witnessed firsthand by one of his students, Sheikh Mukhtaruddin al-Falimbani. The preparation of his body for burial was handled by Sheikh Ismail Zein. The funeral prayer was performed at the Grand Mosque after Friday prayers, and he was then buried at the Ma'la Cemetery in Makkah al-Mukarramah.¹²

Tolerance for Deviation in the Qibla Direction

A discussion of the direction of the qibla cannot be separated from the meaning of the word "qibla" itself. In *Lisanul Arab* by Ibn Manzur, as cited by Muh. Ma'rufin Sudibyo, it is explained that etymologically, the word "qibla" means direction

¹¹Nur Hidayatullah, "Jaringan Ulama Falak Nusantara," *AL - AFAQ : Jurnal Ilmu Falak Dan Astronomi* 1, no. 1 (June 20, 2019): 33-66, <https://doi.org/10.20414/afaq.v1i1.1854>.

¹²Sajidatul Roihanah, "SYEKH YASIN: BIOGRAFI DAN TELAAH KITAB AL-ARBA'UNA HADISAN," *AL-ATSAR: Jurnal Ilmu Hadits* 3, no. 2 (October 25, 2025): 63-84, <https://doi.org/10.37397/al-atsarjurnalilmuhadits.v3i2.1009>.

(in Arabic: al-jihah or al-syathrah). Meanwhile, the al-Munawir Dictionary states that the word “qibla” derives from the root qabala-yaqbulu-qiblata, which means “to face.” In Arab tradition, the term “qiblah” is often used to refer to a physical object (not a human) that possesses distinctive characteristics, such as a prominent shape, an uneven surface, and a striking appearance, thereby attracting attention and serving as a focal point. Terminologically, the qiblah refers to the direction toward the Kaaba as the center of orientation for Muslim worship.¹³ Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani also defined the qiblah in *Sallamul Munajat*. He stated that facing the qiblah means facing the Kaaba. The Kaaba itself is called the qiblah because those who pray must face it.

While many scholars have different formulations when defining the direction of the qiblah, they all share the same meaning: the direction of the Kaaba itself. According to Islamic law (sharia), the Kaaba is a sacred building that serves as the center of worship for Muslims and is located within the Masjid al-Haram in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Kaaba holds a very important position in Islamic teachings because it is the direction of the qibla during prayer and serves as the primary site for the performance of the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. In the Quran, Allah SWT states, which means:

“Indeed, the first house ever built for people (as a place of worship) is the House of God in Bakkah (Mecca), which is blessed and serves as a guide for all people.” (QS. Ali Imran: 96).

In Islamic law, the Kaaba is also known as Baitullah (the House of God), as a symbol of monotheism and worship of Allah SWT alone. The Kaaba is not to be worshipped, but serves as the focal point for prayer and a symbol of God’s oneness, uniting all Muslims worldwide in the same direction during prayer.

¹³Riza Afrian Mustaqim, “Penggunaan Google Earth Sebagai Calibrator Arah Kiblat,” *Jurnal Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum, Perundang-Undangan Dan Pranata Sosial* 6, no. 2 (December 5, 2021): 194, <https://doi.org/10.22373/justisia.v6i2.11537>.

Selamet Hambali explains that the qibla direction is the shortest path to the Ka'bah, calculated along a great circle on the Earth's surface. The great circle traversed by the direction of the qiblah is often referred to as the qiblah circle. Technically, the qiblah circle is a circle on the globe that passes through the axis or axis of the qiblah. Based on these various definitions, it can be concluded that the qiblah is the shortest direction that a person must face toward the Ka'bah when performing prayer.¹⁴

According to Imam Shafi'i and the majority of scholars of the Shafi'i school of thought, the obligation to face the qiblah – whether one is near or far from the Ka'bah – is to face directly toward the 'ainul Ka'bah (the physical center of the Ka'bah's structure).¹⁵ Those who are close must face the qiblah with complete certainty, while those who are far away need only face a direction that is reasonably accurate. A similar opinion was also expressed by Ibn Qisar of the Maliki school and Abu Abdullah al-Jurjani of the Hanafi school.

