

## **THE METHOD OF ISTIKHARA ACCORDING TO SUNNAH**

**Hafiz Inayat Ullah & Wajeih ud Din Noman**

*Department of Islamic Studies & Arabic, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan*

### **ABSTRACT**

*Everyone needs a guideline whether he lives in a Muslim society or he is the inhabitant of the non-Muslim society, so that he should lead a successful life. Almighty Allah sent messengers for the guidance and showing right path to the human beings. They imparted awareness to the people that this earthly life is not a reality but the life after death is the undying reality. Life on earth means to achieve the real life, so that our matter must follow the direction of life hereafter. Our Holy Prophet (S.W.A) was sent last of all messengers who was entrusted the sacred duty of universal direction for all people living in any part of earth. This honorable sort of direction and guidance has been given for the people till the Day of Judgment. Our Holy prophet (S.W.A) has imparted the education of Istikhara for the betterment of future and avoidance of losses to the "Ummah". The tendency of making mess of Sharai style of life and tennets of shariah among the Muslim Ummah have not only spared pious practice of Istikhara but many ambiguous and controversial ways have been used for this pious action of Istikhara. So it is the imperative of time to let the "Ummah" be told what the significance of Istikhara is and how it ought to be performed. This research paper elucidates the true method of Istikhara according to Sunnah in practical details.*

**Keywords:** *Istikhara, Muslim Society, Messenger, Muslim Ummah, Sunnah*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ultimate objective of the believers is the love and passion for Allah Almighty. The proper method of attaining this objective has been narrated by Rasoolullah (S.A.W). Because Allah Almighty sent him (S.A.W) as a messenger with the blessings of Rahmat ul-lil Alameen for all humanity. He (S.A.W) was kind and affectionate for the whole humanity in general and his (S.A.W) Ummah in particular. Allah Almighty introduces Rasoolullah (S.A.W) in the words of Holy Quran as: *بالمومنين رؤف رحيم* (Al-Quran 9:128). For the Believers he (S.A.W) is very kind.

It is a fact that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) has countless love and kindness for his Ummah, so he has taught them the method of Istikhara so that they may get the benefit by it with regard to their welfare and prosperity. Moreover, it would be easy for them to have connection with Allah Almighty in their routine matters. As Rasoolullah (S.A.W) has provided us guidance and light in all aspects of life comprehensively, so he (S.A.W) also narrated us the exact method of Istikhara which has been described by Hazrat Jabir (R.A) plainly: *عن*

جابر بن عبدالله قال: كان النبي ﷺ يعلمنا الاستخارة في الامور كلها كما لسورة من القرآن يقول: اذا هم احدكم بالامر فليركع ركعتين من غير الفريضة ثم يقول: اللهم انى استخيرك بعلمك واستقدرك بقدرتك واسئلك من فضلك العظيم فانك تقدر ولا اقدر وتعلم ولا اعلم وانت علام الغيوب، اللهم ان كنت تعلم ان هذا الامر خير لى فى دينى ومعاشى وعاقبة امرى اوقال: فى عاجل امرى واجله فاقدره لى ويسره لى ثم بارك لى فيه وان كنت تعلم ان هذا الامر شر لى فى دينى ومعاشى وعاقبة امرى، اوقال: فى عاجل امرى واجله، فاصرفه عنى واصرفنى عنه واقدر لى الخير حيث كان ثم رضنى به، قال : ويسمى حاجته

(Bukhari, M (1994))

Hazrat Jabir Ansari (R.A) narrates that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) used to teach Istikhara in all matters in such a way as he (S.A.W) used to teach us the Holy Quran. Rasoolullah (S.A.W) used to say that when anyone amongst you wants to do something, he should offer two rakaat Salaate-eNafal and pray like this: “O’Allah I beseech good from your utter knowledge, I ask for an ability to do something from your Divine Power. I request for mercy from your great mercifulness. It is because you have the ultimate Divine Power (in every matters) (whereas) I don’t have the power (to do something myself), you are all knowing and I don’t know (anything) and you are Omniscient. O, Allah if this thing (any sort of work), according to your knowledge, is better for me with regard to my religion, this life and life after death, then bestow it to me. Make it easy for me and make it blessing for me: And according to your knowledge, if this thing (any sort of work), is bad for me with regard to my religion, this life and life after death, then turn it away from me and turn me away from it. And wherever (in any sort of work and any time) it is better for me then bestow it to me and make me satisfied with it. (narrator says that) and then one should speak out one’s personal needs.

