

اعتكاف I'tikāf

VIRTUES, RULINGS, AND ISSUES

Shaykh Abū al-Munīb
Muḥammad 'Alī Khāshkhaylī

Taqrīẓ

Shaykh Abū 'Adnān Muḥammad Munīr Qamar
Shaykh Dr. Maḥbūb Abū 'Āsim

Translated by Dr. Syed Muḥammad 'Ukāshah

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Transliteration Table

Consonants:

ء '	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ṣ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع '	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	ه h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي i

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.:

Short:	ا a	ي i	و u
Long:	آ ā	إ ī	ؤ ū
Diphthongs:	أ aw	أَي ay	

Taqrīz by Shaykh Abū ‘Adnān Muḥammad Munīr Qamar

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. آمَنَّا بَعْدُ:

قارئین کرام۔

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ۔

کتاب: اعتکاف، فضائل، احکام و مسائل تالیف: مولانا ابوالمنیب محمد علی خا صخیلی صاحب حفظہ اللہ کے انگلش ایڈیشن کو ہمارے ایک برخوردار عزیز ابور میصاء عبد اللہ طارق حفظہ اللہ، بحرین، نے شائع کرنا چاہا تو انہوں نے کہا کہ ہمیں اس پر تقریظ لکھ دیں تو میں نے کہا کہ میں بغیر اچھی طرح پڑھے تقریظ نہیں لکھتا تو انہوں نے اس کتاب کا اردو اور انگلش دونوں ایڈیشن کی پی ڈی ایف مہیا کر دی اور تقریظ و نظر ثانی کا مطالبہ دہرا دیا۔ ہم نے بغور مطالعہ کیا اور جہاں جہاں جو جو مناسب سمجھا لکھا، تاہم مؤلف محترم کے بعض مواقف پر موافقت نہ کر پائے جس پر انہوں نے کمال فراخ دلی سے اجازت دے دی کہ ہمارے موقف کو جو کہ دراصل جمہور اہل علم کا رائج موقف ہے اسے بھی حاشیہ میں ذکر کر دیا جائے اور ایسا ہی کر دیا گیا ہے۔ فجزاہ اللہ خیراً۔

جہاں تک اس کتاب کے مجموعی مندرجات کا تعلق ہے تو اس پر یقیناً وہ ہمارے اور تمام قارئین کے شکریہ کے بجائے مستحق ہیں کہ اس عنوان پر انہوں نے قلم اٹھایا اور متعلقہ تقریباً تمام معلومات مہیا کر دیں۔ تقبل اللہ منا ومنہ صالح الأعمال۔

اس پر مزید کام عزیزم ابور میصاء حفظہ اللہ، (بانی و مدیر مکتبہ تخریج الحدیث) نے کیا کہ حواشی کی تفشگی کو دور کر دیا اور جہاں ہم نے کوئی اضافہ مناسب سمجھا وہ مسودے پر لکھ دیا۔ ابور میصاء حفظہ اللہ نے مؤلف کی اجازت سے کئی ایک مفید کام کیے۔ جن میں سے ہی ایک یہ بھی ہے کہ کتاب کے آخر میں اس موضوع سے متعلقہ کئی فتاویٰ جات کا بھی اضافہ کر دیا ہے۔ تقبل اللہ جہودنا وجہودہ المبارکۃ إن شاء اللہ۔

اور اس کتاب کا انگلش ترجمہ کرنے والے جناب ڈاکٹر سید محمد عکاشہ کو بھی اللہ تعالیٰ جزائے خیر دے کہ
اس موضوع کو انگلش میں پیش کرنے کا شرف حاصل کر گئے ہیں۔ اللہم زد فزد۔

اللہ تعالیٰ سے دعا ہے کہ وہ اس کتاب کے مؤلف، مترجم، ناشر اور جس جس نے اسکی طباعت و اشاعت
میں کوئی بھی حصہ لیا ہے ان سب کے اس عمل کو قبول فرمائے، انہیں دنیا و آخرت میں جزائے خیر عطا کرے۔
آمین یا رب العالمین۔ والسلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ۔

✍ الشیخ ابو عدنان محمد منیر قمر، النجف، سعودی عرب

18 رمضان 1446ھ - بمطابق 18 مارچ 2025م۔

Verily all praise is due to Allāh, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of our own souls and from the evil of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allāh leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.

When our dear brother Abū Rumayṣā' 'Abdullāh Ṭāriq (may Allāh preserve him) from Bahrain intended to publish the English edition of the book: **"I'tikāf: Virtues, Rulings, and Issues"**, authored by dear Mawlānā Abū al-Munīb Muḥammad 'Alī Khāshkhaylī (may Allāh preserve him), so he requested me to write a taqrīz (endorsement) for it. I responded that I do not write a taqrīz without thoroughly reviewing a book first. Consequently, he provided me with the PDF copies of both the Urdu and English editions and reiterated his request for the taqrīz and review.

After carefully studying the book, I made necessary observations and annotations where I deemed appropriate. However, I could not align with the respected author's stance on certain issues. Displaying great generosity, he (the author) allowed for the inclusion of our perspective – which actually aligns with the predominant stance of the majority of scholars – in the footnotes. This was accordingly implemented. May Allāh reward him with goodness for that.

As far as the overall contents of this book are concerned, there is no doubt that the author rightfully deserves ours thanks (and appreciation) and that of all the readers. He took the initiative to write on this important subject and provided comprehensive information on it. May Allāh accept from us and from him the righteous deeds.

Furthermore, our dear brother Abū Rumaysā', may Allāh preserve him, (founder and director of Maktabah Takhrīj al-Ḥadīth) contributed additional efforts by refining the footnotes and incorporating our suggested additions into the draft (of the book). With the author's permission, he also undertook several beneficial enhancements, one of which was the inclusion of multiple relevant fatāwā at the end of the book. May Allāh accept our efforts and his blessed efforts, in shā' Allāh.

May Allāh also grant the best of rewards to the esteemed translator, Dr. Syed Muḥammad 'Ukāshah , for the honor of rendering this subject into English. O Allāh, increase and then increase further.

I pray to Allāh – the Almighty – to accept the efforts of the author, translator, publisher, and all those who contributed in any way to the printing and dissemination of this book. May He grant them the best rewards in this world and the Hereafter.

Āmīn, O Lord of the worlds.

Wassalāmu 'alaykum waraḥamatullāhi wabarakātuḥu.

✍ Shaykh Abū 'Adnān Muḥammad Munīr Qamar, al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia
18th Ramaḍān 1446H – 18th March 2025



Taqrīz by Shaykh Dr. Maḥbūb Abū ‘Āṣim

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. آمَنَّا بَعْدُ:

رمضان المبارک فضیلتوں برکتوں اور اللہ تعالیٰ کی رحمتوں کا ماہ مبارک ہے، اگرچہ اس کے تمام شب و روز ہی بہت قیمتی اور پُر نور ہیں، لیکن آخری عشرہ کے لمحات و ساعات کی قدر و منزلت کا کوئی اندازہ نہیں، جن کے فضائل پانے کے لیے نبی رحمت **صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم** اعتکاف فرمایا کرتے تھے۔

اسی موضوع سے متعلق مجھے کتاب (الاعتکاف: فضائل، احکام و مسائل) کے مطالعہ کا شرف حاصل ہوا، جو کہ محترم مولانا محمد علی خا صخیلی حفظہ اللہ تعالیٰ کی تالیف کردہ ہے۔ انہوں نے اعتکاف سے متعلق تمام احکامات بخوبی بیان فرمائے ہیں۔

جس کے انگلش ترجمہ کو عزیزم ابوالرمیضاء عبد اللہ طارق حفظہ اللہ نے حواشی و تخریجات سے مزین کیا ہے۔ بلکہ موضوع سے مزید استفادہ کے لیے کتاب کے آخر میں اس سے متعلق فتاویٰ جات کا بھی اضافہ کر دیا ہے۔ مطالعہ کے دوران بعض تصحیحات اور توضیحات بیان کر دی گئی ہیں۔ تقبل اللہ من الجمع هذه الجهود المباركة، وجعلها نافعة مفيدة، وخاصة لوجه الله الكريم۔

وصلی اللہ وسلم علی نبینا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ أجمعین۔

✍ الشیخ د. محبوب ابو عاصم، البحرین

19 رمضان 1446ھ - بمطابق 19 مارچ 2025م۔

Verily all praise is due to Allāh, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of our own souls and from the evil of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allāh leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one

worthy of worship except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.

The blessed month of Ramaḍān is a month filled with virtues, blessings, and the mercies of Allāh – the Most High. While all its days and nights are immensely valuable and radiant, the precious time and hours of its last ten days hold an unparalleled status, the virtue of which cannot be fully comprehended. It was to attain these virtues that the Prophet of mercy ﷺ would observe i'tikāf.

In relation to this topic, I had the honor of reading (and reviewing) the book **"I'tikāf: Virtues, Rulings, and Issues"**, authored by the respected Mawlānā Muḥammad 'Alī Khāshkhaylī (may Allāh preserve him). He has eloquently explained all the rulings concerning i'tikāf.

The English translation of this book has been enriched with annotations and references by dear Abū Rumayṣā' 'Abdullāh Ṭāriq (may Allāh preserve him). Furthermore, to provide additional benefit on the subject, relevant fatawā have been added at the end of the book.

While reviewing the book, certain amendments and clarifications were pointed out.

May Allāh accept these virtuous endeavors from all, and make it beneficial and valuable, and for sincerely seeking the Face of Allāh – the Most Generous.

And may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and all his companions.

✍ Shaykh Dr. Maḥbūb Abū 'Āṣim, Bahrain
19th Ramaḍān 1446H – 19th March 2025



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا، مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران)
 ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ (سورة النساء)
 ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۚ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب)

أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

إِنَّ أَصْدَقَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ وَأَحْسَنَ الْهُدَى هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا وَكُلُّ مُحَدَّثَةٍ بِدْعَةٍ وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

Verily all praise is due to Allāh, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil of our own souls and from the evil of our deeds. Whomsoever Allāh guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allāh leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh as He should be feared and do not die except as Muslims [in submission to Him].” [Sūrah āl-‘Imrān 3: 102]

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear

Allāh, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever, over you, an Observer.” [Sūrah an-Nisā’ 4: 1]

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice
❖ He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins. And whoever obeys Allāh, and His Messenger has certainly attained a great attainment.” [Sūrah al-Aḥzāb 33: 70-71]

To Proceed:

The truest word is the Book of Allāh, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad ﷺ. The most evil matters are those that are newly invented, and every newly invented matter is an innovation. Every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hellfire.