Meanwhile, Imam Ahmad held that those who are nearby are required to face the Ka'bah itself, but for those who are far away, it is sufficient to face the general direction of the Ka'bah. Imam Malik held the view that whether near or far, the obligation is limited to facing the jihah (direction) of the Ka'bah. Even more flexible is the opinion of Imam Abu Hanifah, who likened the direction of the qiblah to the principle of a triangle: the farther a person is from the center point, the wider the range of acceptable directions becomes.¹⁶

¹⁴Slamet Hambali, *Ilmu Falak: Arah Kiblat Setiap Saat* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2017).

¹⁵Ismail Ismail, "Urgensi Dan Legitimasi Fatwa Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama Aceh Nomor 3 Tahun 2018 Tentang Penetapan Arah Kiblat," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 14, no. 1 (June 2, 2020): 87-98, <https://doi.org/10.24090/MNH.V14I1.3669>.

¹⁶Nur Amalia, Muh. Rasywan Syarif, and Subehan Khalik, "Toleransi Kemelencengan Arah Kiblat," *HISABUNA: Jurnal Ilmu Falak* 4, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 109-22, <https://doi.org/10.24252/hisabuna.v4i1.35802>.

The concepts of *'ainul Ka'bah* and *jihatul Ka'bah* are further divided into two categories each: *'ainul Ka'bah hakiki* and *'ainul Ka'bah 'urfi*, as well as *jihatul Ka'bah kubra* and *jihatul Ka'bah sughra*. What is meant by *'ainul Ka'bah hakiki* is the direction that is absolutely precise and straight toward the Ka'bah building without the slightest deviation, and achieving this level of precision is extremely difficult. As for *'ainul Ka'bah 'urfi*, the permissible tolerance for deviation is approximately one to two degrees. The term *jihatul Ka'bah kubra* refers to a range exceeding 90° , while *jihatul Ka'bah sughra* remains within the 90° range, divided into 45° to the right and 45° to the left; thus, the prayer of such a person is still considered valid.

The *jihah al-sughra* approach can serve as an alternative solution when conditions do not allow for facing the qibla directly. An illustration comparing *jihah al-kibla al-kubra* and *jihah al-kibla al-sughra* can be seen in the following image:

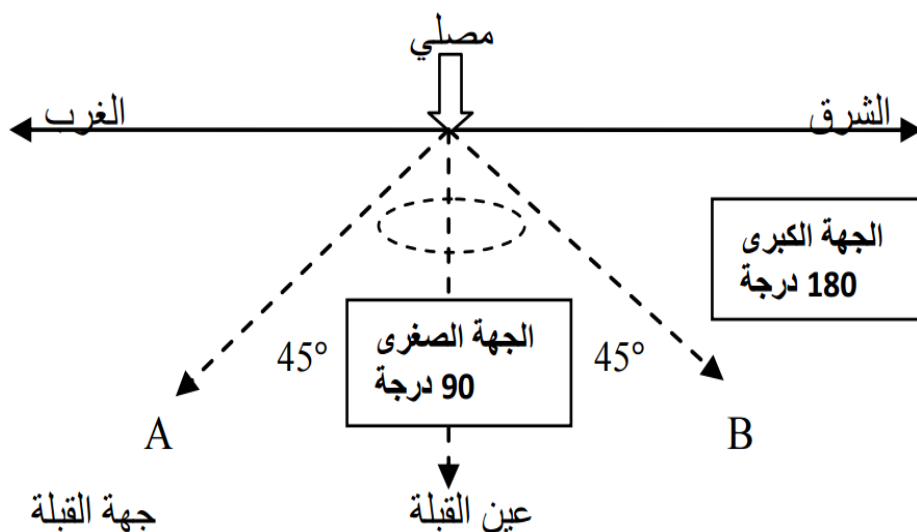


Figure 1. Sketch of the qibla.

Figure 1 shows the scope of the qibla sugra and qibla kubra. In astronomy, the determination of the qibla tolerance is

based on the differences in qibla calculations using three main reference points. These three reference points include the Ka'bah itself as the center of worship orientation, the Masjid al-Haram as the sacred complex surrounding it, and the city of Makkah as a whole as a geographical reference. Each of these reference points can yield a slightly different qibla angle, depending on the observer's location and the measurement method used. Therefore, the tolerance in the qibla direction serves as a technical allowance that is still considered valid under Islamic law. This variation is particularly important to account for in the context of mosque construction or determining the direction of prayer in various parts of the world. This principle demonstrates that the science of astronomy plays a vital role in ensuring the accuracy of religious practices in Islam.

