

SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE [*I'TIKAF*]

CONTENTS

<i>The legality of I'tikaf</i>	2
<i>I'tikaf is recommended in Ramadan</i>	2
<i>I'tikaf is for ten days, unless</i>	2
<i>Making up for last year</i>	3
<i>Fulfilling a vow made before becoming a muslim</i>	3
<i>A prophet in the year of death</i>	3
<i>A prophet informed of the Night of Decree [Qadr] in the last ten days of Ramadan</i>	3
<i>I'tikaf commences after fajr prayer</i>	3
<i>To have the right intention and to seek husband's permission for i'tikaf</i>	4
<i>To set up a tent and a bed for I'tikaf</i>	4
<i>To keep clean during I'tikaf</i>	4
<i>A woman suffering non-menstrual bleeding [Al-istihadah] may perform I'tikaf</i>	4
<i>To strive hard in worship in i'tikaf</i>	5
<i>May leave the mosque for unavoidable personal needs</i>	5
<i>A mu'takif may receive visitors</i>	5

SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE [I'TIKAF]

THE LEGALITY OF I'TIKAF

أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

It is made lawful for you to have sexual relations with your wives on the night of the fasts. They are covering for you and you are the same for them. Allah [swt] knows that you used to deceive yourselves so He turned to you and forgave you. So now have sexual relations with them and seek that which Allah [swt] has ordained for you and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread then complete your fast till the nightfall. **And do not have sexual relations with them while you are in I'tikaf in the mosques.** These are the limits [set] by Allah [swt] so approach them not. Thus does Allah [swt] make clear His ayat to mankind that they may become the pious.¹

I'TIKAF IS RECOMMENDED IN RAMADAN

“The Prophet [saws] used to practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice I'tikaf after him.”²

I'TIKAF IS FOR TEN DAYS, UNLESS

“Allah’s Messenger [saws] mentioned that he would practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. ‘A’ishah [ra] asked permission to perform I'tikaf and he permitted her. Hafsa [ra] asked ‘A’ishah [ra] to take his permission for her and she did so. When Zainab bint Jahsh [ra] saw that she ordered a tent to be pitched for her and it was pitched for her. Allah’s Messenger [saws] used to proceed to his tent after the salah. So he saw the tents and asked, ‘What is this?’ He was told that those were the tents of ‘A’ishah [ra], Hafsa [ra] and Zainab [ra]. Allah’s Messenger [saws] said, ‘Is it Al-Birr [righteousness] which they intended by doing so? I am not going to perform I'tikaf.’ So he returned home. When the fasting month was over he performed I'tikaf for ten days in the month of Shawwal.”³

¹ Surah Al-Baqarah Chapter 2 Verse 187

² Sahih Al-Bukhari 2026; Sahih Muslim 2784 [5/1172]

³ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2045, 2033, 2041; Sahih Muslim 2785 [6/1173]; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1771

SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE [*I'TIKAF*]

MAKING UP FOR LAST YEAR

“The Prophet [saws] would perform *I'tikaf* during the last ten [nights] of Ramadan. One year he did not perform *I'tikaf*, so he performed *I'tikaf* for twenty [nights] in the following year.”⁴

It was narrated from Ubayy bin K'ab [ra] that the Prophet [saws] used to spend the last ten days of Ramadan in *I'tikaf*. One year he was travelling so the following year he spent twenty days in *I'tikaf*.⁵

FULFILLING A VOW MADE BEFORE BECOMING A MUSLIM

“O Allah's Messenger [saws] I [Umar bin Al Khattab (ra)] vowed in the Pre Islamic Period of Ignorance to perform *I'tikaf* in Al Masjid Al Haram for one night.” The Prophet [saws] said, “Fulfil your vow.” So he performed *I'tikaf* for one night.⁶

A PROPHET IN THE YEAR OF DEATH

“The Prophet [saws] used to observe *I'tikaf* for ten days every year. In the year in which he passed away he observed *I'tikaf* for twenty days. And the Qur'an would be reviewed with him once every year but in the year in which he passed away it was reviewed with him twice.”⁷

A PROPHET INFORMED OF THE NIGHT OF DECREE [QADR] IN THE LAST TEN DAYS OF RAMADAN

“Allah's Messenger [saws] used to practice *I'tikaf* in the middle ten days of Ramadan; and once he stayed in *I'tikaf* till the night of the twenty first and it was the night in the morning of which he used to come out of his *I'tikaf*. The Prophet [saws] said, ‘Whoever was in *I'tikaf* with me should stay in *I'tikaf* for the last ten days for I was informed of the Night [of Qadr] but I have been caused to forget it. [In the dream] I saw myself prostrating in mud and water in the morning of that night. So look for it in the last ten nights and in the odd ones of them.’ It rained that night and the roof of the mosque dribbled as it was made of leaf stalks of date-palms. I saw with my own eyes the marks of mud and water on the forehead of the Prophet [saws] in the morning of the twenty-first [of Ramadan].”⁸