Two stages of the method of Istikhara according to sunnah has been derived in this Hadith:

- Salat-e-Istikhara
- Dua-e-Istikhara

### **Salat-e-Istikhara**

Whenever anyone wants to do anything i.e travelling, exodus, wedlock or job etc then he must beseech good from Allah Almighty in the form of Istikhara. The first stage is Salat-e-Istikhara and its method is like this:

### **Intention (Niyatt) in Salat-e-Istikhara**

All though intention can be expressed in any language yet Arabic is the best of all as it is: - نويت ان اصلى ركعتى صلوة الاستخارة

“I intend to offer two rakaat salat-e-Istikhara.

### Number of Rakaat in Salat-e-Istikhara

It is narrated by Hazrat Jabir (R.A) that: *فليركع ركعتين من غير الفريضة* (Bukhari, M (1994)). Whenever amongst you intends to do something, then he should offer two rakaat besides obligatory prayer (Farz)”. It is proved from this hadith that there are two Rakaat in Salat-e-Istikhara. But it is stated in the Hadith narrated by Hazrat Abu Ayub Ansari (R.A): (Baehqi, A, (1424 AH)) *صل ماكتب الله لك*. Say prayer whatever have been written in your fate, it means that say prayer with the help get from Divine Power.

It is found that a person can offer more than two rakaat salat-e-Istikhara.

Ibne Hajar, A, compares both of the Hadiths and narrates: *ويمكن الجمع بان المراد انه لا يقتصر على ركعة واحدة للتنصيص على الركعتين ويكون ذكرهما على سبيل التنبيه بالادنى على الاعلى، فلو صلى اكثر من ركعتين اجزا والظاهر انه يشترط اذا اراد ان يسلم من كل ركعتين ليحصل مسمى ركعتين*.

It is possible to add both of them it means that one must not shorten it to a single rakaat because there has been specification of two rakaat now (thus single rakaat is forbidden). The statement of two rakaat is a warning from inferior to superior. If someone offered more than two rakaat, then it is also lawful. But is clear that it is a condition that when he/she wants to offer more than two rakaat, then he/she should finish salaam after two rakaat, so that he/she may get it.

Shaukani, M (1973) explains this comparisons and says:

*يجزى ان صلى اربعا او اكثر بتسليمه لقوله ﷺ في حديث ابي ايوب: ثم صل ماكتب الله لك: فهو دال على ان الزيادة على الركعتين لا تضر، ومفهوم العدد في قوله ﷺ: " فليركع ركعتين " ليس بحجة على قول الجمهور -*

“It is lawful to offer four rakaats with a single salaam owing to the hadith narrated by Hazrat Abu Ayub (R.A). “Say prayer with the help you get from Divine Power” it argues that it is not unlawful to offer more than two rakaats and the number of rakaats is explained in another Hadith “Thus he/she should offer two rakaats”. It is not an objection according to Jamhoor.

Alamgir, A says: -----*صلاة الاستخارة وهي ركعتان*

“There are two rakaats in Salaat-e-Istikhara”

However, all the four schools of thought in Ahle-Sunnat wal-Jamaat are agreed that there are two rakaat in salaam-e-Istikhara, which is mustahab.

But the accepted number of rakaat according to Ahnaf is that there are four rakaat at day time (Kasani, A (1987)). Because Hazrat Abdullah bin Umer (R.A) has offered four rakaat Nawafal at day time owing to Hadith narrated by Hazrat Abu Ayub (R.A) that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) said: *اربع قبل الظهر ليس فيهن تسليم، تفتح لهن ابواب السماء*. (Abu Daud, S (1414 AH)).

There are four rakaat before Zuhr in which there is no salaam, the doors of Heaven are open for them. It also said that two rakaat nafal is accepted at day and night owing to the Hadith narrated by Hazrat ibne Umer (R.A) that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) says: صلاة الليل والنهار مثني مثني (Termazy, M (1415 AH)).

