

A Critical Analysis Of D.S Margoliouth's Allegations Regarding Changing Of Qibla

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ABSTRACT

Orientalist's have missionary feeling about Islam. They cannot tolerate the grandeur and swift increase of Islam. That's why they prevail suspicions, doubts and uncertainties against Quran, Hadith, fiqh and seerath. In the midst of many bias, inequitable and unfair orientalist's, D.S. Margoliouth is one of them. He has some assumptions concerning "changing of Qibla". Our aim is to secure less aware Muslims, thinkers and adolescents from the bogus and grubby views of the orientalists. Therefore this article concern allegations of D.S. Margoliouth on the "changing of qibla" and conclude that he failed to maintain his objectivity in the description of his ill will.

Introduction

It is the favorite hobby of orientalists to create doubts about Islam and spread Islamophobia. That is why they present out of context arguments to justify their motive. Not only that they take they also take the advantage of fabricated and weak traditions, even did not spare the men and women companions of the holy prophet let alone Quran, hadith and history. They also put forward their point of view and expressed their views about the change of prayer direction and tried to distort the facts underline. The first who wrote about this topic was a British orientalist D. S Morgoliouth.

D.S. Margoliouth was a famous orientalist from England. He was born in 1858 and died in 1940. His insisters were Jews but his father converted to Christianity . In this context Margoliouth was a born Christian. He was professor of Arabic language in Oxford University. He worked as the president of Royal Asiatic society till 1937. The books that Morgoliouth wrote about Islam include Muhammad and the Rise of Islam, The Early development of Mohammedanism, The Eclipse of Abbasside, Umayyad and Abbasside. There is no doubts that these books reflects the informations that Morgoliouth had but despite

this they also posses such explanations that clearly portray his biasness.¹

Following is a critical research based analysis of his views.

Changing Prayer Direction

"The change of the prayer direction was not merely anti-judaic ; he had no sooner spilt Meccans blood than he resolved to open the road to an agreement with the Meccans. Their temple then was to be retained in its proud position of central sanctuary of Arabia.....he had learned by some accident that the temple at Jerusalem was no longer standing ,and he got an idea that the rebuilding of it would mean the ruin of Medinah")²(

The above mentioned paragraph by Margoliouth reveals a few points.

1: The change of prayer direction was a political stance through which the prophet PBUH wanted to pave the way for treaty with Quraysh.

2: Baitullah foundation laid by Abraham on monotheism was totally unjust to be called a temple.

3: According to Margoliouth the prophet PBUH had become sure up to some extent that Jerusalem would not remain for much long time

and he thought to reconstruct Jerusalem means to destroy Madinah.

It is the contrivance by Margoliouth a pure allegation. The holy Quran has referred to the Aqsa mosque with high prestige.

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ .⁽³⁾ It is clear from the word

None of the Prophets started his preaching on the basis of his own thinking and declaring a system or philosophy as right or wrong. It is the desecration of Allah to choose from among the human beings and appoint as His prophet to convey His messages revealed to him to His creatures. Prophets are totally submissive to Allah. They do not say anything by their own well rather what they say and how they say is all by the well of Allah. This job is only to convey the messages of Allah to the people. The sole responsibility of Messengers is to convey the messages of truth to the people, no matter whether they believe it or not. That is why the opponents may say or do anything but they can not get absolved of their obligation. As the prophet of Allah said about his opponents: "If they bring moon to my one hand and sun to the other and they make demand from me to leave the preaching of Islam I will never accepted rather I will sacrifice myself for its sake."⁽⁴⁾

One important objective of the prophet hood of Muhammad PBUH and other messengers was to fully convince them (Itmaam e HUjjat) so that no one would be able to make excuses on the Day of Judgment. The holy Quran has described it in detail.