All praise and thanks be to Allāh alone, the One, the Almighty, and the All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muḥammad, the last of His Messengers and Prophets, and upon his family, his Companions and all those who follow in their footsteps until the end of time.

I am extremely grateful for this blessed opportunity to be able work on and publish this esteemed book in the English language. The subject of the book “I’tikāf” is not much talked about in the English speaking world; hence I have deemed it beneficial to provide the people with a book that discusses the matters related to it, its virtues, rulings, and issues. To further increase the benefits in the original book, a separate section has been added at the end of the book, including fatāwā which are relevant and beneficial to our current day and time.

I have added the references to primary sources (such as Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah, Muṣannaf ‘Abdur-Razzāq, , and others) wherever the author had sufficed mentioning a secondary source like al-Muḥallā by ibn Ḥazm, etc.

I have also included the references from Riyāḍu Ṣāliḥīn and Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ as their explanations are easy to find in various languages, so it facilitates anyone looking for commentaries on those aḥādīth.

I have added and/or changed a few points in the book with the permission of the author after reviewing them with the shaykh himself. The points have further been highlighted under the footnotes throughout the book.

We pray to Allāh – the Exalted – that this book encourages its readers to perform i’tikāf and follow a much neglected Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Imām az-Zuhrī رحمه الله said: ‘It is strange that the Muslims have given up i’tikāf

when the Prophet ﷺ did not give it up from the time he entered Madīnah until Allāh took him (i.e., his soul).’ (1)

«عَجَبًا لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ، تَرَكُوا الْإِعْتِكَافَ، وَالنَّبِيَّ ﷺ لَمْ يَتْرُكْهُ مُنْذُ دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ حَتَّى قَبَضَهُ اللَّهُ»

It may not be practical for most people to perform i’tikāf but the least one can do is intend to perform it in their lifetimes once, as ‘Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is reported to have said: ‘Having an intention to act upon the Sunnah is better than striving in innovation.’ (2)

«الْقَصْدُ فِي السُّنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْاجْتِهَادِ فِي الْبِدْعَةِ»

Imām az-Zuhrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: ‘Our scholars who came before us used to say: Salvation lies in clinging to the Sunnah ...’ (3) So, we advise ourselves, and others to strive to act upon the Sunnah, and call others to act upon it as the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “One who guides to something good has a reward similar to that of its doer.” (4)

«مَنْ دَلَّ عَلَى خَيْرٍ فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِ فَاعِلِهِ»

Shaykh ibn al-‘Uthaymīn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: ‘Each time an opportunity offers itself for the propagation of the Sunnah, do spread it, and you will certainly have the reward, and that of the one who acts upon it till the day of Resurrection.’ (5)

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When carried to his grave, a dead person is followed by three, two of which return (after his burial) and one remains with him: His family, his property, and his deeds follow him; his family and his property return while his deeds remain with him” (6)

«يَتَّبِعُ الْمَيِّتَ ثَلَاثَةٌ، فَيَرْجِعُ اثْنَانِ وَيَبْقَى مَعَهُ وَاحِدٌ: يَتَّبِعُهُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ وَعَمَلُهُ، فَيَرْجِعُ أَهْلُهُ وَمَالُهُ، وَيَبْقَى عَمَلُهُ»

Shaykh ibn al-‘Uthaymīn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentioned while explaining this ḥadīth: ‘... This has evidence that the world will cease to exist. All the adornments of this

(1) Fath-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī by Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (6/612-613 [4/286]); and others.

(2) Sunan ad-Dārimī (217 (1/51)); Jāmi’ Bayān al-‘Ilm wa-Faḍlihi by Imām ibn ‘Abdul-Barr (2334 (2/1179)); and others.

(3) Sunan ad-Dārimī (96 (1/34-35)); Ḥilyatul Awliyā’ by Imām Abū Nu’aym al-Aṣḥānī (3/369); and others.

(4) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1893); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (5129); and Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2671)

(5) Sharḥ Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (740-741 (4/215))

(6) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6514); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2960); Sunan an-Nasā’ī (1937 [1939]); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2379); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (104 & 461)

world will return and will not remain with you in your grave; the property and children – the adornments of world life – will turn back. What will remain? Only deeds! My dear brother, it is incumbent on you to strive to maintain this companion who will remain and not leave with those who will leave. It is necessary for you to struggle hard until your deeds (which will hang out with you in your grave when you are left exclusively with them without loves ones, family and children) become righteous ...’ (7)

Acknowledgement

I am extremely thankful to my shuyūkh, for their continuous support and feedback, and their time and effort specifically for reviewing this book, and then writing us the taqrīz for it, despite their busy schedules during Ramaḍān.

Firstly, I am thankful to the author, Shaykh Abū al-Munīb Muḥammad ‘Alī Khāshkhaylī for giving us the permission to translate and publish his book, and granting us with the complete authority to make changes and improvisations in it. And also, for continuously following up with the progress of the book.

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حفظهم الله وسلمهم الله وبارك في حياتهم وزادهم الله من شرفهم، آمين يا رب العالمين!

I am also thankful to my dear brother ‘Imrān (Germany) at the Maktabah for his time, and effort he spent in proofreading, and editing the first draft of the translation by our dear brother Dr. Syed Muḥammad ‘Ukāshah (Pakistan), to whom I am very thankful as well. I would also like to thank our brother Muḥammad ‘Imrān (Jeddah/India) for helping with adding the tashkīl on the Arabic mutūn. May Allāh accept these efforts by everyone, especially my family for providing me a beautiful atmosphere to work and complete this project.

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20th Ramaḍān 1446H – 20th March 2025



❁ Translator's Foreword ❁



In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

In this era of trials and tribulations, it has become increasingly challenging, if not impossible, to shield oneself from the taints of sin. Everywhere one turns – be it markets, colleges, one's job or universities – there is an overwhelming display of rebellion against the commands of Allāh and allegiance to shayṭān. Yet, it is Allāh's boundless mercy upon Muslims that He continues to provide numerous opportunities for repentance and redemption. Among these is the blessed month of Ramaḍān, and within it, the final ten days, laden with extraordinary blessings such as laylatul qadr (the night of decree) and the sacred practice of i'tikāf.

The significance of laylatul qadr is as radiant as the midday sun, and the importance of i'tikāf can be understood from the actions of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ who never missed this act of worship throughout his prophetic life. In his final Ramaḍān, he even extended his i'tikāf to twenty days. (8) Our pious predecessors followed his example, making the masjid their dwelling not only in Ramaḍān, but also throughout the year. They epitomized the meaning of the ḥadīth: "Seven people will be shaded by Allāh under His shade on the day when there will be no shade except His: ... A man whose heart is attached to the masājid ..." (9)

«سَبْعَةٌ يُظِلُّهُمْ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ يَوْمَ لَا ظِلَّ إِلَّا ظِلُّهُ ... رَجُلٌ قَلْبُهُ مُعَلَّقٌ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ...»

They savored the sweetness of these ten days for the entire year and earnestly prayed to Allāh for another opportunity to perform i'tikāf.

(8) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2044 & 4998); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2466); Sunan ibn Mājah (1769); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (2099); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1270)

(9) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (660, 1423, 6479 & 6806); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1031); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (5380 [5382]); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2391); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (701); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (376, 449 & 658)

Why wouldn't they? During these special nights, a believer experiences a unique closeness with their Creator, pouring out their heart in prayer. A believer longs for moments of seclusion to worship Allāh. In the calmness of i'tikāf, when a worshipper disconnects from the world, the spiritual joy they feel is unmatched.

This sweetness is also seen in the story of Prophet Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. When Allāh asked him about his staff, instead of giving a brief answer, he eagerly continued speaking, enjoying the conversation with his Lord: **"He said: 'This is my stick, whereon I learn, and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses.'"** [Sūrah Tā-Hā: 64]

﴿قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَى غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرَى﴾ (سورة طه)

Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ deeply desired to receive revelation. He once asked Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ why he was delaying bringing down the wahī (revelation), to which Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ replied: **"And We do not descend except by the command of your Lord."** [Sūrah Maryam: 64]

﴿وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ﴾ (سورة مريم)

Alas, the masājīd today lie desolate. As 'Allāmah Iqbāl رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ poignantly remarked: 'The masjid was built overnight by those with fervent faith, yet my sinful self has failed to become a worshiper even after years.'

«مسجد تو بنادی شب بھر میں ایمان کی حرارت والوں نے، من اپنا پُرانا پانی ہے، برسوں میں نمازی بن نہ سکا»

Today, not only do most people neglect i'tikāf, but those who do often succumb to heedlessness. Where once the sound of tearful supplications could be heard during the pre-dawn hours, laughter and idle chatter now dominate. Instead of gatherings that revive faith through the Qurān and the Sunnah, we now witness sessions of gossip, slander, and political debates. Many enter these sacred days with empty hands and leave in the same state, having gained nothing.

It is for this reason that I took on the privilege of translating this concise booklet: **"Virtues, Rulings, and Issues of I'tikāf"** into the English language. Adorned with evidence from the Qurān and the Sunnah, this booklet is a valuable resource that addresses the topic comprehensively, offering

guidance on the rulings and issues related to i'tikāf. My aim in translating this work was inspired by the Āyah: **“And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers.”** [Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt: 55]

﴿وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَ تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ (سورة الذاريات)

This effort seeks to guide those who have strayed back to the path of righteousness, reconnect a servant to their Master, and remind believers of the purpose and significance of this profound act of worship. The spiritual fulfillment I experienced during this translation is beyond description; the rejuvenation of my faith cannot be captured in words. I endeavored to maintain a simple and accessible style so that readers might find ease in understanding.

Finally, it would be unjust not to express my heartfelt gratitude to my esteemed brother, Abū Rumayṣā' 'Abdullāh, whose encouragement transformed someone as unworthy as me into a humble traveler on this noble journey. Despite being well aware of my limitations, he entrusted me with this monumental task of translating into English and took it upon himself to finance the publication of this booklet. May Allāh reward him abundantly with goodness in both this world and the Hereafter.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my beloved teacher and mentor, Shaykh 'Umar Darāz (may Allāh preserve him), whose guidance has illuminated every step of this journey. My special thanks to my sister, Dr. Syedah Malāy'kah Kāẓmī, and her esteemed colleague, Dr. 'Ishā' 'Alvī, for their meticulous review and invaluable suggestions, which have enhanced this work immensely.