“There are two rakaat salat at day and night”. However it is better to offer four rakaat at night, because according to the Hadith narrated by Hazrat Aysa (R.A) that she (R.A) was asked about Qiyam-ul-Lail of Rasoolullah (S.A.W) in the Holy Month of Ramzan then she (R.A) said:

ماكان يزيد في رمضان ولا في غيره على احدى عشرة ركعة يصلى اربعا فلا تسال عن حسنهن وطولهن ثم يصلى اربعا فلا تسال عن حسنهن وطولهن ثم يصلى ثلاثا - (Al-Bukhari, M (1994)).

He (S.A.W) never exceeded from eleven rakaats in Ramzan as well as in other months. He (S.A.W) used to offer four rakaats. Do not ask about the magnificence and prolixity of him (S.A.W), then he (S.A.W) used to offer four rakaats. Do not ask about his (S.A.W) magnificence and prolixity, he (S.A.W) used to offer three rakaat after that. The word “كان” refers to habit and regularity, in this Hadith, if Rasoolullah (S.A.W) shows regularity and consistency on anything that is considered supreme by Allah Almighty. So it is found that it is better to offer four rakaat at night. But it is said with regard to the accepted number of rakaat in salat-e-Istikhara that all the four schools of thought are agreed that it is better to offer two rakaat in salaam-e-Istikhara.

### **Qiraat in Salaat-e-Isitkhara**

It is essential to recite surah Fateha in both the rakaats but beside this, a small surah should be recited along with it. Nowavi, Y, says:

الا فضل ان يقرأ بعد الفاتحة في الاولى "قل يا ايها الكافرون" وفي الثانية "قل هو الله احد"

It is better to recite “قل يا ايها الكافرون” after surah Fateh in the first rakaat and “قل هو الله احد” in the second rakaat.

Ibne Hajar, A, describes the specifications of these both surahs as:

ولهما مناسبة بالحال لما فيهما من الاخلاص والتوحيد والمستخير يحتاج لذلك.

“Both surahs have been connected because the emphasis has been laid on the oneness and attachment with Allah Almighty and the person who wants Istikhara is in need of its expression.

It is also relevant to recite these verses (Ayaat):

وربك يخلق ما يشاء ويختار ما كان لهم الخيرة. سبحن الله وتعالى عما يشركون. وربك يعلم ما تكن صدورهم وما يعلنون. (Al Quran: 28: 68-69)

And the verse: وما كان لمومن ولا مومنة اذا قضى الله ورسوله امرا ان يكون لهم الخيرة من امرهم ومن يعص الله ورسوله فقد ضللا مبينا. (Al Quran: 33: 36)

Ibne Hajar, A, Ibne-e-Abideen, M and Tahtavi, A (1356 AH) have described the complete and perfect form of qiraat that one should recite “قل يا ايها الكافرون” after surah

Fateha, in the first rakaat and should also add the above mentioned verse of surah Qasas. Whereas he/she should recite surah Ikhlas and the above mentioned ayat (verse) of Surah Ahzab after surah Fateha.

Overall there are three opinions about qiraat in salaah-e-Istikhara.

1. Tahtavi, A (1356AH) Says:

يستحب ان يقرأ في الركعة الاولى بعد الفاتحة "قل يا ايها الكافرون" وفي الثانية "قل هو الله احد".

2. It is also better to recite below mentioned verses after surah Fateha in Salaah-e-Istikhara:

The verse وربك يخلق ما يشاء ويختار ما كان لهم الخيرة. سبحن الله وتعالى عما يشركون. وربك يعلم ما تكن صدورهم وما يعلنون. (Al Quran: 28: 68-69)

The verse وما كان لمومن ولا مومنة اذا قضى الله ورسوله امرا ان يكون لهم الخيرة من امرهم ومن يعص الله ضل ضللا (Al Quran: 33: 36) my be recited in second rakaat, after surah fateha. مبينا.

3. Ibne Qudama, A (1981) says that there is no specification of surah in salaah-e-Istikhara but any of the surah can be recited in it. Ibne Rushd, M, says: لا توقيف في هاتين الركعتين في القراءة يستحب وانما يجوز ان يقرأ فيهما المرء حزبه من الليل.

