Writing Supplications and Istikhārah

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Q1422. Is it permissible to pay or receive money in return for writing supplications?

A: There is no harm in paying or receiving money for writing authentic supplications.

Q1423. What is the ruling in the matter of supplications whose writers allege that they are found in old books? Are these supplications lawfully recognized? And what is the view on referring to the writers?

A: If the supplications transmitted from the Imams (a.s.) or their contents are right, there is no harm in seeking the blessing from them. Nor is there any harm in seeking blessing in the ones whose authenticity is in doubt in the hope that they might have emanated from the infallible Imams (a.s.).

Q1424. Is it obligatory to act upon istikhārah?

A: Acting upon istikhārah is not binding as per shar‘. However, it is preferable not to act against its outcome.

Q1425. According to common belief, there is no place for istikhārah in doing charitable work. Is it, therefore, permissible to rely on istikhārah in order to determine the best way to go about doing this work or with a view to circumventing unforeseen problems in the process? And is istikhārah a means of knowing the unseen or does no one, apart from Allah, the Exalted, know about it?

A: Istikhārah should be embarked on as a way of overcoming indecision over doing lawful things, regardless of the nature of indecision, i.e., whether it is emanated from the nature of the intended action or the route taken to do it. Accordingly, doing charitable work, which does not call for indecision, should not necessitate resorting to istikhārah. Istikhārah is not a means to foretelling the future of the person or the work.

Q1426. Is it right to resort to istikhārah by way of consulting the Holy Qur’an in matters such as divorce? And what is the view on not acting on the result of istikhārah, having done it?

A: The permissibility of doing istikhārah by consulting the Holy Qur’an, or by way of prayer beads, is not confined to certain issues to the exclusion of others. Istikhārah could be made in all lawful circumstances where the person concerned is unable to decide upon the matter. It is not lawfully binding to follow the result of istikhārah, although it is advisable not to go against it.

Q1427. Is it proper to resort to istikhārah, by consulting the Holy Qur’an or by prayer beads, in decisive matters, such as marriage?

A: For making a decision on a matter, it is preferable to ponder about it and to consult experienced trustworthy people about it. If these steps fail to remove his/her indecision, one can resort to istikhārah.

Q1428. Is it right to take istikhārah more than once for the same issue?

A: Since istikhārah is sought as a means of removing the state of indecision, a goal that should have been achieved by the first one, there is no point in repeating the same. However, should the subject of istikhārah change, one can do istikhārah afresh.

Q1429. Sometimes a person comes by some leaflets containing some information about miracles of Imam Riḍā (a.s.). The publishers of such leaflets usually make a request that the reader makes more copies of them for distribution to other people and in so doing they would achieve what they aspire to. Is there any truth in this? And is it obligatory on the reader to comply with the request of the publishers?

A: There is no evidence in Islamic law that this has any weight. The reader has no obligation towards acceding to the publishers' request.