I pray it serves as a means of guidance and inspiration for all who read it.

✍ **With utmost humility and prayers,**
Dr. Syed Muḥammad 'Ukāshah



❁ Author's Preface ❁

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

All praise is for Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allāh, the Seal of the Prophets, his family, his companions, and all those who follow them in goodness until the Day of Judgment. To proceed:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ وَمَنْ تَبِعَهُمْ
بِإِحْسَانٍ إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ. أَمَّا بَعْدُ:

Allāh – the Lord of Honor – has bestowed a great favor and kindness upon us all that He has once again granted us the opportunity to witness the blessed month of Ramaḍān. Once again, we have been given a chance to seek forgiveness for our sins, reform ourselves, and earn the pleasure of our Lord.

The month of Ramaḍān is the month of the revelation of the Qurān, the month of fasting, the month of patience, the month of goodwill towards one another, the month of Allāh – the Exalted's – special mercies and blessings, and the month of salvation from Hell and entry into Paradise. Without a doubt, it is a month for Muslims all over the world to engage in worship, recite the Qurān, engage in dhikr (remembrance [of Allāh]), give charity, and seek forgiveness and pardon from their Lord. Even the most sinful individuals, in such a blessed month, perform acts of worship to Allāh – the Exalted – with eagerness and devotion and seek forgiveness for the misdeeds of their past lives.

Though the entire month of Ramaḍān is dedicated to worship, remembrance of Allāh, recitation of the Qurān, adherence to performing obligatory and voluntary prayers, charity, good deeds and acts of kindness, the last ten days hold special significance. This is because the Prophet ﷺ used to exert himself in worship during the last ten days more than in other days. He would stay awake and awaken his family as well. (10)

(10) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2024); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1174); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1376); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (1639 [1640]); Sunan ibn Mājah (1768); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ (2090); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (99, 1193 & 1223)

The Prophet ﷺ observed i'tikāf during the last ten days of every Ramaḍān. (11) He consistently adhered to this practice, and in the year of his passing, he performed i'tikāf for twenty days. (12) On one occasion, when he missed i'tikāf in Ramaḍān for some reason, he then observed it in Shawwāl in its place. (13)

One reason for the importance and special significance of the last ten days of Ramaḍān is laylatul qadr. This night falls within the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramaḍān, and the Prophet ﷺ would always observe i'tikāf during these ten days specifically to seek this night, and he would encourage his companions to do the same. This is because worship on this night is better and more excellent than worship for a thousand months. (14) Worship on this night becomes a cause for the forgiveness and pardon of all past sins.

Therefore, whoever is deprived of this night is as if he is deprived of all goodness.

The best way to seek laylatul qadr as narrated from the Prophet ﷺ is through i'tikāf. The Prophet ﷺ would always seek this night by observing i'tikāf. Because in i'tikāf, a person leaves all his affairs, and distances himself from the distractions of the world, secludes himself in a corner of a masjid, the House of Allāh – the Exalted – and he establishes a connection with his Lord. Then, he demonstrates utmost humility, meekness, and neediness, helplessness. He places his forehead on the ground, weeps, cries profusely, and begs for forgiveness for his sins. And while seeking laylatul qadr, he becomes a seeker of his Lord's grace and His pleasure.

I'tikāf is an important means of drawing closer to Allāh, loving Him, and placing trust in Him. Through it, a person's darkened heart transforms into a pure heart (qalbin salīm). Because the heart is the very thing upon which a person's physical and spiritual health depends. Good and bad thoughts or satanic whispers originate in the heart. It is the desires of the heart that often cloud a person's intellect.

(11) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2026); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1172); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2462); Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (2097); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1269)

(12) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2044 & 4998); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2466); Sunan ibn Mājah (1769); Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (2099); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1270)

(13) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2033, 2034, 2041 & 2045); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1173); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2464); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (709 [710]); Sunan ibn Mājah (1771); and Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (2104)

(14) Al-Qurān 97: 3

That is why the Prophet ﷺ gave great importance to the heart in determining whether a person is good or bad. And he also stated that the place of piety (taqwā) is the heart. (15) Therefore, it is essential to reform the heart, and i'tikāf is an important means of doing so. And indeed, the rectification of this heart is extremely necessary, and i'tikāf is one of the important means of rectifying the heart. Because in i'tikāf, a person has only one objective: That his Creator and Master becomes pleased with him. Since this is his intention in his heart, and since in i'tikāf he is away from the world and worldly people, his heart is completely inclined towards Allāh – the Exalted.

Imām ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله has beautifully elaborated on i'tikāf as a significant means for turning to Allāh and reforming the heart. His words are quoted here verbatim. Thus, Imām ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله says: 'The rectification and steadfastness of the heart are achieved through the path that leads to Allāh, through complete reliance on Him. Turning towards Allāh alone can remove the restlessness of the heart. Because inclining towards Allāh – the Exalted – is the sole and sufficient cure for the ailments of the heart. Whereas excessive eating and drinking, aimless socializing with people, idle talk, and excessive sleeping are actions that increase the heart's anxiety and cause dispersion and disunity. These things become obstacles in the path of Allāh or create weakness and deficiency in it. That is why the All-Powerful, the Most Merciful Lord, out of His mercy for His servants, has made fasting obligatory so that there is a reduction in excessive eating and drinking and so that sensual impurities are removed from the heart.

All these actions were made obligatory upon the servant for his own good, benefit, and welfare so that he may benefit from them in this world and the Hereafter.

Moreover, i'tikāf has been prescribed, which is the primary objective through which a person's heart naturally inclines towards Allāh – the Exalted. In i'tikāf, a person places complete trust in Allāh, detaches from worldly engagements, and devotes himself entirely to the worship of Allāh. In this way, the heart no longer remains a cradle of thoughts and sorrows; it becomes a dwelling place of the remembrance and love of Allāh.

Then, no remembrance other than the remembrance of Allāh remains; only this thought remains: That the pleasure and nearness of Allāh are attained.

(15) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2564); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (235)

Consequently, he finds solace with Allāh – the Exalted – instead of creation. And Allāh also promises him regarding this that on the day when there will be loneliness in the grave, and there will be no companion nor any means of joy, He will be his companion.

In reality, this is the greatest objective of i'tikāf, and since this objective can only be achieved in this way – that i'tikāf is with fasting (16) – therefore, i'tikāf has also been started in the last ten days of Ramaḍān, which are more excellent than all the remaining days of fasting.' (17)

Therefore, these moments of the blessed month of Ramaḍān are a treasure for our lives. And who knows which fortunate person will be granted these moments again? Therefore, while valuing these moments, we should also make arrangements for i'tikāf along with fasting, so that we may benefit from the blessings of these moments and attain the pleasure and approval of Allāh – the Exalted.

In this book: **“I'tikāf: Virtues, Rulings, and Issues”**, we have compiled all the necessary rulings/issues in the light of authentic aḥādīth, and in a few disputed issues, we have presented our position in the light of the sayings of the scholars of the pious predecessors (salafus ṣāliḥīn).

We will sincerely appreciate any feedback from the general readers and those connected to knowledge regarding any shortcomings or errors and will make corrections in future editions, in shā' Allāh. We are deeply grateful to all those who have cooperated in this good work, and especially deserving of thanks are the respected Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad Na'im, Director of Idara Taḥqīqāt Salafiyyah (Karachi) and his assistants, through whose efforts this booklet is in your hands. (18)

We humbly pray to Allāh – the Exalted – to make this booklet a treasure for the Hereafter for the author, publishers, and readers. Āmīn.

✍ **Abū al-Munīb Muḥammad 'Alī Khāshkaylī**



(16) Refer to the chapter: Is fasting a condition for i'tikāf? (pg. 26)

(17) Zād al-Ma'ād by Imām ibn al-Qayyim (2/82-83)

(18) Editor: Referring to the publisher of the original book in the Urdu language. May Allāh – the Exalted – accept it from them all.

اعتكاف
I'tikāf
VIRTUES, RULINGS, AND ISSUES

❁ I'tikāf ❁

(A significant way to seek closeness to Allāh – the Exalted)

→ Meaning and Concept

The literal meaning of i'tikāf is to stay or remain ⁽¹⁹⁾ or to make something binding upon oneself and confine oneself to it. ⁽²⁰⁾

In Islāmic terminology, i'tikāf refers to a person staying in a masjid for a specific period with the intention of seeking nearness to Allāh, engaging in worship, and performing dhikr (remembrance of Allāh). ⁽²¹⁾

→ Virtue

Without a doubt, coming to the masjid and performing i'tikāf (i.e., staying) with the intention of gaining closeness to Allāh and seeking His pleasure is a great act of worship and a tremendous blessing, and very fortunate are those who attain this blessing.

Numerous narrations regarding the virtue of i'tikāf are reported from the Prophet ﷺ, but they are not authentic in terms of their chain of narration (sanad). However, generally, there is great virtue in staying in the masjid and sitting there for the purpose of worship.

It has been reported from the Prophet ﷺ: “The masjid is the home of every pious person, and Allāh has guaranteed for the person whose home is the masjid – joy, mercy, and passage over the *ṣirāṭ* (bridge) to His pleasure, which is Paradise.” ⁽²²⁾

«المَسْجِدُ بَيْتُ كُلِّ تَقِيٍّ وَتَكْفَلُ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ كَانَ الْمَسْجِدُ بَيْتَهُ بِالرَّوْحِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ وَالْجَوَازِ عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ إِلَى رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ»

This good news is also established for the one who performs i'tikāf because he also, in such a holy and blessed month like Ramaḍān, leaves his business, home, etc., and makes the House of Allāh, i.e., the masjid, his home in order to

(19) Lisān al-‘Arab by ibn Mañzūr (9/255); and Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr by al-Fayyūmī (2/424)

(20) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/587 [4/271]); and others.

(21) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/587 [4/271]); al-Muḥallā by ibn Ḥazm (3/411); al-Mufarradāt fi-Gharīb al-Qurān by ar-Rāghib al-Aṣḥānī (1/579); and others.

