

# ISTIKHAARAH

## SEEKING GUIDANCE FROM ALLAH

Istikhaarah in Arabic means seeking guidance to make a decision concerning something. It is said in Arabic Istakhir Allaaha yakhir laka (Seek guidance from Allaah and He will guide you (to the right decision)). In sharee'ah terminology, Istikhaarah means seeking guidance (to the right decision), i.e., seeking guidance as to what Allaah knows is the best and most appropriate choice, by means of prayer or the du'aa' narrated concerning Istikhaarah.

## DESCRIPTION

Bukhari narrated from Jabir bin Abdullaah –*RadhiAllaahu anhu*- who said “The Messenger of Allaah صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم used to teach his companions to make istikhaarah in all matters, just as he used to teach them soorahs from the Qur'aan. He صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said: *'If any one of you is deliberating about a decision he has to make, then let him pray two rak'ahs of non-obligatory prayer, then say:*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي أَوْ قَالَ فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ

*Allaahumma inni astakheeruka bi 'ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa as'aluka min fadlika, fa innaka taqdiru wa laa aqdir, wa ta'lamu wa laa a'lam, wa anta 'allaam al-ghuyob. Allaahumma fa in kunta ta'lamu haadha'l-amra (then the matter should be mentioned by name) khayran li fi 'aajil amri wa aajilihi (or: fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri) faqdurhu li wa yassirhu li thumma baarik li fihi. Allaahumma wa in kunta ta'lamu annahu sharrun li fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri (or: fi 'aajili amri wa aajilihi) fasrifni 'anhu [wasrafhu 'anni] waqdur li al-khayr haythu kaana thumma radini bihi*

*O Allaah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power, I have none. And You know, I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things. O Allaah, if in Your knowledge, this matter (then it should be mentioned by name) is good for me both in this world and in the Hereafter (or: in my religion, my livelihood and my affairs), then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge it is bad for me and for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs (or: for me both in this world and the next), then turn me away from it, [and turn it away from me], and ordain for me the good wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.*

## WISDOM

Indeed the human being has been created weak, and is in need of Allaah -*Ta'ala*- in all his matters and that is because a human does not know from where good and evil will occur in the future from incidents and events.

This is why, from the Wisdom of Allaah – *Subhanahu* – and from His Mercy to His slaves, He legislated for them this *Dua'* so that they can come closer to their Lord and that they can seek refuge with Him, and that He will direct them to the path leading towards good and benefits.

Shaykh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymeeyah (d.728) -*Rahimullaah*- said : 'The one who seeks guidance from the Creator and he consults the creation and is firm in his issue, will not have any regret.

## CONNECTION WITH EMAAN (FAITH)

Ibn Qayyim aj-Jawzeeyah -*Rahimullaah*- said (in '*Za'ad al-Ma'aad*' by Ibn al-Qayyim 2/443-445):

'Allaah compensated the Muslims by giving them this supplication, which is *Tawheed*, and it is being in need of Allaah, servitude of worship, reliance upon Allaah, asking the One in whose Hand is all goodness, Who Alone can turn away evil.

He Alone who, if He opens up Mercy for His slave then there is none who can seclude a person from that mercy, and if He (Allaah) withholds it then none can send mercy to a person whether it is using omens, astrology or lucky stars.

This *Dua'* is the good fortune for the happy person, it is good fortune for the people of happiness and success, those for whom Allaah gave them happiness before, and it is not good fortune for the people of *Shirk* and wretchedness, those whom associate another deity with Allaah, then soon will they come to know.

This *Dua'* includes the confirmation and testification of the existence of Allaah S.W.T.. The confirmation and testification of His Perfect Attributes, from the perfection of Knowledge and Capability and universal Will. And it includes the confirmation and testification of Allaah's Lordship and entrustment of this matter to Him – *Ta'ala* – and seeking aid from Him, and relying upon Him, and a person leaves the responsibility from himself and acquits himself from any capability and strength except that it is with Allaah *Ta'ala*. It also includes the acknowledgement of the slave of Allaah of the weakness of his knowledge and his own interests and his own capability upon these things, and his desire for them, and that all of these things are in the Hand of his Guardian and his Originator and his true Lord. . . . '

Ibn al-Qayyim -*Rahimullaah*- continues: 'So the purpose of *al-Istikharah* is to rely upon Allaah and entrustment to Him and the capability to fulfill the action with Allaah's Capability, His knowledge. And that Allaah chooses good for His slave, and this is from those things which necessitate being pleased with Allaah as the Lord. As a person will not taste the flavour of *Eemaan* if he does not have these things (reliance, entrustment etc), and if he is pleased with destiny after *al-Istikharah* then that is a sign of happiness.'

