

Two unique gifts from the Prophet Muhammad (Peace & Blessings be upon him) for His Ummah in order to help them in times of needs, problems and difficulties

The Messenger of Allah (Peace & Blessings be upon him) gave two gifts to his Ummah (nation), in order to save them from losses: The Prayer of Istikharah (seeking goodness & guidance in futures matters) and the prayer for when one is in need of something (Salah tul Haajah).

The Prophetic method (Sunnah) of Istikharah

Whenever someone needs to make a decision regarding an important matter, and the person is undecided on which action to take then one should perform Istikharah. For example, if one is unsure of the result of an action (such as business, marriage, journey or other permissible matter) will be good for one's worldly and religious matter, or whether one will be at a loss.

Wrong methods regarding seeking guidance for the future

Muslims should not visit or consult fortunetellers, soothsayers, shaytaans, jinns, tarot readers, palm readers and astrologists. Sayyidunna Muhammad (Peace & Blessings be upon him) strictly forbade people from all of the above. These people do not possess certain knowledge of the unseen, nor do they have the ability to change what is to be destined, nor do they have the ability to personally benefit or harm anyone. On the contrary they may weaken a person's faith and relationship with Allah, His Messenger, and deen or may even lose his faith completely.

The Prophet (Peace & Blessings be upon him) said:

"Whoever visits a fortuneteller or a soothsayer and believes in his words, has disbelieved in what was revealed to Muhammad (May the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him)."

When in need of guidance and help one should turn to the Being to which even the Prophets and Messengers (Peace be upon them) turned to

This is because Allah, the Exalted is the One who has created everyone and He possesses knowledge of everything and He possesses power and control over all things. Whomsoever He wills to benefit, no one can stop Him, and whomsoever He wills to harm, no one can stop Him. He can do whatever He wills; there is nobody to question Him. One can make a request to Him in His court with humility and humbleness, and He accepts the intercession of his pious servants, because they can intercede only by His permission. He is not in need of His servants and He is the One who cares most about them.

For which matters is Istikharah Impermissible?

Whatever action a person needs to make Istikharah for, it is necessary for it to be permissible in Shariah. To make Istikharah for impermissible and unlawful actions will cause him to become sinful. The reason being that regarding that action, Allah and His Messenger (Peace & Blessings be upon him) has foretold us that this action is harmful, therefore doing Istikharah for it serves no purpose, rather it is disrespectful towards the Lord of the worlds.

The incorrect use of Istikharah

Istikharah is done for the matters of the future, not for the time that has already elapsed. For example, some people due to their lack of knowledge have been heard saying, "Such a thing of mine has been stolen and through Istikharah I want to find out who the guilty person is." It should be known that Istikharah has nothing to do regarding this matter. If the person, through a dream, vision or any other means finds out that such a person stole it, then even in that case the Shariah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace & Blessings be upon him) does not grant him permission to form a bad opinion or accuse any Muslim based on these unreliable sources. The person who does this and the one who informs him are both sinful.

Who should one perform Istikharah?

The Person should perform Istikharah themselves as this is the Sunnah. If a person does not know the supplication or he does not know how to pray, then he may ask another person to perform it. However he should also make the prayers in the court of Allah in his own language.

The methodology of Istikharah

First and foremost he should make ablution and seek forgiveness from Allah after which he should pray two units of optional prayer (Nafl salah). One should make intention by thinking, "I am making intention for performing two rakaats optional prayer Istikharah, for the pleasure of Allah" and then begin the prayer as normal saying, "Allahu Akbar". In both the units (Rakats) of prayer one should read any Surah after Surah Fateha.

What to think during prayer and supplication

The prayer should not be read with forgetfulness. One should rather direct their attention and thought towards Allah, and then should imagine that:

- 1) Allah the Exalted is seeing me,
- 2) Allah the Exalted is listening to me,
- 3) Allah has knowledge of my existing situations,
- 4) And whatever He wills He Does.