(22) Musnad al-Bazzār (2546 (6/505-506)); al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr (6143 (6/254-255)); Majma’ al-Zawā'id (2053-2054 (4/319-320)). Authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī رحمه الله in Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb (330 (1/253)); and Silsilah Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah (716 (2/333)). Some of the other scholars have declared this narration as weak. And Allāh knows best.

attain the pleasure and approval of Allāh. Surely, among those who have secured Allāh's pleasure, and the guarantee of Paradise is also such a person (in shā'Allāh).

At another place, the Prophet ﷺ said: "A Muslim (man) does not regularly attend the masājid to perform prayer and remember Allāh, but Allāh feels happy with him just as the family of one who is absent feels happy when he comes back to them." (23)

«مَا تَوَطَّنَ رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلصَّلَاةِ وَالذِّكْرِ، إِلَّا تَشَبَّشَ اللَّهُ لَهُ كَمَا يَتَشَبَّشُ أَهْلُ الْغَائِبِ بِغَائِبِهِمْ، إِذَا قَدِمَ عَلَيْهِمْ»

What greater virtue of i'tikāf can there be than that a person, purely for the sake of Allāh's pleasure, is engaged in His worship, is fasting during the day and standing in prayer at night, abandoning all his comforts and leaving the comforts of his home purely to attain Allāh's pleasure. He stays in the the masjid, performing i'tikāf there, just so that the Lord of Majesty may forgive his sins and be pleased with him.

When this is the intention, and that person is so sincere, then why would the Lord of the Universe not be pleased with him, open the doors of His mercy and forgiveness, why would He not admit him into His Paradise of blessings. Surely, this is the person who is the heir to these great blessings of Allāh, Lord of Honor. May Allāh the Exalted grant us also the ability (to do so).

→ Types

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ mentions regarding i'tikāf: 'It is not obligatory by consensus except if someone makes a vow for it or if someone starts it and then intentionally breaks it midway, then it becomes obligatory upon them to complete it.' (24)

«وَلَيْسَ بِوَاجِبٍ إِجْمَاعًا إِلَّا عَلَى مَنْ نَذَرَهُ، وَكَذَا مَنْ شَرَعَ فِيهِ فَقَطَعَهُ عَامِدًا عِنْدَ قَوْمٍ»

(23) Sunan ibn Mājah (800). The narration is declared as authentic by Shaykh al-Albānī [Sunan ibn Mājah (800 (1/151))], Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt [Sunan ibn Mājah (800 (1/511-513))], Ḥāfiẓ Zubayr 'Alī Za'tī [Sunan ibn Mājah (800 (1/139))], Shaykh Dr. Ḥamzah Zayn [Musnad Aḥmad (9802 (9/328))], and Shaykh Muqbil [Aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad (1253 (2/306))]

(24) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/587 [4/271])

Similarly, Imām an-Nawawī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ states: ‘The Muslims have reached a consensus that i’tikāf is recommended (mustahabb) and not obligatory, and that it is emphasized in the last ten days of Ramaḍān.’ (25)

«وَقَدْ أَجْمَعَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ عَلَى اسْتِحْبَابِهِ وَأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِوَاجِبٍ وَعَلَى أَنَّهُ مُتَأَكَّدٌ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ»

From the above details, it is known that there are two types of i’tikāf:

① **Obligatory (Farḍ/wājib):** Meaning, if a person makes a vow or pledge for it, fulfilling this type of i’tikāf is obligatory Allāh – the Exalted – says: “... and [they] fulfill their vows...” [Sūrah al-Ḥajj 22:29]

﴿وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ﴾ (سورة الحج)

This means that they should fulfill their (vowed) pledges. Similarly, in the pre-Islāmic era (jāhiliyyah), ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ made a vow to perform i’tikāf for one night in the Masjid al-Ḥarām. When he asked the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ about this vow, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “Fulfill your vow, and perform i’tikāf for a night.” (26)

«أَوْفِ نَذْرَكَ، فَاعْتَكِفْ لَيْلَةً»

② **Emphasized Sunnah (Sunnat mu’akkadah):** Performing i’tikāf in the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān is an emphasized Sunnah (Sunnat mu’akkadah), and it is a communal obligation. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ always used to perform i’tikāf in every Ramaḍān. It is narrated from Abī Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to perform i’tikāf for ten days in every Ramaḍān, but in the year of his passing, he performed i’tikāf for twenty days. (27)

«كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْتَكِفُ فِي كُلِّ رَمَضَانَ عَشْرَةَ أَيَّامٍ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ الْعَامُ الَّذِي قُبِضَ فِيهِ اعْتَكَفَ عِشْرِينَ يَوْمًا»

It is known from the aforementioned ḥadīth and other aḥādīth that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to regularly perform i’tikāf in every Ramaḍān.

(25) Al-Minhāj fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin Ḥajjāj by Imām an-Nawawī (4/218)

(26) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2042); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1656); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (3325); Sunan an-Nasā’ī (3820 [3851]); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (1539); Sunan ibn Mājah (1772 & 2129); and Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ (2101)

(27) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2044 & 4998); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2466); Sunan ibn Mājah (1769); Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ (2099); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1270)

Furthermore, if for some reason the Prophet ﷺ did not perform i'tikāf in Ramaḍān, he would make up for it later.

Once, following his example, his wives (azwāj-e-muṭahharāt) had tents set up in the masjid for the purpose of i'tikāf. This displeased him, and he said: **“What prompted them to do this? Piety? Remove them; I do not approve of it.”** So, they were removed, and he also (that year) did not perform i'tikāf in Ramaḍān but performed i'tikāf in the last ten days of Shawwāl. (28)

«مَا حَمَلَهُنَّ عَلَى هَذَا؟ الْبِرُّ؟ انْزِعُوهُنَّ فَلَا أَرَاهَا»، فَلَمْ يَعْتَكِفْ فِي رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى اعْتَكَفَ فِي آخِرِ الْعَشْرِ مِنْ شَوَّالٍ.

From the above ḥadīth, it is also known that if a person intends to perform i'tikāf and then is unable to do so in Ramaḍān, then if he wishes, he can perform i'tikāf in Shawwāl. Also, it is known that performing i'tikāf in ordinary days is also permissible and established from the Sunnah.

And Allāh knows best.

→ Duration

In the Qurān and Sunnah, no specific duration has been fixed for general i'tikāf. Rather, its ruling is general. Allāh – the Exalted – says: **“And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid.”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah: 187]

﴿وَلَا تَبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ﴾ (سورة البقرة)

In the aforementioned āyah, no limit has been set for i'tikāf. Therefore, i'tikāf, whether it is for one night, a few days, ten days, or twenty days, is correct and permissible. Also, the incident of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has already been mentioned, in which he made a vow for i'tikāf for one night in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, and the Prophet ﷺ also commanded him to fulfill his vow.

Similarly, if i'tikāf is performed for a few hours, it is also permissible.

① Firstly: Because the very meaning and concept of i'tikāf is to stay in the masjid for a specific time with the intention of worship and remembrance of Allāh, no matter how long or short that time may be.

(28) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2033, 2034, 2041 & 2045); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1173); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2464); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (709 [710]); and Sunan ibn Mājah (1771)

② Secondly: The righteous predecessors also hold the view of its permissibility. For example, the companion of the Prophet ﷺ, Ya'lā bin Umayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, says: 'I sit in the masjid for an hour, and I do not sit except with the intention of i'tikāf.' (29)

«إِنِّي لَأَمْكُثُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ السَّاعَةَ، وَمَا أَمْكُثُ إِلَّا لِأَعْتَكِفَ»

Similarly, it is narrated from the great tābi'i, Sayyidunā Suwayd bin Ghafalah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, that: 'Whoever sits in the masjid while he is in a state of purity (ṭahārah), then he is in i'tikāf as long as his ablution (wuḍū') does not break.'

(30)

«مَنْ جَلَسَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَهُوَ طَاهِرٌ فَهُوَ عَاكِفٌ فِيهِ، مَا لَمْ يُخْدِثْ»

Additionally, 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: 'It is i'tikāf as long as he remains there, and if he sits in the masjid, expecting goodness, he is in a state of i'tikāf'

(31)

«هُوَ اعْتِكَافٌ مَا مَكَثَ فِيهِ، وَإِنْ جَلَسَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ احْتِسَابَ الْخَيْرِ فَهُوَ مُعْتَكِفٌ»

However, in the month of Ramaḍān, the i'tikāf in the last ten days is established from the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, performing i'tikāf in the last ten days of Ramaḍān is the Prophetic Sunnah, as its duration is known.

But if a person occasionally performs i'tikāf for twenty days, then this is also permissible, because in the year in which he passed away, he performed i'tikāf for twenty days.

→ Is fasting a condition for i'tikāf?

The fasts of Ramaḍān al-Mubārak are obligatory, therefore whoever performs i'tikāf in Ramaḍān will necessarily be fasting. And incase if one gets sick during i'tikāf and does not fast, then this will not affect the i'tikāf. However, if someone wishes to perform i'tikāf outside of Ramaḍān, then fasting is not a condition for him. If he fasts, it is better, but this does not mean at all that i'tikāf will not be valid without fasting. The aforementioned incident of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, in which the Prophet ﷺ gave him permission to

(29) Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah (9910 (6/95)); Muṣannaf 'Abdur-Razzāq (8255 (5/81)); Ḥilyatul Awliyā' (3/312); Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/588 [4/272]); al-Muḥallā (3/412); and Fatāwā Thanā'iyah Madaniyah (3/277)

(30) Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah (4112 (3/391)); and al-Muḥallā (3/412)

(31) Muṣannaf 'Abdur-Razzāq (8256 (5/82)); and al-Muḥallā (3/412)

fulfill his vow of i'tikāf for one night, indicates this, because fasting is not for the night but rather for the day, and 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ fulfilled his vow of i'tikāf for the night. If fasting were a necessary condition for i'tikāf, then the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would have commanded him to fast along with i'tikāf. Thus, it is proven that i'tikāf is valid even without fasting.