## WHAT TO PRAY ISTIKHAARAH FOR?

The four madhabs are agreed that istikhaarah is prescribed in cases where a person does not know the right decision to make. In matters where it is known whether a thing is good or bad, such as acts of worship, doing good deeds, sins or evil actions, there is no need to pray istikhaarah in these cases. But if a person wants to find out the right time to do something, such as whether to do Hajj this year, because there is the possibility of encountering an enemy or some tribulation, or whether to go with a certain person or not, then he may pray istikhaarah with regard to such decisions. But there is no room for Istikhaarah when it comes to things that are obligatory, haraam or makrooh. Rather Istikhaarah has to do with things that are recommended or permissible. Istikhaarah is not ordinarily required with regard to things that are recommended, rather it should be done in cases where there is a conflict, i.e., when a person has a choice of two things and must decide which one to start with or which one not to do. With regard to permissible things, he may pray Istikhaarah as a regular matter.

## MINDSET

The person who wants to pray Istikhaarah should have an open mind, and not have decided on a specific course of action. The phrase *“If any one of you is deliberating”* indicates that Istikhaarah should be prayed when one starts to think of the matter, when through the blessing of prayer and du’aa’ what is good will become clear to him, in contrast to when the idea has taken root and his resolve to do it is firm, in which case his inclination will sway him, and there is the fear that wisdom may not prevail because he is inclined to do that which he has already decided to do. It may be that which is meant by deliberation here is resolve, because a passing thought does not matter. And a person should not pray Istikhaarah except when he has decided to do something but does not have a strong inclination towards it. Otherwise, if a person were to pray Istikhaarah for every thought that crosses his mind, he would never stop and he would consume all his time doing that.

The secret is that ones heart should not be attached to the matter in question, because that will result in a person becoming restless. Being pleased with something means that ones heart is content with the decree of Allaah.

## BEST TIME TO OFFER IT

Unlike commonly believed, Istikhaara can be prayed anytime, it is not bound to be prayed in the night only. Al-Nawawi said in al-Adhkaar: One can pray istikaarah after two rakahs of regular sunnah prayer done at zuhr for example, or after two rakahs of any naafil prayers whether they are regularly performed or not It seems to be the case that if he made the intention to pray istikhaarah at the same time as intending to pray that particular prayer, this is fine, but not if he did not have this intention.

## CONSULTING OTHERS BEFORE PRAYING ISTIKHAARAH

Al-Nawawi said: It is mustahabb, before praying istikhaarah, to consult someone whom you know is sincere, caring and has experience, and who is trustworthy with regard to his religious commitment and knowledge. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“and consult them in the affairs”* [Aal ‘Imraan 3:159]

## SURAHS TO BE RECITED IN SALAAT AL-ISTIKHAARAH

The Hanafis, Maalikis and Shaafa’is said that it is mustahabb, after reciting al-Faatihah, to recite Surah Al kaafiroon in the first rak’ah and Surah Al Ikhlâas in the second. Al-Nawawi said, explaining the reason for that: It is appropriate to recite these in prayer, to show sincerity and expressing your leaving your affairs to Allaah. They said that it is also permissible to add other verses from Qur’aan where the context refers to the idea of making a choice or decision.

The Hanbalis and some of the fuqaha’ did not say that any particular verses are to be recited when praying Istikhaarah.

## WHEN ONE SHOULD RECITE THE DUA OF ISTIKHAARAH

There is a difference of opinion, but majority of the scholars of the Hanafis, Maalikis, Shaafa’is and Hanbalis stated that the du’aa’ should be recited immediately after the prayer. This is in accordance with what was stated in the hadeeth narrated from the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ. See al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah, part 3, p. 241.

Amongst the ones who said it should be recited during prayer was Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah who said, “it is permissible to recite the du’aa’ of istikhaarah before or after the salaam, whether you are praying salaat al-istikhaarah or another prayer. Reciting du’aa’ before the salaam is preferable, as the Prophet ﷺ used to recite a lot of du’aa’ before the salaam, and the worshipper before saying the salaam is still in a state of prayer, so it is better to recite the du’aa’ then”.

## SEEING A DREAM OR SOUL FEELING DELIGHTED AFTER OFFERING ISTIKHAARA

Many people think that following istikhaarah there has to be a dream or a feeling of ease in the heart, and so on, but that is not the case. Even if no such thing happens when a person has prayed istikhaarah and done his best to find out what is best for him, such as consulting people, examining the issue and asking those who have experience, then he goes ahead and does it, then it is hoped that this will be what is best for him, even if he does not feel at ease in his heart in the beginning. Even if we assume that he does not succeed in this matter that he goes ahead with after praying istikhaarah, it may be good for him even if he does not know it, but his Lord knows, may He be exalted.

