

Sahih Al-Bukhari Hadith

Hadith 2.263

Narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah

The Prophet (p.b.u.h) used to teach us the way of doing Istikhara (Istikhara means to ask Allah to guide one to the right sort of action concerning any job or a deed), in all matters as he taught us the Suras of the Quran. He said, "If anyone of you thinks of doing any job he should offer a two Rakat prayer other than the compulsory ones and say (after the prayer): 'Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi'ilmika, Wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratika, Wa as'alaka min fadlika al-'azlm Fa-innaka taqdiru Wala aqdiru, Wa ta'lamu Wala a'lamu, Wa anta 'allamu l-ghuyub. Allahumma, in kunta ta'lam anna hadha-l-amra Khairun li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or 'ajili amri wa'ajilihi) Faqdirhu wa yas-sirhu li thumma barik li Fihi, Wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha-lamra shar-run li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or fi'ajili amri wa ajilihi) Fasrifhu anni was-rifni anhu. Waqdir li al-khaira haithu kana Thumma ardini bihi.' (O Allah! I ask guidance from Your knowledge, and Power from Your Might and I ask for Your great blessings. You are capable and I am not. You know and I do not and You know the unseen. O Allah! If You know that this job is good for my religion and my subsistence and in my Hereafter--(or said: If it is better for my present and later needs)--then You ordain it for me and make it easy for me to get, and then bless me in it, and if You know that this job is harmful to me in my religion and subsistence and in the Hereafter--(or said: If it is worse for my present and later needs)--then keep it away from me and let me be away from it. And ordain for me whatever is good for me, and make me satisfied with it). " The Prophet added that then the person should name (mention) his need.

Fiqh-us-Sunnah

Fiqh 2.32

Salatul Istikharah

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 regular 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'an after reciting al-Fatihah. Then one praises Allah and sends salutations to the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam and recites the following supplication which has been recorded by al-Bukhari in Jabir's narration: "The Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam would teach us al-istikhara for all of our affairs as he would teach us a surah from the Qur'an. He said: 'If one of you is deliberating over an act, he should pray two non-obligatory rak'at and say:

"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."

There is nothing authentic concerning something specific that is to be recited in the prayer nor is there any authentic report concerning how many times one should repeat it.

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."

Fiqh-us-Sunnah

Fiqh 4.141

Consultation and Istikharah Before Setting out on a Journey

Istikhara (Arabic) means to ask Allah to guide one to the right thing concerning any affair in one's life, especially when one has to choose between two permissible alternatives. A traveller should consult good righteous persons before setting out on a journey, because Allah says, "And consult them (O Prophet) in affairs (of moment)," (Qur'an 3.159) and one of the characteristics of the believers is that "they (conduct) their affairs by mutual consultation" (Qur'an 42.38).

Qatadah said, "Every people who seek the pleasure of Allah and consult with one another are guided to the best course in their affairs."

The traveller should also make istikharah and seek guidance from Allah. Sa' d ibn Waqas reported that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Istikharah (seeking guidance from Allah) is one of the distinct favors (of Allah) upon man, and a good fortune for the son of Adam is to be pleased with the judgment of Allah. And a misfortune of the son of Adam is his failure to make istikharah (seeking Allah's guidance), and a misfortune for the son of Adam is his displeasure with the judgment of Allah." Ibn Taimiyyah said, "He who seeks guidance from the Creator and consults the creatures will never regret it."