One should maintain these thoughts in their heart and mind during the prayer. After the prayer one should read the supplication of Istikharah (keeping the meaning in one's mind). After that he can also supplicate in his own language. Before the supplication he should praise Allah, after which he should recite (Durood) Peace and Blessings upon His beloved Prophet (Peace be upon him), and then pray for forgiveness, starting with himself, his parents and then all the Muslims. At the end one should send peace and blessings on the Prophet (Peace & Blessings be upon him) and upon saying Ameen, he should draw the supplication to a close.

If the person doesn't know the translation of the supplication, then he should keep the following summary of it in his mind:

'Oh Allah I do not know anything and You have knowledge of all things. I am weak and you have power over all things. With your Grace, Oh Allah, if in your knowledge this affair is good for me in relation to my religion, my worldly life and the end, then decree and facilitate it for me, put blessing in it for me and make it easy for me. If in your knowledge this matter is bad and harmful for my religion, my worldly life and the end, then take it away from me.'

The Supplication for Salah tul Istikharah

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ
 فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ
 الْغُيُوبِ ط اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي
 وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي فَأَقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ وَإِنْ
 كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي
 فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ ☆
 (رواه بخاری، سنن اربعه عن جابر بن عبد الله انصاری)

“O Allah, I consult You as You are All-Knowing and I appeal to You to give me power as You are Omnipotent, I ask You for Your great favor, for You have power and I do not, and You know all of the hidden matters. O Allah! If you know that this matter (then he should mention it) is good for me in my religion, my livelihood, and for my life in the Hereafter, (or he said: ‘for my present and future life,’) then make it (easy) for me. And if you know that this matter is not good for me in my religion, my livelihood and my life in the Hereafter, (or he said: ‘for my present and future life,’) then keep it away from me and take me away from it and choose what is good for me wherever it is and please me with it.” (Narrated by Bukhari)

Some wrong understandings regarding Istikharah

It is not amongst the sunnah method of Istikharah that a person necessarily has to sleep after performing it, and nor is it a condition to see a dream, vision or witness some unseen sign because these things have not been mentioned in the Hadith. Only the dreams of Prophets and Messengers are revelation, whereas the dreams of the rest of mankind can be from shaytan or may occur due to the kind of thoughts the person has been having during the day. Even if the dream is from Allah it still needs to be interpreted. Istikharah was done to rid oneself of uncertainty and doubt, but now the uncertainty can increase if, God forbid, Shaytaan shows the person such a scene, which outwardly appears divine, and consequently the person acts upon it, after which he suffers loss, this person's faith on Allah Ta'la can be shaken because Shaytaan will put this thought 'you did Istikharah, but your Lord did not help and guide you towards success'.

How will the result of Istikharah become apparent?

The Holy Prophet, Master of both Worlds, (Peace and Blessings be upon him) whilst teaching the supplication of Istikharah, also indicated how a person will know the outcome and result of it. If the action is better for the person, then not in a dream, but rather in real life the result of this will become apparent to them, such that the means to accomplish this action will begin to come into existence via people and all the obstacles which are opposing it will be removed and it will become easier for the person to fulfill his purpose. However if a person tries to accomplish this action but he sees that the means to achieve it are getting worse and unexpected, and unusual obstacles begin to stand in his way, then this is an indication that this action is not good for the person. However after that a new path and window will open from which he had no expectation and Allah with His Absolute Power, will facilitate it that way for him. Together with this if a person sees any dream then this will be considered as an additional aid, not as a basis upon which the decision of the outcome of Istikharah should be made.

What to do after Istikharah

After performing Istikharah a person should not sit hand in hand and wait, but rather from his own side make effort at a practical level. After that the destiny will take him towards what is best for him. By doing Istikharah a person has negated his own knowledge and experience, and at the same time relying completely on Allah by leaving his own choice completely in the matter and placing it in the hands of Allah, by saying: "Oh Allah you select for me that which is best." Now from the heart he should trust and have certainty in Allah, because up until today whomsoever has relied and trusted in Allah in the right way, then in return Allah has never failed him, or not provided him help and support.

