

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(Series of Questions Addressed to Scholar Sheikh Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah,
Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir through his Fiqhi Facebook Page)

Answer to Question

Essence of Salatul Istikhara

To: Joud Ridwan Ridwan

Question:

Assalamu alaikum, I want to know what is Salatul Istikhara, and does the person who made Istikhara see something in his dream after performing the Istikhara? Please answer as soon as possible, Jazakoum Allah Khayran.

Answer:

Wa alaikoum I salam wa Rahmatu Allah wa Barakatuh,

The Prophet (saw) showed Salatul Istikhara via a thorough and adequate demonstration in a Hadith narrated by Bukhari and others on the authority of Jaber bin Abdullah, may Allah be pleased with both of them, he said: The Prophet of Allah (saw) would teach us to pray for guidance in all matters, as he (saw) used to teach us a chapter from the Quran, he (saw) said: «إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ، فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ، ثُمَّ لِيَقُلْ: 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 أُمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَاقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أُمْرِي - أَوْ قَالَ فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَآجِلِهِ - فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ، وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي» «وَيَسْمَى حَاجَتَهُ» قَالَ: «**When one of you has a decision, he should perform two cycles of prayer other than the obligations, then let him say: O Allah, I seek guidance from your knowledge and power from your might, and I ask you from your tremendous favor. Verily, you have power and I do not have power, and you know and I do not know. You are the knowing of the unseen. O Allah, if you know that this matter is good for my religion and my livelihood and my ending (or he said: if it is better for my present and latter needs), then decree it for me and make it easy for me and bless me in it. But if you know that this matter is evil for my religion and my livelihood and my ending (or he said: if it is worse for my present and latter needs), then divert it from me and keep me away from it, and decree for me what is good for me and make me content with it.**» The Prophet added that the person should then mention his need. END.

It is clear from this Hadith how to perform the Salatul Istikhara (prayer for guidance), so whoever wanted to seek guidance from Allah (swt) should pray two cycles (*rakah*) of prayer other than the obligations (*nafaleh*) with the intention of seeking guidance and after completion from the prayer he should make Supplication of seeking guidance (Istikhara) that is mentioned in the Hadith. By this, he would have performed the prayer for guidance or the Supplication for guidance, as this is the method of performing the prayer for guidance... However, there are other matters pertaining to the prayer for guidance, which are:

1. If a person has a decision to make, after he has studied the matter from all sides, and he is inclined towards a certain act and wanted to go with it, by then he prays two cycles of prayer (*rakah*) and makes Supplication of guidance and does them while he prays to Allah (swt) to facilitate it for him if it is good or divert it away from him if it is bad. This means that he should not pray for guidance except until he studies the matter from all of its sides and is inclined to go for it, that is when he prays and makes the Supplication for guidance and then goes for it... He should not pray for guidance except after studying the matter and is inclined to go forward with it. Look at the Hadith: «إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ، فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ، ثُمَّ لِيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ...» «**When one of you has a decision, he should perform two cycles of**

prayer other than the obligations, then let him say: O Allah, I seek guidance from your knowledge...” (Narrated by Bukhari).

2. **It is not proper to relate from the Prophet (saw) that he (saw) has connected prayer for guidance to a vision seen during a dream** as far as I know that even though he (saw) recommended people to pray for guidance, he (saw) didn't connect its result to dreams, as it was reported in a Hadith from Jaber who said: «فَأَقْدَرُهُ لِي وَيَسِّرُهُ لِي، ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ» «فَأَصْرَفَهُ عَنِّي وَأَصْرَفَنِي عَنْهُ، وَأَقْدَرَ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ أَرْضَيْتَنِي» and said: “**then decree it for me and make it easy for me and bless me in it**” and said: “**then divert it from me and keep me away from it, and decree for me what is good for me and make me content with it**” which show that he (saw) did not connect prayer for guidance with a vision seen in the dream. He rather made the matter connected to the facilitation and decree of Allah (swt), meaning that the person seeks to go with the matter which he prayed guidance for, so if there was good in it, Allah (swt) will decree it for him and facilitate it for him, else He (swt) will divert it away. Therefore, prayer for guidance is shifting the matter and the choice to Allah (swt) so that He (swt) chooses for the person praying for guidance, and to facilitate the matter which He (swt) sees as good for him. So, if He (swt) doesn't deem it as good for him, He (swt) will divert it away from him.

3. The saying of the Prophet (saw) in the Hadith of Jaber: «فَأَصْرَفَهُ عَنِّي وَأَصْرَفَنِي عَنْهُ، وَأَقْدَرَ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ، ثُمَّ أَرْضَيْتَنِي» “**then divert it from me and keep me away from it, and decree for me what is good for me and make me content with it**”. Some people understand from it that the feeling of relief is considered a sign for the choice of Allah (swt), meaning that if someone feels relieved then he should go for the matter, but if he feels unsettled and he diverts from it then he should keep away from it, since the diversion of the person praying for guidance occurs when the heart feels unsettled and wants to stay away... Ash-Shawkani reported in the book “*Neil Al-Awtar*” from An-Nawawi who said: “It is supposed that after performing the prayer for guidance to do what makes one relieved, so he is not supposed to rely on a feeling of relief that he had prior to the prayer for guidance. Instead, the person praying for guidance should leave his choice directly or else it would not be praying for guidance from Allah (swt), it would rather be praying for guidance according to his wishes. He might also be dishonest in asking for a choosing and acknowledging lack of knowledge and ability and affirm their presence in Allah (swt), so if he honest in this, he would acknowledge his lack of ability and strength and of choosing for himself.” **END**. However, what I am tending for is that this sign is not correct because there is no text about it, and the Hadith which some people rely on in this matter is a Hadith with a very weak chain of narration as the researchers mentioned, and the Hadith is:

Ibn As-Sinni reported in “The Work of the Day and Night” stating Abu Al-Abbas bin Qutaiba Al-Asqalani informed us, and told to us by Obeid Allah bin Al-Himayri, praised by Ibrahim bin Al-Alaa bin An-Nadr bin Anas bin Malik, praised by my father, on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, said: The Prophet of Allah (saw) said: «يَا أَنَسُ، إِذَا هَمَمْتَ بِأَمْرٍ فَاسْتَخِرْ رَبَّكَ فِيهِ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ، ثُمَّ انظُرْ إِلَى الَّذِي يَسْبِقُ إِلَى قَلْبِكَ، فَإِنَّ الْخَيْرَ فِيهِ» “**O Anas, if you have decided about a matter, then pray for guidance about it from your Lord seven times, then look at what your heart is inclined towards, then there is goodness in it**”. Ibn Hijr in Fatih Al-Bari “... An-Nawawi said in “Al-Athkaar” to do after prayer for guidance what brings the sense of relief to the person, and his evidence for that is a Hadith reported by Anas at Bin As-Sunni: “If you have decided about a matter, then pray for guidance about it from your Lord seven times, then look at what your heart is inclined towards, then there is goodness in it”, if it could be confirmed then it could be relied on, **but its chain of narration is very weak...**”

Therefore, what only remains is what we have mentioned in the first point that the Hadith mentions that prayer for guidance occurs after going for a matter, meaning that after making the decision of doing something based on a holistic study of it and all aspects suggest the inclination towards it... What testifies to the validity of this understanding is the Hadith narrated by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak upon the account of Abu Ayyoub Al-Ansari that the Prophet of Allah (saw) said: «اَكْتُمُ الْخُطْبَةَ ثُمَّ تَوَضَّأْ فَأَحْسِنِ وَضُوءَكَ، ثُمَّ صَلِّ مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لَكَ، ثُمَّ أَحْمَدُ رَبَّكَ»

وَمَجْدَهُ، ثُمَّ قُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ، وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ، وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ، فَإِنْ رَأَيْتَ لِي فِي فَلَانَةٍ، - يُسَمِّيَهَا بِاسْمِهَا - خَيْرًا لِي
“Keep the engagement a secret, then perform ablution and perform it well, then pray as much as Allah (swt) has written for you, then praise Allah and glorify Him, then say: O Allah You are Able and I am not, You know and I do not, You know the Unknown, so if You see that this person – name her by her name – is good for me in my Deen, my life, and my afterlife then decree her for me, but if there is another person who is better for me in my Deen, my life, and my afterlife, then decree her for me”. It is clear from this Hadith that the person praying for guidance **has decided to get engaged to a certain woman**, but he didn't publicize it rather kept it a secret, then he prayed for guidance from Allah about it and left it in the Hands of Allah (swt) so that He decrees her for him if there is goodness in her, or to decree someone else for him if there is goodness in someone other than her, **and he didn't connect what he saw in the dream or in the feeling of relief...**

In conclusion, what I am tending towards in the topic of prayer for guidance is:

If a person decided about something after he has studied it from all its angles, and he is inclined towards going for it and is aiming to do it, only then that he pray two cycles and say the Supplication of praying for guidance and to do that while he is supplicating to Allah Almighty to facilitate it for him if there is goodness in it or divert it away if there is evil in it.

This means that he doesn't pray for guidance only until he studies the matter from all angles and is inclined towards going for it, then he prays and supplicates for guidance and then goes for it... Look at this Hadith: «إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ، فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْقَرِيضَةِ، ثُمَّ لِيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي...»
“**When one of you has a decision**, he should perform two cycles of prayer other than the obligations, then let him say: O Allah, I seek guidance from your knowledge...” (Narrated by Bukhari).

This is what I have outweighed from the Hadith, that he should not pray for guidance while waiting to see something in a dream, or wait until he sees what he is inclined to do from either matters, because the Hadith says: «إِذَا هُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ...» “When one of you has a decision...”. As I mentioned earlier, this is what I found most preponderant from some of the sayings, but only Allah (swt) knows what is most right.

Your Brother,

Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah

01 Jamadi Al-Oula 1437 AH

10/02/2016 CE

The link to the answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/AmeerhtAtabinKhalil/photos/a.122855544578192.1073741828.122848424578904/444663125730764/?type=3&theater>

The link to the answer from the Ameer's account on Google Plus:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/100431756357007517653/100431756357007517653/posts/JT5W6jfJQoR>

The link to the answer from the Ameer's account on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/ataabualrashtah/status/700017773234225152?lang=ar>