“Mustahab (desirable) qiraat is not bound in specific surahs in these two rakaat. And it is lawful to recite the surah in these rakaats, according to his habit at night, whatever he/she recites in salaah.

Ayenee, M says about the non-specification of surahs:

لم اجد في شئ من طرق احاديث الاستخارة تعيين ما يقرأ فيهما.

“I have not found any specification of surah in the salaah-e-Istikhara. Thus, it is better to recite these surah which are learnt by heart so that he/she may recite it with ease and humility.

### Timings for salaah-e-Istikhara

Audwee, A, says that it is lawful to offer salaah-e-Istikhara at any time except the time which is unlawful.

Tahtavi, A(1356AH) says that Shafia has allowed to offer salaah-e-Istikhara at Harm-e-Makkah, during the unlawful timings. They have presumed it with two rakaat-e-Tawaf, They give proff of Hadith narrated by Hazrat Jubair bin Mutaam that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) said: (Nesai, A) يا بني عبد مناف لا تمنعوا احد اطاف بهذا البيت وصلى في اى ساعته من ليل او نهار. Ibne Qudama, A(1981) says that according to Hanfia and Hanabala, it is unlawful to offer nawafal every time.

They forbid to offer nawafal at unlawful timings generally owing to the Ahaadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet S.A.W) in which it is prohibited. One of these Hadith is narrated by Ibn-e-Abbas (R.A), he says: شهد عندي رجال مرضيون وارضاهم عندي عمر رضى الله عن الصلاة بعد الصبح حتى تشرق الشمس وبعد العصر حتى تغرب. (Bukhari, M (194)) عنه ان النبي ﷺ نهي

“Many of the favorite personalities means noble persons have borne witness and the most liked by them is Hazrat Umar (r.a) for me who has narrated the Hadith that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) forbade us to offer salaah after salaah-e-Fajar till the sun rises high and after salaah-e-Asar till the sun sets down.”

Hazrat Amar-Bin-Absa (r.a) narrates: قلت يا نبي الله : اخبرني عن الصلوة قال صل صلاة الصبح ثم اقصر عن الصلاة حين تطلع الشمس حتى ترتفع فانها تطلع حين تطلع بين قرني الشيطان وحينئذ يسجد لها الكفار ثم صل فان الصلوة مشهودة محضورة حتى يستقل الظل بالرمح ثم اقصر عن الصلاة فانه حينئذ تسجر جهنم فاذا قبل الفجر فصل فان الصلوة مشهودة محضورة حتى تصلي العصر ثم اقصر عن الصلاة حتى تغرب الشمس فانها تغرب بين قرني الشيطان وحينئذ يسجد لها

الكفار. (Muslim, M (1415 AH))

“I asked about salaah from Rasoolullah (s.a.w), Rasoolullah (s.a.w) said that say salaah-e-fajar and stay till the sun rises high because it rises over the two horns of sataan (Devil) and at that time the non-believers (kafir) prostrate before it. Then offer salaah because the angels will bear witness for that salaah and they will be over there till the time. When the shadow of the sun gets solid like a spear means when the sun rises high and then stop praying because at that time the Hell gets blazed it means the time of Zawaal (decline of the sun), when the shadow appears, offer salaah because the angels will bear witness for that salaah and they will be called in. Hence you should offer salaah-e-Asar then stop praying till the sunset because it sets down over the two horns of sataan (Devil) and at that time the non-believers (Kafir) prostrate before it.

There is no specification of time about salaah-e-Istikhara, in Hadith. Therefore, one group of religious scholars has considered it lawful for all times. But the majority of the religious scholars did not consider salaah-e-Istikhara during unlawful timings (Aukat-e-Makrooha). This contradiction has been clarified by Ibne Abdul Bar, Y (1393 AH). Thus Nawafal-e-Istikhara are lawful the whole night and it is lawful the whole day except the forbidden timings and the Nawafal at night are superior than nawafal at daytime. Hazrat Abu Huraira (R.A) narrated that Rasoolullah (S.A.W) said: افضل الصلاة بعد الفريضة الصلاة في جوف الليل

(Darmi, A)

“Afzal (the best) salaah after the obligatory prayers (Farz) is the salaah of midnight.

