

## Salatul-Istikhara The Guidance Prayer

Bismi'llah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim

Here is a description of how to perform the Guidance Prayer (known as Salat ul-Istikhara). It is very useful to perform when needing guidance or to ask Allah to facilitate any kind of matter inward or outward. It is very helpful in coming to a choice between various possibilities, finding a way through mental/emotional overwhelm, realizing resources to achieve a difficult task, or simply clarifying some lingering confusion or doubt. Although praying in the night before sleep is optimal, you can pray this prayer at any time. If one is travelling or in experiencing, menses it will suffice to read the dua' alone. Here is the process.

1. Take a moment to get clear what your question is.
2. Make a fresh wudhu. Let go of your personal inclinations and resign yourself to allow Allah to guide and facilitate your affair.
3. Pray 2 normal rakas of superogatory prayer intending salat ul-istikhara.
4. Read the dua' on the right. When you come to the part "hadha-l-amra (this matter)" one should think about the matter.
5. There are several next steps in waiting for an answer:
  - a. Sidi recommends sitting remembering the Name of Allah and looking into the eye of the heart for about 20 minutes.
  - b. Go to sleep and wait to receive a dream.
  - c. Wake up with certainty about the matter.
  - d. Watch to see what signs Allah opens and closes outwardly as the day proceeds.

Performing the prayer leads to inner insight, clarity and a feeling of inner certainty. If Step A doesn't work, move Step B and so on. Sometimes, nothing is opened inwardly (steps A-C), but through the prayer Allah will bring things to/away from you outwardly without any conscious directing of effort on your part. Wait until you feel sure. If you don't arrive to surety the first time, you can perform the prayer up to 7 times in a week. Practice makes perfect.

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، فَاقْدِرْهُ 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. ❁

Allāhumma innī astakhiruka bi 'ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa as'aluka min faḍlika 'l-'aẓīm(i), fa innaka taqdiru wa lā aqdiru wa ta'lamu wa lā a'lamu wa Anta 'Allāmu 'l-ghu-yūb(i), Allāhumma in kunta ta'lamu anna [hādha 'l-amra] khayrul li fi dīnī wa ma-'ashī wa 'āqibati amrī, fa 'qdirhu li wa yassirhu li thumma bārik li fiḥ(i), wa in kunta ta'lamu anna [hādha 'l-amra] sharrul li fi dīnī wa ma-'āshī wa 'āqibati amrī, fa 'ṣrifhu 'anni wa 'ṣrifni 'anhu wa 'qdir liya 'l-khayra ḥaythu kān(a), thumma arḍini bih(i).

O Allāh, I ask of You the good through Your knowledge and I ask You to grant me ability through Your power and beg Your favor of infinite bounty, for surely, You have power and I have none, You know all and I know nothing, and You are the Knower of all that is hidden. O Allāh if, in Your knowledge, *this matter* be good for my faith, my livelihood and the outcome of my affairs in the world and the Hereafter, then ordain it for me and facilitate it for me and grant me blessing in it. But, if in Your knowledge *this matter* is bad for my faith, my livelihood and the outcome of my affairs in the world and the Hereafter, then turn it away from me and turn me away from it, and ordain for me the good wherever it be, and cause me to be pleased with it (Bukhārī)."