According to a hadith narrated by Imam Baihaqi, which reads:

البيت قبة لأهل المسجد ، والمسجد قبة لأهل الحرم ، والحرم قبة أهل الأرض في مشارقها ومغاربها من أمتي

The Kaaba is the qibla for those who pray at the Grand Mosque, and the Grand Mosque is the qibla for the residents of the Sacred Precincts (Mecca), and the Sacred Precincts (Mecca) are the qibla for all members of my community across the Earth (both East and West). (HR. Baihaqi).

Qibla Direction of Sheikh Muhammad Yasin Al-Fadani

Sheikh Muhammad Yasin bin Muhammad Isa al-Fadani is known as a teacher of astronomy at Darul Ulum in Mecca. His passion for astronomy stems from his appreciation of the nobility of this field of study. Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani also believes that by studying astronomy, we can determine the direction of the qibla and the times of prayer.¹⁷ To

¹⁷Shandy Errlita Ngalian et al., "JARINGAN ULAMA NUSANTARA DENGAN KAWASAN ISLAM INTERNASIONAL: PEMIKIRAN, KEILMUAN, SANAD, DAN KIPRAH BAGI ISLAM,"

determine whether the time for prayer has begun or not, direct observation is required. The Qur'an itself indicates that the time for prayer begins when the sun begins to decline. This is where the importance of astronomy lies, as this science serves as a vital tool for determining prayer times and the direction of the qiblah—two essential requirements for the validity of prayer. Therefore, the study of astronomy is considered a collective obligation (*fardhu kifayah*). Additionally, according to Sheikh Yasin, astronomy is also useful in determining who is entitled to an inheritance when heirs pass away simultaneously.

As explained by al-Ghazali in Ahmad Izzuddin's book, there are three methods for determining the direction of the qibla and their accuracy, as follows:¹⁸

- a. *Sama'iyah* is an approach that uses signs from the universe—specifically the positions and movements of the stars, the moon, and the sun—as a guide.
- b. *Ardhiyyah* is a method that uses landmarks on the earth's surface—such as hills, villages, or river courses—as directional cues. Because it relies on geographical features, the direction determined may vary depending on the location. To confirm the direction of the qiblah, one can ask local residents, observe the orientation of the mihrab in a nearby mosque, or examine the orientation of graves in a local cemetery.
- c. *Hawaiyyah* is a method that uses wind direction as a guide, beginning with identifying the names of well-known winds along with their characteristics and directions, and then matching them to compass directions. This method also varies depending on the region or country in question.

Tamaddun: Jurnal Kebudayaan Dan Sastra Islam 25, no. 02 (December 25, 2025): 40–52, <https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddunradenfatih.v25i02.32748>.

¹⁸Ahmad Izzuddin, "Typology Jihatul Ka'bah on Qibla Direction of Mosques in Semarang," *Ulul Albab: Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Hukum Islam* 4, no. 1 (November 1, 2020): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.30659/JUA.V4I1.12186>.

Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani argues that the most accurate method for determining the direction of the qibla is through a mastery of astronomy, as this method offers a high degree of accuracy and provides strong certainty to those who practice it. Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani's view on the importance of astronomy in determining the direction of the qibla is reinforced by his broad knowledge and mastery of various classical and modern texts. He is known for his mastery of traditional astronomy as well as his understanding of modern astronomy and geodesy. This is reflected in the numerous texts he has studied, such as the works of Abu Raihan al-Biruni, which discuss astronomy and geodesy, as well as *al-Khulasah al-Wafiyah*, a work within modern astronomical literature that covers topics such as comets, meteors, the history of the development of astronomy, and lunar mansions. In fact, Sheikh Yasin also studied the works of pre-Islamic scientists such as Ptolemy, Euclid, and Archimedes. KH Maimoen Zubair, who once studied astronomy directly under him, stated that Sheikh Yasin truly mastered classical astronomy with a very deep understanding.

Sheikh Yasin's ideas on classical astronomy are widely reflected in his works, one of which is *Syarah Tsamarat al-Wasilah*. In this book, he discusses various important topics such as the Rubu' Mujayyab (sinusoidal quadrant), the Islamic calendar system, moon sighting before sunset (*ru'yah qabla al-ghurub*), variations in the moon's rising points (*ikhtilaf al-mathali'*), and other astronomical aspects. Through the use of the Rubu' Mujayyab, Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani once concluded from his observations that the geographical latitude of the city of Makkah is at 21 degrees.