I'TIKAF COMMENCES AFTER *FAJR* PRAYER

“When the Messenger of Allah [saws] wanted to perform *I'tikaf* he would perform the *fajr* prayer and then he would enter his place of *I'tikaf*.”⁹

⁴ Jami' At-Tirmidhi Sahih 803

⁵ Sunan Ibn Majah 1770

⁶ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2042, 2032; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1772

⁷ Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1769

⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2027, 2036, 2040

⁹ Jami' At-Tirmidhi Sahih 791

SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE [*I'TIKAF*]

TO HAVE THE RIGHT INTENTION AND TO SEEK HUSBAND'S PERMISSION FOR *I'TIKAF*

“Allah’s Messenger [saws] mentioned that he would practice *I'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan. ‘A’ishah [ra] asked permission to perform *I'tikaf* and he permitted her. Hafsa [ra] asked ‘A’ishah [ra] to take his permission for her and she did so. When Zainab bint Jahsh [ra] saw that she ordered a tent to be pitched for her and it was pitched for her. Allah’s Messenger [saws] used to proceed to his tent after the *salah*. So he saw the tents and asked, ‘What is this?’ He was told that those were the tents of ‘A’ishah [ra], Hafsa [ra] and Zainab [ra]. Allah’s Messenger [saws] said, ‘Is it *Al-Birr* [righteousness] which they intended by doing so? I am not going to perform *I'tikaf*.’ So he returned home. When the fasting month was over he performed *I'tikaf* for ten days in the month of *Shawwal*.”¹⁰

TO SET UP A TENT AND A BED FOR *I'TIKAF*

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar [ra] that when the Prophet [saws] observed *I'tikaf* his bedding would be spread for him or his bed would be placed there for him behind the Pillar of Repentance.¹¹

It was narrated from Abu Sa’eed Al-Khudri [ra] that the Messenger of Allah [saws] observed *I'tikaf* in a Turkish tent over the door of which was a piece of reed matting. He pushed the mat aside then he put his head out and spoke to the people.¹²

TO KEEP CLEAN DURING *I'TIKAF*

“He [saws] also used to put his head out of the mosque while he was in *I'tikaf* and I [‘A’ishah [ra]] would wash it during my menses.”¹³

“‘A’ishah [ra] during her menses used to comb and oil the hair of the Prophet [saws] while he used to be in *I'tikaf* in the mosque. He would stretch out his head towards her while she was in her chamber.”¹⁴

A WOMAN SUFFERING NON-MENSTRUAL BLEEDING [*AL-ISTIHADAH*] MAY PERFORM *I'TIKAF*

“One of the wives of Allah’s Messenger [saws] practiced *I'tikaf* with him while she had bleeding in between her periods and she would see red or yellowish traces; and sometimes we put a tray beneath her when she offered the *salah*.”¹⁵

¹⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2045, 2033, 2041; Sahih Muslim 2785 [6/1173]; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1771

¹¹ Sunan Ibn Majah Hasan 1774

¹² Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1775

¹³ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2031; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1778

¹⁴ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2046

¹⁵ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2037; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1780

SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE [*I'TIKAF*]

TO STRIVE HARD IN WORSHIP IN *I'TIKAF*

“The Messenger of Allah [saws] used to strive harder in the last ten [nights of Ramadan] than at any other time.”¹⁶

“When the [last] ten [nights] began the Messenger of Allah [saws] would stay awake at night wake his family strive hard [in worship] and tighten his *izar*.”¹⁷

MAY LEAVE THE MOSQUE FOR UNAVOIDABLE PERSONAL NEEDS

“Allah’s Messenger [saws] used to let his head in [the house] while he was in the mosque and I would comb and oil his hair. When in *I'tikaf* he used not to enter the house except for a need.”¹⁸

“I [‘A’ishah (ra)] used to enter the house to relieve myself and there was a sick person there and I only enquired after him as I was passing through. And the Messenger of Allah [saws] would not enter the house except to relieve himself when they were observing *I'tikaf*.”¹⁹

A *MU'TAKIF* MAY RECEIVE VISITORS

“Safiyya [ra], the wife of the Prophet [saws], told me that she went to Allah’s Messenger [saws] to visit him in the mosque while he was in *I'tikaf* in the last ten days of Ramadan. She had a talk with him for a while then she got up in order to return home. The Prophet [saws] accompanied her. When they reached the gate of the mosque opposite the door of Umm Salamah [ra], two Ansari men were passing by and they greeted Allah’s Messenger [saws]. He said to them, ‘Do not run away!’ And said, ‘She is Safiyya bint Huyai.’ Both of them said, ‘*Subhan Allah* O Allah’s Messenger [saws].’ And they felt it. The Prophet [saws] said, ‘Satan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it. I was afraid lest Satan might insert an evil thought in your minds.’”²⁰

¹⁶ Sahih Muslim 2788 [8/1175]

¹⁷ Sahih Muslim 2787 [7/1174]

¹⁸ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2029

¹⁹ Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1776

²⁰ Sahih Al-Bukhari 2035, 2038; Sunan Ibn Majah Sahih 1779