According to Hazrat Abu Umama (R.A) Rasoolullah (S.A.W) was asked:

اي الدعاء اسمع قال جوف الليل الاخر ودير الصلوات المكتوبات. (Termezi, M (1415 AH))

“Which of the prayer is most accepted one. Rasoolullah (S.A.W) said that the prayer which is sought at the last portion of night and after the obligatory prayers.

However, when salaah-e-Istikhara will be offered, keeping in mind all its issues then this salaah will certainly be accepted by Allah Almighty. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of all the theorems (issues) of salaah.

### **DUA'A-E-ISTIKHARA**

If the person who is offering Istikhara, gets free from saying salaah-e-Istikhara, then after it comes the stage of Dua'a-e-Istikhara (the prayer for Istikhara), then it is must for him/her to seek dua with all its etiquettes. One should begin prayer with the glory and praise (Hamd-o-Sana) of Allah Almighty and recite darood over Rasoolullah (S.A.W) and end it with the same way then his/her prayer is closer to acceptance. And after that recite the following dua-e-Istikhara.

اللهم انى استخيرك بعلمك واستقدرك بقدرتك واسئلك من فضلك العظيم فانك تقدر ولا اقدر وتعلم والا اعلم وانت علام الغيوب. اللهم ان كنت تعلم ان هذا الامر خير لى فى دينى ومعاشى وعاقبة امرى فاقره لى ويسره لى ثم بارك لى فيه وان كنت تعلم ان هذا الامر شر لى فى دينى ومعاشى وعاقبة امرى فاصرفه عنى واصرفنى عنه واقدر لى الخير حيث كان ثم رضنى به. ((Bukhari, M (1994))

One thing should be kept in mind that when the person who is offering Istikhara reaches the words "هذا الامر" during the recitation of the dua'a then he/she should mention the work for which the Istikhara is offered either verbally or by heart, it does not matter. Although it is enough to recite dua-e-Istikhara once yet it is better to recite it thrice. Because it is sunnah to recite it thrice.

### **Dua'a-e-Istikhara for marriage**

The above mentioned method for Istikhara is used for common purposes and it can also be done for routine matters. However, Rasoolullah (S.A.W) has described the method of specific Istikhara for the purpose of betrothal and marriage and that the proposal for marriage may be kept hidden then he/she should make fresh ablution with all the etiquettes and Masnoon prayers (dua'a). Then one should offer salaah-e-Nafal as much as one can offer easily with the intention of Istikhara. After Nawafal praise and glorification (Hamd-o-Sana) of Allah Almighty may be related and Darood-e-Pak over Rasoolullah (S.A.W) may be recited and after that the below mentioned dua may be recited thrice: اللهم انك تقدر ولا اقدر وتعلم ولا اعلم وانت علام الغيوب فان رايت ان فى {فلانة ويسمىها باسمها} خيراً فى دينى ونيابى وأخرتى، فاقد رهالى، وان غير ها خيراً منها لى فى دينى وأخرتى فاقد رهالى. (Hakim, M (1405 AH)).

"O, Allah you have the Divine Power and I have none and you are omniscient and I know nothing and you know the invisible as well. And according to your knowledge such lady (take here, her name) is better for me with regard to my religion, this life and life after death then bestow it to me. And if besides this (another lady) is better for me with regard to my religion, this life and life after death, then bestow it to me.

One thing is essential to know that the personal pronouns used in this dua'a is meant for females it means that if a man offers Istikhara for a women then he should recite it like this but if a woman offers Istikhara for a man then in that case, wherever (personal pronoun feminine) "ها" is used, he should recite it as "ه" (personal pronoun masculine) i.e "فاقدرة" etc.

## CONCLUSION

Allah Almighty has sent the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) as mercy for the entire world. He was considerate for the humanity in general and for his own Ummah in particular. Allah Almighty himself has introduced the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) as affection incarnate for the faithfuls. It is due to his kind and considerate nature that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has taught Istikhara to Muslims, so that they may meet their success in their tasks and may get benefit from this pious action. We should follow the sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W) because Allah Almighty likes it and acceptance of Allah Almighty lies in following the way of His last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W).