Similarly, the person who is not able to fast and gives fidyah (expiation) in its place can also perform i'tikāf. And the person who intended to perform i'tikāf in the month of Ramaḍān but was unable to perform i'tikāf in Ramaḍān, if he wishes, then he can make up for it in another month. For this too, it is not necessary to fast. His i'tikāf will be valid even without fasting. Yes, if he wishes to fast, then it depends on his own choice. In this regard, it is narrated from Sayyidunā 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib and 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا that: 'Fasting is not obligatory upon the one performing i'tikāf unless he himself makes it obligatory upon himself.' (32)

«الْمُعْتَكِفُ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ صَوْمٌ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَشْتَرِطَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ»

Similarly, Sayyidunā Ṭāwūs رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said that 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا did not consider fasting necessary for the one performing i'tikāf unless that person made it obligatory upon himself. (Upon this) 'Aṭā' [bin Abī Rabāh] رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: 'This is also my opinion.' (33)

«كَانَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ لَا يَرَى عَلَى الْمُعْتَكِفِ صِيَامًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجْعَلَهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، قَالَ عَطَاءٌ: ذَلِكَ رَأْيِي»

This is also the opinion of 'Umar bin 'Abdul-'Azīz, Ibrāhīm an-Nakh'ī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and others. (34)

Moreover, the aḥādīth in which i'tikāf is made conditional upon fasting are not authentic in their chain of narration. Among them, a narration from Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا is presented (that she said): 'There is no i'tikāf except with fasting.'

(32) Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah (9880 (6/89)); and al-Muḥallā (3/414)

Imām Bayhaqī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has a different wording narrated by both the companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: 'The person in i'tikāf, if he wishes, may fast, and if he wishes, he may not fast.' [Ma'rifat as-Sunan wal-Āthār by Imām al-Bayhaqī (9102 (6/395))]

(33) Bayhaqī's Sunan al-Kubrā (8587 (4/523-524)); Ma'rifat as-Sunan wal-Āthār (9100 (6/395)); and al-Muḥallā (3/414)

(34) Ma'ālim as-Sunan by al-Khaṭṭābī (2/137-138); and al-Muḥallā (3/415)

«لَا اِعْتِكَافَ اِلَّا بِصَوْمٍ»

However, there is a strong disagreement regarding this narration being directly attributed (marfū'an) to the Prophet ﷺ. Some have stated that it is the saying of Imām az-Zuhrī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. Some say that it is the saying of Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. (35)

→ Rulings and Issues

Before every action, it is necessary to have intention (niyyah) because the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Indeed, the deeds are considered by the intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention..."** (36)

«إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنِّيَّاتِ، وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مَّا نَوَى ...»

Therefore, making the intention before performing i'tikāf is necessary. This means the person should have the intention in their heart, as the intention refers to the intention of the heart. The respected scholar of the Ḥanafī school, Mawlānā 'Abdus-Subḥān Shād, writes: 'From a sharī'ah perspective, it is more correct to say that making verbal statements for the intention holds no significance... The example of the Prophet ﷺ and the practices of the companions in the established books confirm that uttering words of intention with the tongue is a later innovation, upon which there is no seal [of approval] of Prophethood or the seal of the companions.' (37)

Therefore, the intention of i'tikāf that some people have innovated: 'I intend the Sunnah i'tikāf for Allāh – the Exalted.'

«نَوَيْتُ سُنَّةَ الْاِمْتِكَافِ لِلّٰهِ تَعَالٰى»

There is no doubt about it being an innovation and fabrication. Hence, it is necessary to avoid this.

(35) For detailed discussion, see Sunan ad-Dāraquṭnī (3/183-188); Ma'rifat as-Sunan wal-Āthār (6/393-395); Naşbur Rāyah by al-Jamāl al-Zayla'ī (2/486-493); and others.

(36) Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (1, 54, 2529, 3898, 5070, 6689 & 6953); Şaḥīḥ Muslim (1907); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2201); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (75, 3437 [3467] & 3794 [3825]); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (1647); Sunan ibn Mājah (4227); Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ (1); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1)

(37) Tuḥfatus Şiyām lil-Khawāṣ wal-'Awām by Mawlānā 'Abdus-Subḥān Shād (1/490-496)

→ Issue 1: I'tikāf should be in the last ten days of Ramaḍān

It was the regular practice of the Prophet ﷺ to perform i'tikāf in the last ten days of Ramaḍān. The necessary details about this have already been explained in the previous pages.

→ Issue 2: I'tikāf should be in a masjid

Being in a masjid is a condition for i'tikāf. Allāh – the Exalted – says: **“And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masjid.”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah: 187]

﴿وَلَا تُبَايِعُواهُمْ وَتَأْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ﴾ (سورة البقرة)

It is understood that i'tikāf must be in a masjid, and the Prophet ﷺ always performed i'tikāf in the masjid.

Nāfi' (the freed slave of 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar) reports that 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا showed him the place in Masjid an-Nabawī where the Prophet ﷺ used to perform i'tikāf. (38)

It should be noted that i'tikāf can be performed in any masjid. However, it is better to do it in a masjid where the Friday prayer (Jumu'ah) is held so that the person in i'tikāf does not need to leave the masjid. Otherwise, the one performing i'tikāf, if he is in a masjid where Jumu'ah is not held, can go to a masjid where Jumu'ah is held. As for saying that i'tikāf cannot be performed in any masjid other than a jāmi' masjid (congregational masjid), this statement is without proof; there is no evidence for it from the Qurān and Sunnah.

And Allāh knows best.

→ Issue 3: Separate tents should be set up for each individual

Every person performing i'tikāf should set up his own separate tent.

Thus, Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that (for the Prophet's i'tikāf) I would set up a tent for him (in the masjid), and he would go into it after

(38) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1171); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2465); and Sunan ibn Mājah (1773)

praying the morning prayer. Then Ḥafṣah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا also sought permission from ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to set up a tent. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا gave permission and she set up a tent. When Zaynab bint Jaḥsh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا saw this, she also set up a tent (for herself). (39)

From this we understand that each individual should set up their own separate tent.

However, in contemporary times, while individuals may set up separate tents, they often end up gathering in a single tent, spending time in idle talk, joking, and making noise. Some even bring radios or other distractions. Imām ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ after explaining the proper way of i’tikāf, beautifully remarks: ‘The ignorant people of today make their place of i’tikāf as spacious as for ten people and create a gathering place for visitors and guests, then they engage in worldly talk with them. This is a different kind of i’tikāf (that these people have). But the i’tikāf of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was of a different nature altogether.’ (40)

Due to such actions, i’tikāf become completely meaningless, and they violate the sanctity of the masjid. Whereas the very purpose of i’tikāf is that one connects with Allāh – the Exalted – and strengthens ones connection through worship, remembrance (dhikr), adherence to voluntary prayers (nawāfil), while humbly supplicating and making prayers. And for this very reason, seclusion and isolation are adopted in the first place. But with this type of behavior (we see nowadays), we not only distance ourselves from nearness to Allāh – the Exalted – but rather return with His wrath. May Allāh protect us.

→ Issue 4: When does the mu’takif enter his mu’takaf (place of i’tikāf)?

In the above pages, the ḥadīth has been mentioned multiple times that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to perform i’tikāf in the last ten days of Ramaḍān. And he would enter his place of i’tikāf (mu’takaf) after praying the fajr prayer. Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that: ‘When the Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ intended to perform i’tikāf, he would enter the muta’kaf after

(39) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2033, 2034, 2041 & 2045); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1173); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2464); Sunan an-Nasā’ī (709 [710]); and Sunan ibn Mājah (1771)
 (40) Zād al-Ma’ād (2/86)

praying the fajr prayer [in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and others, there is mention of entering after praying the morning prayer].’ (41)

«كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَتَكَبَّرَ صَلَّى الْفَجْرَ، ثُمَّ دَخَلَ فِي مُعْتَكِفِهِ»

It is well known that Islāmic day starts with sunset. And the Prophet ﷺ used to perform i’tikāf in the last ten days of Ramaḍān, so the night before the last ten days begin must be spent in the masjid, and the next morning, after praying fajr, one should enter the place of i’tikāf.

But the question arises: Should the one performing i’tikāf enter the i’tikāf after praying the fajr prayer of the 20th or after the fajr prayer of the 21st? There is a well-known difference of opinion among scholars regarding this issue. Some give preference to the 20th, and some to the 21st. We do not find any explicit statement about this in the blessed ḥadīth, but from the indications, it appears that the one performing i’tikāf should enter the i’tikāf after praying the fajr prayer of the 20th.

And Allāh knows best.

In this regard, consider the following aḥādīth:

① Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to perform i’tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān and would say: “Seek laylatul qadr in the last ten days of Ramaḍān.” (42)

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يُجَاوِرُ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْآخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، وَيَقُولُ: «تَحَرَّوْا لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْآخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ»

② Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ performed i’tikāf in the middle ten days of Ramaḍān. After the nights had passed, when the 21st night came, he would return home in the evening. [In one narration, it is mentioned that he would leave i’tikāf on the morning of the 20th and give us a sermon and in another narration of Bukhārī itself, it is mentioned that when the night of the 21st arrived. This is the night after which in the morning

(41) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2033 & 2041); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1173); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2464); Sunan an-Nasā’ī (709 [710]); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (791); Sunan ibn Mājah (1771); and Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ (2104)

(42) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2020); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1169); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1191)

he would come out of i'tikāf.] Then those who were in i'tikāf with him would also return to their homes.

Once, when he was performing i'tikāf in Ramaḍān, he remained (in the masjid) even on that night, when it was his custom to return home. Then he gave a sermon to the people and commanded them with whatever Allāh – the Exalted – willed. Then he ﷺ said: **“I used to perform i'tikāf in this (middle) ten days. But now it has become clear to me that I should perform i'tikāf in this (last) ten days. Therefore, whoever has performed i'tikāf with me should remain in i'tikāf, and I was shown this night (laylatul qadr) but then I was made to forget it. Therefore, you people should seek it in the last ten (odd nights) of the month. I saw myself (in a dream) prostrating in mud on that night.”** Then on that night, the sky became cloudy, and it rained, and water started dripping (from the roof) at the place where the Prophet ﷺ used to pray. This happened on the 21st night. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says: 'I saw with my own eyes that after the fajr prayer, he was returning and there was mud on his blessed face.' (43)

③ From the narration in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim we come to know that he was in i'tikāf [while this happened] and, taking his blessed head out of the tent, addressed the companions and said: **“Whoever among you wishes to perform i'tikāf again, let him do so.”** Then the people performed i'tikāf with him. (44)

«فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَكَبَّرَ فَلْيَتَكَبَّرْ»، فَأَتَكَفَ النَّاسُ مَعَهُ.