When determining the direction of the qiblah, he also preferred to use Mecca as the zero-degree meridian rather than any other location. This approach offers a distinct advantage: it allows one to determine the value of fadhl ath-thulain (the difference between two longitudes) simply by looking at the longitude (*'ardh al-balad*) of a given location. This method was

also followed by a number of other astronomers, such as Sheikh Muhammad Yusuf al-Khayyath, Sheikh Muhammad Hasan Asy'ari al-Baweani, Sheikh Muhammad Hasan bin Yahya al-Jambi, and Sheikh Zubair Umar al-Jailani.

In the opinion of other astronomers, such as Sheikh Abdussomad in his book *Sairus Salikin ila 'Ibadati Rabbil 'Alamin*, Volume II, Chapter Four: *Fi Ma'rifah al-Qiblah*, it is explained that the study of astronomy is a collective obligation (*fardhu kifayah*), not an individual obligation (*fardhu 'ain*). Therefore, if a person is unable to study astronomy, it is sufficient for them to follow the direction of the mihrab as determined by the predecessors who established the direction of the qiblah based on their ijtihad. Additionally, it is also permissible to follow the opinion of someone who is proficient in astronomy and knows the direction of the qiblah through their scientific ijtihad.¹⁹

However, if a disagreement arises between classical and contemporary astronomers, Sheikh Abdussomad al-Falimbani addresses this by stating: *"If there is a discrepancy between the results of the ijtihad of astronomers and the direction of the mosque's mihrab as established by our predecessors, then you should consider which one feels more convincing to your heart. Whichever of the two you are more certain about, that is what you should make your qiblah."*

The Direction of the Qibla in the Digital Era

In this era of modern globalization, determining the direction of the Qibla is now very easy without having to worry about significant deviations compared to traditional methods of measuring the Qibla, as suggested by classical scholars of the past. With the rapid advancement of science and technology, the process of determining the direction of the Qibla has become far easier and more precise. The use of various smartphone apps and digital compass devices allows Muslims to determine the

¹⁹Khadijah Khadijah, "Eksplorasi Materi Fiqih Dalam Film Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari," *Journal on Education* 7, no. 1 (August 3, 2024): 3405–17, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v7i1.6743>.

direction of the Qibla in a matter of seconds, without having to go through complex manual calculations.

GPS (Global Positioning System) technology, connected to satellites, provides location and direction data with a high degree of accuracy. Apps like Qibla Finder can display the direction of the qibla in real-time based on the user's geographic coordinates, whether in urban areas or remote regions. The primary advantage of this technology lies in its ease of access and the precision of the information it provides. With digital devices, Muslims can determine the direction of the qibla anytime and anywhere without having to rely on observing the sun's position or astronomical calculations.²⁰

This convenience is particularly significant, especially for Muslims living far from the city of Mecca or in areas that lack clear markers indicating the direction of the qibla. However, some argue that complete reliance on technology is not an entirely ideal solution. Traditional knowledge regarding the manual determination of the qibla's direction is still considered important as a means of preserving Islam's intellectual heritage.

The science of astronomy, which has been developed by Muslim scholars for centuries, such as Sheikh Muhammad Manshur al-Batawi (1295 AH/1878 CE – 1387 AH/1967), Sheikh Ahmad Shadaqah Dahlan, Sheikh Muhammad Ali bin Husain bin Ibrahim bin Husain bin Abid al-Maliki al-Makki, Sheikh Khalifah bin Hamad an-Nabhani (1270 – 1366 AH), and others, demonstrates that Islam made significant contributions to the development of science and technology prior to the modern era. By studying traditional methods of determining the direction of the qiblah, Muslims not only preserve the continuity of this scientific heritage but also deepen their understanding of the

²⁰Ismail Ismail, "Standar Operasional Prosedur (SOP) Kalibrasi Arah Kiblat Masjid Di Era Digital," *Al-Marshad: Jurnal Astronomi Islam Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Berkaitan* 5, no. 1 (June 20, 2019): 90-110, <https://doi.org/10.30596/jam.v5i1.3126>.

order of the universe as the creation of Allah SWT. Furthermore, not all regions have stable access to digital technology.

In emergency situations, such as in mountainous areas or regions with weak signal coverage, digital qibla-finding apps may not be reliable.²¹ In situations like this, the ability to determine the direction of the qibla manually remains relevant and necessary.