Allah says: رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِنَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةً بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا⁽⁵⁾

Any Oder issued by the holy prophet whether it is do or do not it is by the well of Allah. Prophets say nothing by their own well. The saying of Margoliouth that changing the prayer direction by the prophet was on some purpose is not only unfair rather it is unjust. It was exactly in accordance with the order of Allah. How a prophet who rejects the offers of wealth, dignity, property and beautiful women can prefer a worldly motive.⁽⁶⁾

Changing Qibla : The Messenger of Allah had the habit of agreeing with people of the Book in

matters that did not have the commands of Allah. For this reason the messenger of Allah was used to pray towards Bait ul Maqdis. The order of changing prayer direction was revealed in 2 hijri. The Messenger of Allah was invited by Bashir bin Bara Maroor. There it was time for Zuhr prayer and the people were stood to lead him in prayer. In the third rakah the order of changing the prayer direction was revealed. And that time all people turned back from Bait ul Maqdis toward Kabah following the Messenger of Allah.⁽⁷⁾

Hafiz Abu Bakr Mardoway narrated that we were praying Zuhr or Asr in the mosque of Bani Haritha facing Bait ul Maqdis. When we completed two rakahs some one came and informed us that the Messenger of Allah has changed his direction toward Bait ul Haram.⁽⁸⁾ It was later on announced in Madinah and its suburbs. As Baitul Muqaddas is located to the north of Madinah and Kaba is at its south, that is why the Prophet had to come from the backside of the followers and the followers had not only had to change their direction but also to align themselves again for prayer. In some traditions this detail is mentioned.

Causes of changing prayer direction

The holy prophet p.b.u.h used to face toward Kabah while offering prayer before hijrah.

However he did this in a manner that both Kabah and Baitul Muqaddas remains in front of him. That is because the holy prophet p.b.u.h would not use an approach different from Ahl e Kitab until he p. b. u. h was ordered or allowed by the Almighty Allah. When the holy prophet p. b. u. h came to Madinah, it was not possible to offer prayer while keeping both Qiblas in his front.

Hence he p. b. u. h started, as a principle, offering prayer toward The Baitul Muqaddas. But he p.b.u.h wished to offer prayer toward Kabah.⁽⁹⁾

1st Cause : Pre-planning

Change of prayer direction from Aqsa Mosque to Masjid AL Haram was according to the pre-planning done by the Almighty Allah. Had it not been decided, the Prophet Abraham would not

have left Iraq for Makka along with his son Ismael.

The Almighty Allah ordered Abraham through revelation to go to Makkah hence Abraham embarked on Burraq. Ismail was two years old then, Ismail and Hajrah sat to his front and back respectively. Jibreel was also with them who was guiding them toward Makkah. By reaching Makkah he left Ismail and his mother over there and left for Syria himself. (10) The Almighty Allah revealed to Abraham to construct Kabah. Ibrahim and Ismail were 100 and 30 years old then, respectively. Both the prophets constructed the building. (11)

Abraham and Ismail migrated to Makkah by the order of the Almighty Allah, not by their own will. It was a pre-planning for changing the direction of prayer. It was called Kaba because of its cubic shape, "Baitullah" because it is a place build for worshipping Allah and "Masjid alHaram" due to its dignity. (12)

Second Cause : Love for Qibla e Ibrahim

The holy Prophet p.b.u.h liked Qibla e Ibrahim. He used to pray to God and raise his eyes toward sky again and again. Then Allah revealed the following verse of Surah AlBaqarah

فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ (13)

"Soon we will make turn to the direction of prayer you like hence turn your face towards masjid al Haram"

3rd Cause: To test people It was a test for those people.

Allah says
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ (14)
"And we have not selected your prayer direction but to distinguish those who follow the Prophet The first ever home (of Allah) declared for people (to worship is) is the one at Bakkah (which is) sacred and (a source of) divine guidance for all the people of world. "

Sixth Cause

Abraham was the founder of that Mosque and he was the forefather of Jews, Christians and Muslims as well. Declaring the mosque of such are spectable ancestor of these nations as direction for prayer was a message to them to

from those who turn back on their feet. And although it was a difficult job but not difficult for those guided by Allah"

Allah says, O Muhammad! first made you to face toward Bait ul Muqaddas and then make you turn toward Kabah in order to find obedient and disobedient ones among your followers and those who change their prayer direction with you

and to find out the apostates. مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ. It means those who left their faith.

وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً Means the act of turning from Baitul Muqaddas toward Kabah, though it was a difficult task however the people guided by Allah and those who had a firm belief in the prophethood of Muhammad p.b.u.h did not have any doubt about its correctness. Allah can do or order anything.

He is competent to restrict people about anything or to repeal His order. To him belongs all the wisdom. (15)

Fourth Cause : Acceptance of Abraham 's Prayer

One reason is the acceptance of Abraham' s prayer. Allah says,
وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (16)

" O Lord ! make both of us obedient to you and also make a group of our progeny obedient to you . And teach us our methods of worship verily you entertain repentance and you are merciful"

Fifth and Important Cause : The First Sacred Building

Allah himself has mentioned the most important cause.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (17)

unite themselves physically and spiritually (18)

Allah says: (19) ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ "Do enter into Islam completely"

Margolaith has the same objection had by the Jews living in prophet' period that direction of prayer was changed due to prophet's love for his ancestral mosque, his nation and his faith. Allah says:

وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ (20)

“ And surely those who have been given the book know that this is truly from their God and Allah is not oblivious of what they do”. Allah further describes the attributes of those Jews:

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ⁽²¹⁾

“Those to whom we have given the book know him just like they know their children . And surely a group of them hides the truth while they know (the truth).

Omer said to Abdullah bin Salam " do you know the Prophet like your own children?", he replied, "rather more than my own children." It is an Arabic

proverb which is used when a person knows someone very well and does not have any doubt about him.⁽²²⁾ In the next verse, Allah further discloses their secret,

وَلَنْ أَتَّبِعَ الَّذِينَ أَتَّبَعْتَهُمْ وَلَا يُفْعَلُونَ بِكَ آيَاتٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ⁽²³⁾

“No matter whatever sign you show to those who have been given the book, they are not gonna follow your prayer direction and are not gonna follow their prayer direction and they will not follow each other's prayer direction”.

Allah is describing the disbelief, stubbornness and resistance, despite the knowledge about prophet, of the Jews that if the Prophet bring all kind of evidences to them, they will not follow him and will never abandon their desires²⁴ .Every Muslim believes that this prayer direction is correct. As Allah says,

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ²⁵

“Truth comes from your Lord so you should never become hesitant.”

It is known from the collection of Bibles that Allah had priorly informed Ahl e Kitab that the best among two prayer directions would be the final one.

Description in the divine book

The whole text of prophet Yaseya 's book includes praise for Makkah,

"You (Makkah) will have a lot of sea water, you will be provided with all nation' s wealth, you will become covered with a lot of she camels , all the camles of Madyan and Afya will come to you ladned with gold and perfume, all the sheep of Qedar shall come to you, The goats of Nabeeth shall be brought to you, they shall do offerings to

please me and I shall grant glory to my honorable house.²⁶⁽⁾

It is clear that the " honorable house " means Kaba because in the above text the congregation of the people of Madyan, Eefa, Saba, Nabeeth and their offerings have been mentioned. All these five were the progeny of Abraham, settled in Arab and embraced Islam. They were neither Christians nor Jews and all of them made offerings at the same place, Mina. The names of above nations, their congregation at Hajjat ul Wada and address of Mina all these things made the meaning of the above verse very clear.⁽²⁷⁾

It is said in the book of prophet Hajji

" This house would be more respectable than theformer one. The Lord of armies says that He will shower peace on this house"⁽²⁸⁾ .

It is said in Mukashafat e Yohanna

" I shall make the dominant one a pillar of my Temple. And I shall write my name on the city ofmy Lord."⁽²⁹⁾

Jhon has mentioned " new name" and " new Jerusalem" . The new Jerusalem is Kaba while the new name of God to which Arabs were not familiar, despite the fact that they were native speakers, was "Rahman" introduced by Islam.

The " advent of new Jerusalem from heaven "means that Kaba would be declared the new prayer direction by God⁽³⁰⁾.