④ In another narration, it is mentioned that he came out of the tent after performing i'tikāf of the second ten days and also ordered the tent to be taken down, but later, through revelation, it became known that laylatul qadr is in the last ten days. He then ordered the tent to be set up again and continued his i'tikāf. (45)

From the above narrations, the following points can be understood:

a) The purpose of his i'tikāf was to seek laylatul qadr. Therefore, he ﷺ performed i'tikāf in all three ten-day periods of Ramaḍān. Later it became

(43) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2018); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1167); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1382); and Sunan an-Nasā'ī (1356 [1357])

(44) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1167)

(45) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1167)

known that this night is in the last ten days, so he ﷺ himself would perform i'tikāf in the last ten days and also encourage the companions to do so.

b) His usual practice was to complete the i'tikāf of the middle ten days and return home on the morning or evening of the 20th of Ramaḍān. However, on that day (i.e., the 20th of Ramaḍān), he did not return home but stayed in his tent. And from within the tent, he addressed the companions and instructed those who had left to come back and set up their tents for i'tikāf again.

c) Meaning, he ﷺ began the i'tikāf of the third ten days from the 20th of Ramaḍān and, while declaring it [i.e., that laylatul qadr will be in] the last ten days, also ordered the companions to remain in i'tikāf.

d) It is also proven from both the actions and words of the Prophet ﷺ that he spent the 21st night in i'tikāf, not outside the tent.

Reflect on this: If the one performing i'tikāf spends the 21st night in the masjid and enters his tent after praying fajr of the twenty-first, will he not be deprived of this Sunnah of the Prophet? The narrations clearly state that the Prophet ﷺ spent the 21st night in his tent, and there is no evidence that he spent that night outside of it.

And Allāh knows best.

e) The Prophet ﷺ also instructed that the laylatul qadr should be sought in the last ten days and on the odd nights. (46)

It is obvious that the odd nights of the last ten days are 21, 23, 25, 27, and 29, and the Prophet ﷺ, while in the state of i'tikāf (i.e., while staying in his mu'takaf), was informed about the 21st night being laylatul qadr.

From these observations, it is understood that i'tikāf should begin from the 20th date so that, according to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, the 21st night is spent in the place of i'tikāf, so that along with following his Sunnah, his command is also acted upon.

And Allāh knows best.

(46) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2017); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (2083); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1192)

It may be argued that if someone starts their i'tikāf from the fajr of the 20th and the moon [of the next month] is sighted on the 30th, they would need to extend their i'tikāf by an additional 12 hours, beyond a full ten-day i'tikāf.

The response to this is that there is no harm in this because it is proven that the Prophet ﷺ stayed in i'tikāf for more than one ten-day period, but not less than one ten-day period. It should also be considered that if someone starts their i'tikāf from the fajr of the 21st and the moon is sighted on the 29th, will their i'tikāf be less than a full ten-day period?

Similarly, such a person will spend the night of the 21st, which the Prophet ﷺ spent in the mu'takaf, outside the mu'takaf. Therefore, it is better to start the i'tikāf from the fajr of the 20th so that one can spend the laylatul qadr (i.e., the night of the twenty-first) while in the state of i'tikāf.

And Allāh – Glory be to Him – knows best.

This is also the position of our mentor and Shaykh 'Allāmah Badī' ud-Dīn Shāh ar-Rāshidī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ [See Badī' at-Tafāsīr (3/636)]. (47)

→ Issue 5: The one performing i'tikāf can keep necessary items with him

The one performing i'tikāf can keep with him a cot, bedding, and other necessities of life. 'Abdullah bin 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrated: 'When he performed i'tikāf, his bedding would be spread out for him, or his bed would be placed behind the pillar of repentance.' (48)

(47) Editor: The stance mentioned here and adapted by the author is opted by the minority of the scholars, because majority of the scholars (including the four imāms; Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī, and Aḥmad) are of the view that the one who wants to observe i'tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān should enter his place of i'tikāf before the sun sets on the night of the twenty-first.

→ This stance was recommended and considered as the stronger and dominant position by Shaykh Abū 'Adnān Muḥammad Munīr Qamar, and Shaykh Dr. Maḥbūb Abū 'Āṣim.

For details see (pg. 45-47) at the end of this book.

(48) Sunan ibn Mājah (1774) – The ḥadīth is ḥasan in shaa Allāh. Shaykh al-Albānī despite declaring it weak in his checking of Sunan ibn Mājah (1774 (1/308)), has later on stated otherwise that it is near to ḥasan. This has been mentioned by his student, Shaykh 'Eṣām Mūsā Hādī in his checking of Sunan ibn Mājah (1774 (1/302)). And other contemporary ḥadīth scholars such as Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūṭ [Sunan ibn Mājah (1774 (2/653-654))], and Ḥāfiẓ Zubayr 'Alī Za'ī [Sunan ibn Mājah (1774 (1/315)) & Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ (2099 (1/683))] have declared it ḥasan as well. The ḥadīth is also narrated via a different sanad in al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr (13424 (12/385)), and it has other shawāhid as well. And Allāh knows best.

«كَانَ إِذَا اعْتَكَفَ طَرَحَ لَهُ فِرَاشُهُ، أَوْ يُوَضِّعُ لَهُ سَرِيرَهُ وَرَاءَ أُسْطُوَانَةِ التَّوْبَةِ»

→ Issue 6: The one performing i'tikāf can meet with those who come to meet him

If the wife of the one performing i'tikāf or other family members or guests etc., wish to meet him for some necessary need, then he can meet them. Similarly, the one performing i'tikāf can go out to escort his wife to her home.

Umm al-Mu'minīn Ṣāfiyyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates that she came to the Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ while he was in i'tikāf in the masjid in the last ten days of Ramaḍān, and she talked with him for a while, then she got up to leave, and the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also got up with her to escort her (home). (49)

«أَنَّهَا جَاءَتْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَزُورُهُ فِي اعْتِكَافِهِ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، فَتَحَدَّثَتْ عِنْدَهُ سَاعَةً، ثُمَّ قَامَتْ تَنْقَلِبُ، فَقَامَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَعَهَا يَقْلِبُهَا»

From this ḥadīth, it is known that at the time of need, conversation and meeting are also permissible. But it has been observed in some of our religious circles that those performing i'tikāf cover their faces with cloth like a sick person and even refrain from answering the most necessary questions. This practice is not correct; rather, this type of unnecessary and incorrect formality is only found among the sūfis. The religion of Islām is an easy religion. Therefore, to resolve necessary matters, meeting or conversing is permissible and correct.

→ Issue 7: Having sexual relations with one's wife during i'tikāf is prohibited

Allāh – Glory be to Him – has forbidden the one performing i'tikāf from having sexual relations etc., He says: **“And do not have relations with them (your wives) as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid. These are the limits [set by] Allāh, so do not approach them.”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

﴿وَلَا تُبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا﴾ (سورة البقرة)

(49) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2035); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (2175); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1849)

‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا stated that a person in i’tikāf, whether during Ramaḍān or outside it, during the day or night, is prohibited from having intercourse with their wife until the i’tikāf is completed.

Also, Imām Mujāhid رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Qatādah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Muqātil رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and others also hold the same opinion that intercourse is forbidden for a person performing i’tikāf in the masjid. (50)

Imām ibn Kathīr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ states that the term about ‘mubāsharah’ in this āyah refers to sexual intercourse (i.e., not having relations) and the actions leading to it, such as kissing and embracing, etc. (51)

It is also narrated on the authority of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا that he said the i’tikāf is invalidated if the mu’takif has sexual intercourse, and it must be restarted. (52)(53)

However, taking and giving something is permissible. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا says that the Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, while in i’tikāf, would lean his head towards me, and I would comb his hair, even though I was menstruating. (54)

Meaning, ‘mubāsharah’, whether it is kissing, embracing, touching, or those actions that arouse desire, are prohibited. Yes, applying oil to the head or combing, etc., or taking and giving something, or touching without desire is permissible and correct.

And Allāh knows best.

→ Issue 8: Leaving the mu’takaf without a need is not correct

Umm al-Mu’minīn ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates: ‘And he would not enter the house except for a need when he was performing i’tikāf.’ (55)

(50) Tafsīr ibn Kathīr ([2: 187] 2/77-78); and others.

(51) Tafsīr ibn Kathīr ([2: 187] 2/78)

(52) Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah (9939 (6/100) & 12853 (7/342)); Muṣannaf ‘Abdur-Razzāq (8331 (5/97)); and Irwā’ al-Ghalīl (976 (4/148)). The athar is declared as authentic by Shaykh Sa’d bin Nāṣir ash-Shitrī and Shaykh al-Albānī. Also see Muṣannaf ‘Abdur-Razzāq (8329-8334 (5/96-97))

(53) Editor: This athar was not mentioned in the original book by the author. Hence, we have added it after notifying him, and getting his permission.

(54) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2029 & 2046); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2469); and others.

(55) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2029); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (297); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2467); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (804 & 805); Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (2100); and others.

«وَكَانَ لَا يَدْخُلُ الْبَيْتَ إِلَّا لِحَاجَةٍ إِذَا كَانَ مُعْتَكِفًا»

Imām ibn Kathīr رَحِمَهُ اللهُ states that there is consensus among the scholars on this matter: If the one performing i'tikāf goes home for a necessary need, such as relieving himself or performing istinjā' (washing after relieving oneself), or to eat food, then he should not stay there for long but should return as soon as he has finished. It is not permissible for him to kiss or embrace his wife, nor is it permissible for him to engage in any other work besides i'tikāf. Rather, it is not permissible to (specially) go for visiting the sick. However, if he inquires about the well-being of a sick person while passing by, then this is a different matter (i.e., it is permissible). (56)

Performing the maximum amount of worship in the last ten days

The one performing i'tikāf should consider this last ten days a precious opportunity, seek forgiveness for his sins, attain greater nearness to Allāh – Glory be to Him – pay utmost attention to performing many voluntary prayers (nawāfil), spend most of his time in remembrance (dhikr) and supplications (adhkār), and worship with complete devotion. Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا narrates that when the last ten days of Ramaḍān would come, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would tighten his waist wrapper (i.e., exert himself fully in worship), and he himself would stay awake during these nights and would awaken his family members. (57)

'Tightening the waist wrapper' means that he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would worship with full dedication. He would exert himself greatly and would also awaken his family members for the purpose of worship so that they too would be occupied in the worship of Allāh – Lord of Majesty. Although performing the worship of Allāh is always a great act of reward, performing worship in this ten-day period of Ramaḍān is a very great act of reward. Therefore, whatever worship is possible in these days, is a blessing.