Thus, the question of the necessity of manually determining the direction of the qibla is not merely a technical matter, but also reflects the depth of intention and spiritual awareness in worship. The direction of the qibla is not merely a set of coordinates on the Earth's surface, but a symbol of a servant's sincere intention to face Allah the Almighty. Therefore, both digital and manual methods have their own respective importance, depending on the conditions and needs of Muslims across the globe.

The Direction of the Qibla in the View of Sheikh Muhammad Yasin Al-Fadani

In the past, determining the direction of the qibla was not as accurate as it is today due to limited tools and knowledge in this regard; the classical method allowed for a fairly large margin of error, namely up to 45 degrees to the right or left of the point considered to be the exact direction of the Kaaba. This was due to the limitations of technology and science at that time, such as the lack of precision measuring instruments and a still rudimentary understanding of astronomy. Additionally, geographical factors and difficulties in performing accurate mathematical calculations also contributed to this tolerance. Thus, the qibla direction in the classical method did not have to be perfectly precise; it was still considered valid as long as it fell within a wide tolerance range.

²¹Muhammad Rasywan Syarif, "PROBLEMATIKA ARAH KIBLAT DAN APLIKASI PERHITUNGANNYA," *HUNafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika* 9, no. 2 (December 15, 2012): 245, <https://doi.org/10.24239/jsi.v9i2.76.245-269>.

In contrast, determining the qibla direction in the modern era has a much higher level of precision due to technological advancements, such as the use of digital compasses, GPS systems, and astronomy-based software. These tools enable highly accurate angle calculations, making any deviation in the qibla direction negligible or even near-perfect. Modern calculations also account for the Earth's spherical shape (geodesy), allowing the direction of prayer to be determined with high precision—unlike the classical method, which may have ignored the Earth's curvature.

The difference between these two methods reflects the evolution of science in supporting religious practices. While the classical method relies on estimates and broad tolerances, the modern method emphasizes absolute precision. However, the tolerances in the classical method are not necessarily considered incorrect, as they were adapted to the context of an era when tools and knowledge were not as advanced as they are today. Meanwhile, modern precision better aligns with the demands of worship today, where Muslims seek greater certainty in performing their prayers.

From an Islamic legal perspective, this difference also sparks an interesting discussion. Some scholars argue that as long as the qibla direction remains within reasonable tolerance limits (such as 45 degrees in the classical method), the prayer remains valid. However, with modern technology, efforts to determine the most precise direction have become easier and are encouraged. Thus, the evolution of methods for determining the qibla direction not only reflects scientific progress but also a commitment to religious values that continue to be refined over time.

It should be noted that the opinions expressed by classical scholars such as Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani and Sheikh Abdussamad al-Falembani predate the current digital era by a wide margin; and even if adequate tools had existed at that time, the fatwas issued by the earlier scholars might not have been as far off the mark as they are now corrected by the calculations of

the current digital age. However, as existing fatwas, they will certainly still be applicable in certain cases.

CONCLUSION

Facing the qiblah is one of the conditions for the validity of prayer, as agreed upon by the scholars. This requirement is based on *ijtihad* that refers to the Qur'an and the Hadith. Scholars have discussed the issue of the qiblah's direction in depth in various classical texts, both from the perspectives of *fiqh* and astronomy, presenting various methods for determining the direction of the qiblah. Sheikh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani opined that for those far from the Ka'bah, the obligation is limited to facing the general direction (*jihat*) of the Ka'bah, not its exact point. Therefore, the mihrabs of mosques in the Indonesian archipelago that deviate from the qibla direction are still considered valid as long as they remain within a 45-degree tolerance margin to the left or right. This view can serve as a solution when dealing with inaccurate mihrabs in older mosques, in emergency situations, or when there is confusion regarding the direction of the qiblah.

However, he also emphasized that the opinions of astronomers carry greater weight and should be given priority. In the modern era, the use of tools such as digital apps or theodolites has become the preferred method because they provide more accurate results. Regarding the direction of the qiblah, it is important to adhere to the opinions of scholars competent in the science of *miqat* and to use instruments such as the *rubu' mujayyab* or *astrolabe*. Although they do not achieve a degree of absolute certainty, the results are sufficient because they reach a level of strong presumption (*ẓann*), which is deemed sufficient in Islamic law, as ruled by the *muhaddiqin* scholars.

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