The holy Quran has also mentioned this:

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا³¹⁾

Surely, we watch the turning of your face toward the sky hence, soon, we shall make you turn your face to the prayer direction you love.

It is written in the Arabic Zabur:

1.طوبى للساكينين فى بيتك ابدأ يسبحونك.

2.طوبى لانااس عزهم بك طرق بيتك فى قلوبهم .

3.عابرين فى وادى البكا يصيرونه ينبوعا. ايضا

ببركات يعطون مورة.⁽³²⁾

It is also written in urdu zabur:

1.Congratulations to those who live in your house and praise you.

2.Congratulations to those who get power from you and they find your ways in their hearts.⁽³³⁾

They live in valley of Bakkah. They will dig a will over there. These rains bring mercy of God to them. According to the first verse, there is a house of God whose inhabitants have been

declared as blessed ones and their identification mark is that

they always praise and glorify God. In the second verse, it is said that God, Himself, would grant them power not the worldly things. In the third verse, the word "Bakka" is present both in Urdu and Arabic languages which proves that Bakka is a proper noun that remains the same in every language. It also proves that they shall also dig a well in Bakka.

The "inhabitants of the house" mentioned in the first Arabic verse means Ismail and his progeny. The holy Quran contains the prayer of Abraham

as below:

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ
(34)

“ O Lord! have made my offspring settled in a barren valley near your honorable house”.

The word "barren", mentioned in the above verse has been called Bakka in another verse. For example, a verse in Surah AL e Imran mentioned earlier.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ (35)

Next comes the "will" which is also mentioned in a lengthy tradition in Sahih AL Bukhari as below:

" suddenly she saw an angel at Zam Zam hitting the ground with her ankle or wing until she discovered water. Hajra started storing water into a pool. She would take water with her hands. Then the water started to spring.(36)

ORIENTALIST'S VIEW

Constance Virgil George :writes in the " Messenger of Islam" that the holy Prophet used to act upon the commandments revealed in Torah

¹ .Daira maarif islamia urdu, Danish ghah, Punjab, Lahore, 1985, vol:18, pg316-317

2 . D.S.Margoliouth, Muhammad and The Rise ,(G.P.Putnam Son's New York 1905) pg 247

3 .surah bani israeel: 1

4 .seerath un nabhi ibe hisham(s.a.w) , abdul malik ibe hisham, vol :1, pg275

5 .surah nisa :165

6..seerath un nabhi ibe hisham(s.a.w) , vol :1, pg275

7 . Abu al fida ismail bin umar, tafseer al quran alazeem(tafseer e ibne kaseer) ,dar al kutub al elmia ,1999, Surah al baqara: 144

in case of no new order or instruction from Allah. That is why the old orders would remain intact until the

new ones came. Among these was the command to pray towards Baitul Muqaddas. Then the new command was issued and the direction got changed.

In the Islamic history, changing the direction of prayer has got utmost importance because it has brought the Muslims a status unique from Christians and Jews. And Islam has got a totally distinguished position from both the above-mentioned religions.

Islam is associated with prophet Abraham so is Kaba, built by him. Hence changing the prayer direction was basically an announcement that Islam is no more dependent on Christianity or Judaism. It has got its own prominent status as a religion.(37)

Like Constance George, K.L. Gaba has said very precisely :

“If there is any group of Medinite peopleit ought to be the Jews.....But no conscience, no toleration, no latitude seems enough to assure him of loyalty from Jews”.³⁸

Conclusion: From the above discussion it is clear that the point of view of Margoliath regarding the change of prayer direction is solely based on allegations and biasedness.

According to him it was a political stance by an ordinary political leader who wished to get the sympathies of Quraish. Although it is clear from the Holy Quran that was purely an order by Allah.

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11 .Ibid

12. Rahmat ul lillalameen , Suleman Mansoor Pori, vol:2, pg 199

13. Surah Al Baqara: 144

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16. Surah al baqara:128

17 .Surah Al e Imran: 96

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18. Ibn e kaseer,vol:1,Surah Al Baqara: 149
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 - 38 -K.L.Gaba. The Prophet Of Desert, pg 169