

FREE DOWNLOAD

How to Pray Istikhara

A decision to make, and a prayer for exactly this. The full guide.

01

Pray two rak'ahs

Voluntary prayer, separate from any obligatory prayer

02

Say the du'a in Arabic

After the prayer, from memory or read from the card

03

Name the matter

Out loud or in your heart, say what the decision is

04

Ask, then choose

Seek counsel, look honestly, then go ahead and choose

FOUNDATION

What Istikhara Is

Istikhara comes from the Arabic root *kh-y-r*, the same root as *khayr*, meaning good. To seek istikhara is to seek the good, specifically to ask Allah to show you, and arrange for you, whichever option is genuinely better for you.

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُعَلِّمُنَا الْإِسْتِخَارَةَ فِي الْأُمُورِ كُلِّهَا كَمَا يُعَلِّمُنَا
السُّورَةَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ

"The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to teach us to seek guidance (istikhara) in all matters, just as he taught us a surah of the Qur'an."

NARRATED BY JABIR IBN ABDULLAH · [SAHIH AL-BUKHARI 1166](#)

What istikhara is not

It is not a request for a dream, a sign in the sky, or a feeling that arrives out of nowhere. It is also not a substitute for thinking. It is the last of three steps, not a replacement for the first two.

1

Think

Use the judgement Allah gave you. Weigh the options honestly.

2

Ask

Seek counsel from people whose judgement you trust.

3

Istikhara

Ask Allah to bless the choice that is genuinely better.

The Du'a of Istikhara

Said after two rak'ahs of voluntary prayer

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ، وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ
وَلَا أَقْدِرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ.

Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi 'ilmika, wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika, wa as'aluka min fadlika al-'azim. Fa innaka taqdiru wa la aqdiru, wa ta'lamu wa la a'lamu, wa anta 'allamu al-ghuyub.

O Allah, I seek Your guidance by Your knowledge, and I seek ability by Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. For You have power and I have none, You know and I do not, and You are the Knower of the unseen.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي، فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي
وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ.

Allahumma in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha al-amra khayrun li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa 'aqibati amri, faqdurhu li wa yassirhu li, thumma barik li fihi.

O Allah, if You know that this matter is good for my religion, my livelihood and the outcome of my affair, then decree it for me, make it easy for me, and bless me in it.

وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي، فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي
وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ.

Wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha al-amra sharrun li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa 'aqibati amri, fasrifhu 'anni wasrifni 'anhu, waqdur li al-khayra haythu kana, thumma ar dini bihi.

And if You know that this matter is bad for me in my religion, my livelihood and the outcome of my affair, then turn it away from me and turn me away from it. Decree for me whatever is good, wherever it may be, and make me content with it.

BEFORE YOU GO

Common Mistakes

1

Waiting for a dream or a feeling

You may be waiting a long time, for something that was never promised.

2

Asking someone else to pray it for you

There is no basis for this. Each person prays their own istikhara for their own matter.

3

Using it for something obligatory or forbidden

Istikhara is for matters where a real, permissible choice exists.

4

Only doing it once and feeling stuck

Pray it again. Repetition is not a failure of the process.

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The full guide, transliteration and more, free