How many times can a person perform Istikharah

Istikharah should be done in odd number of times (from one to seven). However if there comes a time when a person does not have the opportunity to read two units of prayer then the person may just read the supplication only. If he is to make a very quick decision then the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) has even taught a very brief supplication for Istikharah as well. After praising Allah and sending peace and salutations upon the Holy Prophet (Peace & Blessings be upon him) the person should read the following supplication a few times:

اللَّهُمَّ خِرْ لِي وَاخْتِرْ لِي

Oh Allah, select for me goodness.

Some benefits of doing istikharah

1) Relationship with Allah Strengthened More

The biggest benefit is that a person's relationship with Allah is strengthened even more because when a person performs istikharah in the correct manner and obtains some goodness, the result of this is that his reliance on Allah is further increased.

2) Relationship and love with Prophet (Peace and Blessing be upon him) is increased

Istikharah which is a Sunnah and a unique gift from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) from which the ummah will benefit from up until the Day of Judgment. When someone acts upon a Sunnah, (with the intention of acting upon a Sunnah also) his relationship with the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him) is further strengthened.

3) Happiness in all cases

The Performer of Istikharah is fortunate from two dimensions. Firstly if he attains his objective then he is happy and content and thanks Allah the Exalted for selecting goodness for him. And if he doesn't attain his objective then he is still happy and content and thanks Allah for saving him from loss.

In regards to benefit and loss in any action there can only be three possible outcomes:

- 1) To benefit from a particular action from the worldly point of view
- 2) To benefit in respect to one's religion and hereafter but to have loss from worldly point of view
- 3) To benefit in any particular action in the beginning but to have loss at the end of it

In regards to these three cases, to save oneself from having loss is outside his knowledge, power and experience, it is only Allah the Majestic, whose knowledge encompasses all aspects. So the Muslim who does Istikharah is saved from all these

losses and obtains success in the following aspects: Worldly, religious, livelihood, spiritual and hereafter.

It has been related from the great sages, for example, Sayyidunna Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilaani and Shaykh Ahmad Mujaddad Alf Thani (May Allah have mercy upon them) that they would perform Istikharah for every action in the coming twenty four hours.

The Losses of not doing Istikharah

By performing Istikharah a person becomes free from the fear and subjugation of all things other than Allah the Exalted, such as devils, soothsayers, fortunetellers, magicians, jinns, envious people and one's enemies. The reason being that now the person's relationship and trust is upon that Being, without His permission no loss can occur.

Loss of faith and wealth

Whichever person leaves Allah and goes against the way of the Prophet (Peace be upon him), the Companions, and the Friends of Allah, by going to magicians and fortune tellers and consulting them in their affair; seeking help from them, and believing in what they say, then their relationship with Allah and His Messenger is broken. In some cases the person's faith is even lost; reason being that the effect of black magic doesn't take place until the devils are happy with the person. Sometimes the person does such an action, or reads such charms, which entail the worship of Shaytaan.

By performing Istikharah a person is also saved from financial losses because the Shaytaanish soothsayers and magicians fool the simple and naïve people and through deception take huge lumps of money from them. They take advantage of their desperateness and helplessness and their lack of knowledge. For example they will say to them: We will guarantee you that your job will be done in seven days. However in order to achieve this we are going to need to sit in seclusion and read certain prayers and also obtain help from the Jinns. So for this we are going to charge you money. Unfortunately, however, when the job does not get completed then those simple and naïve people come back to them. Then they just make up stories, saying someone has done some strong black magic upon you and there is a danger of Jinns, because some very powerful devils are working against you. Therefore you must give us a lump sum of money in order to get your work done. These fraudsters always mention or advertise those things that are common problems and relate to all types of people. For example they will trap people with the following issues: marriage of your choice, domestic issues, husband/wife disagreement, disobedient children, court cases, lack of offspring, betrayal of husband, disobedient wife, physical illnesses, effect of black magic, lottery numbers, failure in business, lack of wealth, and so on.

