Why was the prayer direction changed from the Aqsa Mosque to the Sacred Mosque in Makkah?

The Ka‘bah was mentioned many times throughout history. People used to visit it every year even from the farthest parts of the Arabian Peninsula, which showed great reverence for its holiness. It was also mentioned in the prophecies of the Old Testament: "As they pass through the Valley of Bakkah, they turn it into a spring." [300]

The Arabs used to venerate the Sacred House during their pre-Islamic era of ignorance. When Prophet Muhammad was sent, Allah Almighty made Jerusalem his first prayer direction. Then, He commanded him to turn towards the Sacred House instead to distinguish between those who were sincere to Allah and those who turned against Him from among the followers of Prophet Muhammad. The main objective behind changing the prayer direction was to make the hearts completely devoted to Allah and to purify them from all kinds of attachment to other than Allah. Muslims, thus, submitted and turned towards the new prayer direction as instructed by the Prophet. The Jews used to consider the Prophet's facing the direction of Jerusalem in prayer as an argument supporting their stance. Old Testament, Psalms: 84.

Furthermore, such a change in the prayer direction was also a turning point and a symbol of the shift of religious leadership to the Arabs after being taken away from the Children of Israel for their breach of covenants with the Lord of the worlds.

Questions and Answers about Islam
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