## REFERENCES

- Abu Daud, S. (1414 AH). "Sunan Abi Daud" Darulfikr, Beirut 1414 AH. Kitabuttib (19) Babfil Kuhl (195) Hadith (481),
- Al Quran Surat ul Taubah, 9:128
- Al Quran Suratul Ahzab, 33:36
- Al Quran Suratul Qasas, 28: 68-69
- Alamgir, A. "Al-Fatawa Al-Hindiya Ash-Shaheer bil Fatawa Alamgirri" Kutub Khana Rahimiya, Deuband V-1, P-112.
- Audwee, A. "Hashia Alal Kharshi" Dar Saader, Beirut, V-1, P-37.
- Ayenee, M. "Umdatul Qari" Al-Muneria, Egypt, V-7, P-223.
- Baehqi, A. (1424 AH). "Assunan AlKubra" Darul Kutubul Ilmiyya Beirut 1424 AH. Kitabus Salaat (3), Bab Salaatul Istikhara (668), Haidth (463). Kitabul Hajj (12), Bab Istikhara (347). Haidth (10302). Kitabun Nikah (39) Babul Istikhara Filkhutbati (136) Haidth (13837).
- Bukhari, M. (1994). "Al Jamay us Sahih" Darul Fikr, Beirut, 1994. Kitabu ut Tahajjud (19) Bab Ma jaa Fit Tatawa'a Musna Musna (25) hadith (1162). Kitab ud Da'awaat (80) Bab Addu'a Indal Istikhara (48) Hadith (6382). Kitabus Salaatitraweeh (13) Bab (1) Hadith (2013) Kitab Mawaqaetussalat (9) Bab (30) Hadith (581).
- Darmi, A. (1484). "Sunan Addarmi" Nashrus Sunnah, Multan. Kitabuss Salaat (2) Bab (166) Hadith.
- Hakim, M. (1405 AH). "Al-Mustadrik Alus Sahehain" Darul Kitabul Arabi, Beirut, 1405AH, V-1, P-314.

- Ibne Abdul Bar, Y. (1393 AH). "Al Istizkar Lemazaaheb Fuqahaael Amsar" Almajles AlAala, Egypt 1393AH V-1, P-139.
- Ibne Abideen, M. "Raddul Muhtar Aladdurrel Mukhtar" Darul Kutubil Arabia Alkubra, Egypt V-1, P-507.
- Ibne Hajar, A. "Fathul Bary Sharah Saheeh Al-Bukhary" Al maktabatul Salfiya, Epypt V-11, P-185.
- Ibne Qudama, A. (1981). "Almughni" Riazul Hadiqa, Saudi Arabia 1981, V-2, P-123
- Ibne Rushd, M. "Badayatul Mujtahid Wa Nahayatul Muqtasid" Darul Kutub ul Arabia, Beirut, V-1, P-147.
- Kasani, A. (1987). "Diday us Sanaya Fi Tarteeb ish Sharaya" Markaz Tahqeeq Diyal Singh Trust Library, Lahore 1987, V-2, P-739.
- Muslim, M. (1415 AH). "Saheeh Muslim" Darul fikar, Beriut 1415 AH. Kitab Fazail il Quran (7) Bab Islam Amar Bin Absa (325) Hadith (1930).
- Nisai, A. "Sunan Nisai" Dar Ahyaatturath Al Arabi, Beirut. Kitabul Mawaqeeet (6) Bab Ibahtissalah (340) Hadith (588).
- Nowavi, Y. "al Azkaar" Maktaba Al Yousafiya, Epypt, P-60
- Shaukani, M (1973). "Neil ul Aoutar Sharah Mantaqi Al Akhbar" Darul Jail, Beirut, 1973, V-3, P-89.
- Tahtawi, A. (1356 AH). "Hashia Ala Miraqil Falah" Mustafa Albabi, Epypt 1356 AH, P-239.
- Termazy, M. (1415 AH). "Sunan Altermazy" Darulfikar, Beirut 1415AH. Kitabus Salaatis Safar (6) Bab Majaa Fissalaa Illal Wannahar mathna mathna (412) Hadith (579). Kitabud Da'awat (45) Bab (462) Hadith (1425).