Injustice to women and their oppression

These people oppress women even more, because they usually go to these people without the permission of their family members. After giving them money, if their job is not accomplished, then they do not even inform anybody. Sometimes these Shaytaanik beasts even play with the honour of these naïve women, however due to fear and shame they do not inform anyone. In some cases they even photograph and film them in order to black mail them, continuously demanding money from them and playing with their honour.

If the transaction or action is in relation to the coming future, then the method for performing Istikharah for this has been taught in the previous pages

Another great gift from the Prophet (Peace & Blessings be upon him) to this Ummah – What to do when in need or facing difficulties in life

If at the current moment the person is going through some difficulty, due to which these devilish people are taking advantage of him by fulfilling their own financial desires and the desires of the flesh, then the Master of both Worlds, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) has bestowed another priceless gift upon His ummah in order to relieve themselves from their needs and difficulties, namely Salahtul Haajah (Prayer of need). One of the blessed guidances of Sayyiduna Muhmmad (Peace and Blessings be upon him) (the meaning of which is):

“If a person has any need from Allah or any person then he should make wudhu in a good way and after that offer two units of prayer for the pleasure of Allah (just like the prayer of Istikharah is read).”

After that he should read the supplication written below once or however many times he wishes, and then in the court of Allah make supplication and mention his need or problem to Allah with humility and humbleness. The best time for this is the last portion of the night in which one performs the night prayer (Tahajjud). In this portion Allah descends to the first heaven in a manner which suits His Majesty and makes the following announcement:

“Is there any needy person who wants me to fulfill his need. Is there any unhappy person who would like me to relieve him from his unhappiness? Is their person seeking forgiveness from his sins?”

The time of acceptance is up until the beginning of fajr (dawn). So when the Lord of both worlds Himself is announcing this, then why should a person leave the door of Allah and go to the doors of His enemies and devilish people, resulting in loss to their faith, wealth and honour.

After reading two units of prayer of need, one should praise Allah and then recite (Durood) Peace and Blessings upon the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings be upon him). Thereafter he should read the supplication written below with understanding. He should read this everyday up until the persons need is fulfilled or he is relieved from his problem.

The supplication for the prayer of need

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ ط سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ط
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ط أَسْأَلُكَ مُوجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَعَزَائِمَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ
 وَالْعِصْمَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ وَالْغَنِيمَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَرٍّ وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ إِثْمٍ لَا
 تَدَعْ لِي ذَنْبًا إِلَّا غَفَرْتَهُ وَلَا هَمًّا إِلَّا فَرَجْتَهُ وَلَا حَاجَةً هِيَ لَكَ رِضًا إِلَّا
 قَضَيْتَهَا يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ ☆ (رواه حاكم و ترمذی)

There is no God but Allah, the Clement and Wise. There is no god but Allah the High and Mighty. Glory be to Allah, Lord of the Tremendous Throne. All praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds. I ask you (O Allah) everything that leads to your mercy, and your tremendous forgiveness, enrichment in all good, and freedom from all sin. Do not leave a sin of mine (O Allah), except that you forgive it, nor any concern except that you create for it an opening, nor any need in which there is your good pleasure except that you fulfill it, O Most Merciful!" (Related by Hakim and Tirmidhi).

Another Prophetic Supplication for the prayer of need

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ وَأَتَوَجَّهُ إِلَيْكَ بِنَبِيِّكَ مُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّ الرَّحْمَةِ يَا مُحَمَّدُ
 إِنِّي أَتَوَجَّهُ بِكَ إِلَى رَبِّي فِي حَاجَتِي هَذِهِ لِتُقْضَى لِي اللَّهُمَّ فَشَفِّعْهُ
 فِيَّ ☆

Oh Allah, I ask you and I direct myself to you in supplication by Our Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), The Prophet of mercy. Oh Muhammad, I direct myself to Allah by you, so my need would be fulfilled. (Related by Tirmidhi).