

## Istikharaah The Guidance Prayer

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- > We are humans, powerless in this sphere of life, knowledgeable only enough
- > to survive. So why shouldn't we turn to Allah and seek His perfect help
- > whenever we require it? Allah responds to the call of His servant when he
- > asks for guidance, and we are after all seeking to do something in order
- > to please Him.
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- > Istikharaah means to ask Allah to guide you to the path best for you
- > concerning an affair with two halal options. In matters that are waajib
- > (obligatory), haraam (forbidden) or makrooh (disliked) there is no need to
- > pray Istikharaah. Salaat-ul-Istikharaah should only be used for matters
- > that are mubaah (allowed) or in matters that are mustahabb (liked or
- > encouraged), in which there is a decision to be made as to which one
- > should be given priority (i.e. get married or go to grad school).
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- > Many wrong notions exist concerning istikharaah. Many Muslims will pray,
- > read the du'a, and run to bed expecting to see a dream showing them their
- > future wife, what her favourite colour is, and some other weird fantasy.
- > That is not the purpose of this salaah.
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- > The results of an istikharaah can take many forms. Basically, you go by
- > your feelings, whether you now feel more favourable or not. Also, you may
- > notice events have changed, either for or against you. Note that you must
- > follow the results of an istikharaah, because not doing so is tantamount
- > to rejecting Allah's guidance once you've asked for it. Also, you should
- > firstly clear your mind, not have your mind already decided, and then
- > afterwards follow the results willingly.
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- > It is a sunnah that, if one must choose between permissible
- > alternatives, one may pray two non-obligatory rak'at, even if they are
- > of the sunnah prayers or a prayer for entering the mosque, and so on,
- > during any time of the day or night, and to recite therein whatever one
- > wishes of the Qur'aan after reciting al-Fatihah. Then one praises Allah
- > and sends salutations to the Prophet s. a. w. recites the supplication in the
- > Hadith below.
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- > The description of Salaat-ul-Istikharah was narrated by Jaabir ibn
- > 'Abd-Allah al-Salami (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:
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- > "The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. used to
- > teach his companions to make istikharaah in all things, just as he used to
- > teach them surahs from the Qur'aan. He said: 'If any one of you is
- > concerned about a decision he has to make, then let him pray two rak'ahs
- > of non-obligatory prayer, then say:
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- > 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-ghuyub. 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) fashrifni 'anhu [wasrafhu 'anni] waqdur li
- > al-khayr haythu kaana thumma radini bihi.
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- > "O Allah, 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 Allah, 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."
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- > The Prophet, added that then
- > the person should mention his need."
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- > [Sahih Bukhari]
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- > Salaat-ul-Istikharaah is just two rakats of a non-obligatory prayer,
- > prayed at anytime during the day, with a specific dua at the end. While
- > reciting the dua, you should be thinking about the situation you want to
- > be advised about with pure intentions and from the bottom of your heart.
- > And Allah says that whenever he guides a heart aright it can never be
- > misguided. Afterwards, you should "have a good feeling" about one of your
- > options. Whatever option you feel is best right after you say the dua
- > should be your decision. If you're still in doubt, you can repeat.
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- > An-Nawawi holds that "after performing the istikharah, a person must do
- > what he is wholeheartedly inclined to do and feels good about doing and
- > should not insist on doing what he had desired to do before making the
- > istikharah. And if his feelings change, he should leave what he had
- > intended to do, otherwise he is not completely leaving the choice to
- > Allah, and would not be honest in seeking aid from Allah's power and
- > knowledge. Sincerity in seeking Allah's choice, means that one should
- > completely leave what he himself had desired or determined." Some people
- > mistakenly wait for a dream to give a clear sign as to what decision to
- > make, but this is not true, and often times it never really happens. In
- > fact, dreams may lead you away from what Allah wants you to do, as
- > Shaytaan might try to deceive you in your dreams.
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- > Salat-ul-Istikharaah is for everybody. It's a way for all of us to implore
- > Allah for divine guidance and mercy. It is yet another invaluable resource
- > from Allah to keep us on the straight and narrow Siraat al-Mustaqeem. The
- > Prophet told all Muslims about

> Istikharaah, not just the scholars. Despite this gift, too many of us take  
> the advice of our friends and parents, or accept the norms of our society  
> and act without ever wondering what Allah wants us to do. We must stop  
> looking to the dunya for guidance. We must begin to consult Allah.

> I cannot provide a better conclusion than saying that you must put your  
> trust in Allah. You must have trust in His concern for us, and His ability  
> to help us. Allah says:  
> "Put your trust in Allâh, certainly, Allâh loves those who put their trust  
> (in Him)."  
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> [Surah Surah Al-Imran Ayah 159]