(56) Tafsīr ibn Kathīr ([2: 187] 2/78)

(57) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2024); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1174); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1376); Sunan an-Nasā'ī (1639 [1640]); Sunan ibn Mājah (1768); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābiḥ (2090); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (99, 1193 & 1223)

In another narration, Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا states that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to exert himself more in worship during the last ten days of Ramaḍān compared to the other days. (58)

Observe the practice of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Although he was the most pious, the most abstinent, and the most devoted worshipper, he would perform even more worship during these specific days compared to the rest of the days. May we also be granted the ability to act upon this Sunnah of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. How fortunate and blessed is the person who acts upon this practice of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

May Allāh grant us the ability. Āmīn.

→ Issue 9: Women can also perform i'tikāf

Since i'tikāf is a Sunnah act and an important means of attaining nearness to Allāh, women can also perform i'tikāf. The wives of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also used to perform i'tikāf; rather, they performed i'tikāf during his lifetime and also after his death. Thus, it is narrated in one narration that Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا sought permission from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to perform i'tikāf. So, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave her permission, and she pitched a tent in the masjid. (59)

«فَأَذِنَ لَهَا، فَصُرِبَتْ فِيهِ قُبَّةٌ»

In another narration, it is mentioned that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to regularly perform i'tikāf every Ramaḍān until Allāh – the Exalted – took him. Then after his death, his wives performed i'tikāf. (60)

«ثُمَّ اعْتَكَفَ أَزْوَاجُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ»

Moreover, if a woman is experiencing istiḥāḍah (non-menstrual bleeding), she can still perform i'tikāf. Ummul Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said: '... One of

(58) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1175); Sunan at-Tirmidhī (796); Sunan ibn Mājah (1767); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (2089); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1194)

(59) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2041 & 2045)

(60) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2026); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1172); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2462); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (2097); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1269)

his wives performed i'tikāf with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ while she was afflicted with istiḥāḍah.' (61)

«اعْتَكَفْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ امْرَأَةً مِنْ أَزْوَاجِهِ مُسْتَحَاضَةً»

Meaning, despite such a condition, the Prophet ﷺ did not prevent her. Therefore, if a woman wishes to perform i'tikāf with zeal and desire, she can do so; she will not be prevented. However, it is necessary to keep a few things in mind for this:

a) The permission of the husband or guardian is necessary

This is because i'tikāf is a voluntary act of worship. Just as the husband's permission is necessary for performing congregational prayer in the masjid and for observing voluntary fasts, similarly, permission is also necessary for i'tikāf. And this point is also present in the aforementioned ḥadīth that 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا sought permission from the Prophet ﷺ before i'tikāf. Therefore, if the husband or guardian gives permission, then i'tikāf should be performed, and if a woman performs i'tikāf without her husband's permission, then according to the opinion of the majority of scholars (Imām Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad, and others), her husband has the right to stop her and end her i'tikāf. (62)

b) The masjid where i'tikāf is to be performed must meet specific conditions

In the masjid where i'tikāf is to be performed, it is necessary to keep in mind that there should be no mixing of men and women, the paths should be separate, there should be sufficient arrangements for seclusion and facilities for restrooms and fulfilling ones needs should be available. The area for i'tikāf should be completely separate from men or the coming and going of men. And if such facilities are not available and it is not possible to avoid temptation and evil, then abstaining from i'tikāf is better. Because preventing harm takes precedence over achieving benefits. This is the reason that, considering the current circumstances, some scholars have considered i'tikāf of women in ordinary masājid to be disliked (makrūh) and not preferable. (63)

(61) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (309, 310, 311 & 2037); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2476); and Sunan ibn Mājah (1780)

(62) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/598 [4/277]); and others.

(63) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/598 [4/277]); and others.

A woman during her 'iddah (either after the demise of her husband, or due to divorce) is not allowed to perform i'tikāf, until her 'iddah period has finished. This has been reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullāh رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. (64)(65)

→ Issue 10: Can women perform i'tikāf at home?

From the above details, it is clear that being in a masjid is a condition for i'tikāf. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ always performed i'tikāf in the masjid, and similarly, his wives also performed i'tikāf in the masjid. If i'tikāf in homes were permissible, then the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would have commanded them to perform i'tikāf in their homes or at least would have definitely stated it as preferable. Just as for prayers, he stated their homes to be preferable for them, that their homes are better for them. Just as the Prophetic saying is: **“Do not prevent your women from the masājid, but their homes are better for them.”** (66)

«لَا تَمْنَعُوا نِسَاءَكُمْ الْمَسَاجِدَ، وَبُيُوتَهُنَّ خَيْرٌ لَهُنَّ»

However, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not give such a ruling regarding i'tikāf.

Therefore, women should also perform i'tikāf in the masjid. But contrary to this, some scholars give permission to women to perform i'tikāf in their homes instead of the masjid, which is clearly against the Qurān and Sunnah. Therefore, the i'tikāf of those women who perform i'tikāf in their homes or in any room or corner of the house is not valid. However, when it comes to those people who have built a proper masjid in their homes, and in this masjid, their family members and the women of the locality perform congregational

(64) Bayhaqī's Sunan al-Kubrā (8604 (4/529)). See the edition by Dārul Ḥadīth, Cairo (8604 (4/782)). The athar has been declared weak because of ibn Abī Aways, i.e., Isma'īl bin 'Abdullāh [d. 226H]. A similar wording has also been reported in Sharḥ Ma'ānī al-Āthār (4579 (3/79)), which has also been declared weak because of 'Abdullāh bin Lahī'ah [d. 173H]. Nevertheless, this issue is established despite the weakness in these narrations. Refer to the fatwā at the end of this book (pg. 51-53) for this particular issue.

(65) Editor: This athar was not mentioned in the original book by the author. Hence, we have added it after notifying him, and getting his permission.

(66) Sunan Abī Dawūd (567). The narration is declared as authentic by Shaykh al-Albānī [Sunan Abī Dawūd (567 (1/105))], Shaykh 'Eṣām Mūsā Ḥādī [Sunan Abī Dawūd (567 (1/178))], Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt [Sunan Abī Dawūd (567 (1/424-425))], and Ḥāfiẓ Zubayr 'Alī Za'ī [Sunan Abī Dawūd (567 (1/126))]. There are other narrations as well in which the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has told not to prevent the women (wives) to pray in the masājid if they ask permission for it. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (865, 873, 899, 900 & 5238); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (442); and others.

prayer, some of the early scholars, considering the current circumstances, have given permission to perform i'tikāf in such masājid. (67)

And Allāh knows best.



(67) Muṣannaf 'Abdur-Razzāq (5/86); al-Muḥallā (3/430); and others.

❁ Final Note ❁

Brothers and sisters! The blessings of Ramaḍān are granted to very few people, especially the acts of worship in the last ten days, which are more significant than the rest of Ramaḍān. During these days, Allāh – the Almighty – has placed the blessed night of laylatul qadr, whose worship is better than a thousand months. (68) And we are extremely hopeful from Allāh – the Exalted – that in return for our little worship in these nights, He will surely reward us with the reward and blessings of laylatul qadr.

Therefore, keeping in view the practice of the Prophet ﷺ, we should value every moment of this ten-day period and make them precious and try to worship as much as possible in it. Along with this, we should abandon all those things that are contrary to Islām, such as idle talk, lying, backbiting, tale-bearing, abusive language, slander, violation of rights, fraud, theft, deviation from the right path, envy, malice, enmity, consuming unlawful things, hatred, resentment, treachery, breach of promise, arrogance, stubbornness – such dangerous evils. Because the purpose and source of the fasts of Ramaḍān and these acts of worship and efforts is only this: That taqwā (piety) is created in man; that fear of Allāh and abstinence are created.

Remember! If even after these acts of worship of Ramaḍān, fasting and i'tikāf, we are not able to stay away from these evils and sins and do not abandon them, then all our acts of worship will be merely meaningless and fruitless.

We must reflect and evaluate ourselves: What vices existed in us before Ramaḍān and i'tikāf, and which ones still remain. Extremely fortunate and successful is the person who has reformed himself and saved himself from the fire of Hell.

May Allāh – the Exalted – grant us all the ability to fulfill the purpose of Ramaḍān and i'tikāf. Āmīn.



(68) Al-Qurān 97: 3

→ **There is no i'tikāf except in the three masājid**

? I heard a ḥadīth which says that i'tikāf is only valid in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (in Makkah), al-Masjid an-Nabawī (in Madinah) and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā (in Palestine). Is this ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ?

→ Praise be to Allāh.

Firstly: The ḥadīth to which the questioner is referring was narrated by al-Bayhaqī in Sunan al-Kubrā (8574 (4/519)) from Ḥudhayfah, who said to 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: I saw some people who were observing i'tikāf between your house and the house of Abū Mūsā (i.e., in the masjid) and I know that the Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **“There is no i'tikāf except in the three masājid: al-Masjid al-Ḥarām...”** 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said: 'Perhaps you forgot and they remembered, or you made a mistake and they were correct.'

This was classed as ṣaḥīḥ by Shaykh al-Albānī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ in Silsilah Aḥādīth aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah (2786 (6/667-676)).

Secondly: With regard to the ruling on this matter, the majority of scholars are of the view that it is not essential for i'tikāf to be observed in one of the three masājid. They quoted as evidence for that the āyah in which Allāh says: **“And do not have relations with them (your wives) as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid.”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

The word masājid in this āyah includes all masājid, except those of which the evidence states that i'tikāf is not valid therein, such as masājid in which prayers are not held in congregation, if the person who is observing i'tikāf is one of those on whom prayer in congregation is obligatory. (69)

Imām al-Bukhārī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ referred to the general meaning of the āyah. He said: Chapter: I'tikāf during the last ten days (of Ramaḍān) and i'tikāf in any masjid. Allāh says: **“And do not have relations with them (your wives) as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid. These are the limits [set by]**

(69) See <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/48985>

Allāh, so do not approach them. Thus does Allāh make clear His āyāt to mankind that they may become al-muttaqīn.” [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

The Muslims continued to observe i’tikāf in the masājid in their countries, as was mentioned by aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ in Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār (2771 (7/205)).