That is the correct view is that when Allaah makes something easy for you after having decreed it and accepted your duaa this is a sign that it is good to go ahead and do it. The existence of obstacles and difficulties is an indication that Allaah is pushing His slave away from doing it. This meaning will be very clear when one ponders the meaning of the hadeeth of Jaabir concerning *al-istikhaarah*.

Ibn al-Haaj al-Maaliki said: Some of them pray *istikhaarah* as prescribed in sharee'ah and then wait until they see a dream from which they will decide whether they should go ahead and do whatever they prayed *istikhaarah* about or not, or until someone else sees a dream for them. This does not count for anything, because the infallible one (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us to pray *istikhaarah* and consult others, not to rely on what is seen in dreams. End quote

Shaykh Muhammad Badr 'Aalaam said: 'And know that the scholars of the past and the present indeed pointed out that it is not conditional for *al-Istikharah* that the person who made *al-Istikharah* sees a dream or that someone speaks to him or something occurs to his heart and mind. But rather Allaah Ta'ala makes his heart incline or lean to the side which causes his heart to be happy and is resolute upon this.' ['al-Badr as-Saaree ila Fayd al-Baari' 2/247-248]

Shaykh Muhammad 'AttaAllaah Haneef -*Rahimullaah*- said: 'Likewise, there is nothing in the narrations mentioning sleep after *al-Istikharah* prayer or recognizing that which is better for that person of what he may see in a dream.

I bring attention to this, because many of the people claim that *al-Istikharah* is seeking information from Allaah Ta'ala and seeking consultation from Him, so they invent principles for *al-Istikharah* which the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ did not bring. Then if they do not see a dream in their sleep, they go and seek guidance from others whom they think are righteous people. Upon my life, indeed this action of theirs is from a type of fortune telling which the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ prohibited and it negates the *Sharia'* aim of *al-Istikharah*.'

He continues: '[That *al-Istikharah* is having] *Tawwakul* (reliance upon Allaah) before the action, and being pleased with it after it. So whoever relied upon Allaah before it, and was pleased with what it fulfilled after *al-Istikharah* then he has established *al-Uboodeeyah* (servitude of worship for Allaah).'

For example, one got a proposal for marriage and prayed *Istikhaara* and saw a dream and if we assume that the interpretation of the dream suggests something good, good dreams are no more than hints, but they cannot be relied on. Rather you should try to find out and ask about the one who has proposed marriage, make sure whether he is religiously committed and of good character, and other things that you should find out about him. If you are certain of these matters then the good dream is no more than a message to be of good cheer when proceeding.

So it is not necessary in the case of *Istikhaarah* to feel something specific afterwards. Rather if you consult people and think deeply about the matter, and it becomes clear to you that this matter will be beneficial both in religious and worldly terms, then you should pray *Istikhaarah* and go ahead, and not wait for a sign or a dream or a feeling. You should rather put your trust in Allaah and go ahead after praying *Istikhaarah*.

The above does not mean that if you feel happy it is not a sign, but this should not be regarded as the only sign about whether or not the matter is good. People often make Istikhaarah about something they like or want to do, so they feel happy about it from the outset.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If a person prays Istikhaarah, asking Allah to guide him, then whatever his heart is opened to and he feels at ease with, and is made easy for him, is what Allah has chosen for him.

There is a difference between making feeling happy the only sign and making it one of several signs. And Allaah knows best.

## OTHER RULINGS

- There is no set time period for salaah al-istikhaarah; it is permissible to repeat it more than once, but there is no limit to how many times.
- It is permissible for you while offering Du`a'-ul-Istikharah to raise the hands.
- It is permissible for one to offer a single Istikharah for more than one matter.
- It is not permissible for anyone to pray Istikhaarah on behalf of someone else.
- The key is to have complete faith that Allah will guide to what is good for you & be content with it.

### SOURCE:

All the quotes & rulings in this class were taken from islamqa.info & abdurrahman.org which are authentic and renowned website.

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## ASSIGNMENT

Please do this assignment before taking the test, there will be a question asked about the Assignment worth 10 marks in the test:-

- I. Choose any three topics from the five classes and talk to three people (friends or family) about it. (Choose what you feel is needed in your community) - (5 Marks)
- II. Make Dua for the Muslims that are being oppressed around the world and also for those who are not, to get their acts right and start helping the Ummah. (1 Marks)

Please take this assignment as a motivation to start talking about Islam and make it part of your regular day (even if you do not know too much, spread the little that you know, as the Prophet ﷺ said "Convey from me, even if it is one verse"), most of us are too shy to talk about Islam but are ok to talk about anything under the sky.

*May Allah make us all amongst those who call others to good  
by spreading the Deen of Allah and help us in this noble path.*