Shaykh ibn al-‘Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was asked about the ruling on i’tikāf in the three masājid: Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (in Makkah), al-Masjid an-Nabawī (in Madinah) and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā (in Palestine).

He replied: I’tikāf in masājid other than the three masājid – al-Masjid al-Ḥarām (in Makkah), al-Masjid an-Nabawī (in Madinah) and al-Masjid al-Aqṣā (in Palestine) – is prescribed at the appropriate time, and is not limited to the three masājid. It may be observed in those masājid or in others. This is the view of the imāms of the Muslims and the imāms of the madhhabs that are followed, such as Imām Aḥmad, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, Abū Ḥanīfah and others – may Allāh have mercy on them – because of the words of Allāh: **“And do not have relations with them (your wives) as long as you are staying for worship [i’tikāf] in the masājid. These are the limits [set by] Allāh, so do not approach them. Thus does Allāh make clear His āyāt to mankind that they may become al-muttaqīn”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

And because the word masājid is general in meaning and includes all masājid throughout the world. This sentence appears at the end of the āyah on fasting, the ruling of which applies to the whole ummah in all regions. So, it is addressed to all those to whom the ruling on fasting is addressed. Hence these rulings end with the words (interpretation of the meaning): **“These are the limits [set by] Allāh, so do not approach them. Thus does Allāh make clear His āyāt to mankind that they may become al-muttaqīn”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

It is extremely unlikely that Allāh would address the ummah with words that only include a very few of them.

With regard to the ḥadīth of Ḥudhayfah bin al-Yamān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ: ‘There is no i’tikāf except in the three masājid,’ even if we assume that this ḥadīth is free from faults, it is referring to the most perfect of i’tikāf, i.e., that which is observed in the three masājid, because of their honored status and superiority over others. This usage occurs frequently, where the negative is a statement that something is incomplete, not a denial of its validity. For example the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **“There is no prayer in the presence of**

food,” etc. Undoubtedly the basic principle with regard to negative statements is to negate or deny, but if there is evidence to the contrary then that evidence should be followed, as in the ḥadīth of Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. This is if we assume that it is free of faults. And Allāh knows best. (70)

Shaykh ibn Bāz رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was asked: How sound is the ḥadīth: **“There is no i’tikāf except in the three mosques”**? If the ḥadīth is ṣaḥīḥ, does that in fact mean that i’tikāf can only be observed in the three masājid?

He replied: I’tikāf is valid in masājid other than the three masājid, but it is essential that the masjid in which i’tikāf is observed is a masjid in which prayers are held in congregation. If no prayers are held in congregation there, then it is not valid to observe i’tikāf there. But if a person has vowed to observe i’tikāf in one of the three masājid then he is obliged to do so in fulfillment of his vow. (71)(72)

→ **When should a person who is observing i’tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān enter i’tikāf?**

? I want to observe i’tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān. I would like to know when I should enter the masjid.

→ Firstly:

With regard to entering the place of i’tikāf, the majority of scholars (including the four imāms Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, ash-Shāfi‘ī and Aḥmad رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) are of the view that the one who wants to observe i’tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān should enter his place of i’tikāf before the sun sets on the night of the twenty-first. They quoted several texts as evidence, including the following:

① It was proven that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to observe i’tikāf during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān. (73) This indicates that the period of i’tikāf is

(70) Majmū’ al-Fatāwā ibn al-‘Uthaymīn (460 (20/161-162))

(71) Majmū’ al-Fatāwā ibn Bāz (180 (15/444))

(72) <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/49006/>

(73) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (2026); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1172); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (2462); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (2097); and Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1269)

counted by the nights, not the days. And Allāh says: **“And by the ten nights”**

[Sūrah al-Fajr: 2]

﴿وَلَيْالٍ عَشْرٍ﴾ (سورة الفجر)

The last ten nights start with the twenty-first.

Based on this, he should enter the masjid before the sun sets on the night of the twenty-first.

② They (the scholars) said that one of the greatest aims of i'tikāf is to seek laylatul qadr, and the night of the twenty-first is one of the odd-numbered nights in the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, so it may possibly be laylatul qadr, so he should be observing i'tikāf on that night. This was stated by as-Sindī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ in Ḥāshiyah an-Nasā'ī (2/44).

Also see al-Mughnī (4/489-490).

But Imām al-Bukhārī (2041) and Muslim (1173) narrated that ʿĀ'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said: ‘When the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ wanted to observe i'tikāf, he would pray fajr then enter his place of i'tikāf.’

Because of the apparent meaning of this ḥadīth, some of the salaf were of the view that he would enter his place of i'tikāf after the fajr prayer. This view was followed by the scholars of the Standing Committee i.e., Fatāwā al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah (5 (10/114)) and Shaykh ibn Bāz رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ (15/442-443).

But the majority of scholars responded to this ḥadīth in one of two ways:

① That the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had started i'tikāf before the sun set, but he did not enter the place for i'tikāf until after fajr prayer.

Imām an-Nawawī رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ said: ‘When he wanted to observe i'tikāf, he would pray fajr then enter his place of i'tikāf’ – this was quoted as evidence by those who say that i'tikāf should be started at the beginning of the day. This is the view of al-Awzā'ī and Sufyān ath-Thawrī, and of al-Layth in one of his two opinions. Mālik, Abū Ḥanīfah, ash-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad said: He should enter (i'tikāf) before the sun sets if he wants to observe i'tikāf for a month or for ten days. They interpreted the ḥadīth as meaning that he entered the place of i'tikāf in order to be alone there after he prayed fajr, not that this is the time

when he began i'tikāf; rather he was in i'tikāf from before maghrib and stayed in the masjid, and when he had prayed fajr he withdrew to be by himself.' (74)

② Al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā رَحِمَهُ اللهُ, one of the Ḥanābilah, responded by interpreting the ḥadīth as meaning that he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to do that on the twentieth. As-Sindī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said: 'This response is more likely to be correct.' (75)

Shaykh ibn al-'Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ was asked: When does i'tikāf begin?

He replied: 'The majority of scholars are of the view that i'tikāf should begin on the night of the twenty first, not from fajr of the twenty-first, although some of the scholars are of the view that i'tikāf should begin from fajr of the twenty-first, based on the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا that was narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī: 'When he had prayed fajr he entered his place of i'tikāf.' But the majority of scholars responded by stating that the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ withdrew from people in the morning, but the intention to observe i'tikāf was formed at the beginning of the night, because the last ten nights start when the sun sets on the twentieth.' (76)

He (Shaykh ibn al-'Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) also said: 'Entering the place of i'tikāf for the last ten nights of Ramaḍān may be done when the sun sets on the night of the twenty-first, because that is the time when the last ten nights begin. This is not contradicted by the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا because the wording is different, so it should be understood according to what the language indicates. This is what was narrated by Imām al-Bukhārī (2041) from 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا who said: 'The Messenger of Allāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ observed i'tikāf every Ramaḍān and when he had prayed fajr he would enter the place where he observed i'tikāf.'

Her words 'and when he had prayed fajr he would enter the place where he observed i'tikāf' indicate that he was already staying in the masjid, meaning that he was in the masjid before he entered he place of i'tikāf. (77)(78)

(74) Al-Minhāj fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin Ḥajjāj (4/221)

(75) Ḥāshiyah an-Nasā'ī (2/44)

(76) Majmū' al-Fatāwā ibn al-'Uthaymīn (469 (20/169-170))

(77) Majmū' al-Fatāwā ibn al-'Uthaymīn (20/171-172))

(78) <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/14046>

→ I'tikāf in a room inside the masjid: Permissible?

? Is the doorkeeper's room or the zakāh committee room inside the masjid considered suitable for i'tikāf? Please note that the doors of these rooms are inside the masjid.

→ Praise be to Allāh. Rooms which are inside the masjid and whose doors open into the masjid come under the same ruling as the masjid. Based on that, it is permissible to observe i'tikāf in them because they are part of the masjid.

But if the rooms are outside the masjid, then i'tikāf observed in them is not valid, even if the room has a door leading into the masjid.

And Allāh knows best. (79)

→ Is i'tikāf in muṣallā and Islāmic centres valid?

? Is it permissible to observe i'tikāf in muṣallā or Islāmic centers (in which the five daily prayers and jumu'ah prayer are offered), or is it permissible only in masājid? May Allāh reward you with good.

→ Praise be to Allāh. It is only valid to observe i'tikāf in masājid, because Allāh says (interpretation of the meaning): **"And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid."** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said: "The evidence in this verse indicates that if it (i'tikāf) were valid in places other than the masjid, the prohibition on intimacy with one's wife would not be singled out for prohibition there because intercourse is contrary to i'tikāf according to scholarly consensus. So, it is known, from mention of the masājid, that what is meant is that i'tikāf can only be in the masājid. Ibn al-Mundhir narrated that there was scholarly consensus that what is meant by 'sexual relations' in this verse is intercourse. Aṭ-Ṭabarī and others narrated via Qatādah that the reason for revelation of this verse was that if they were in i'tikāf, and a man went for some need and met his wife, he had intercourse with her if he wanted, so this āyah was revealed." (80)

(79) Fatāwā al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah (6/10/411-412) – <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/34499>

(80) Faṭḥ-ul Bārī fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (6/587 [4/271-272]); and others.

Imām ibn Qudāmah رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said in al-Mughnī (527 (4/461)): I'tikāf is not permissible except in a masjid in which prayers in congregation are held.

I'tikāf is not valid anywhere except in a masjid if the person observing i'tikāf is a man. We do not know of any difference of opinion among the scholars concerning this. The basic principle concerning that is the words of Allāh (interpretation of the meaning): **“And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship [i'tikāf] in the masājid.”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]. End quote.

Imām an-Nawawī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said in al-Majmū' (6/480): I'tikāf on the part of a man or of a woman is not valid anywhere except in the masjid. It is not valid in the prayer-place of a woman's house or the prayer-place of a man's house, which is a separate area set aside for prayer. End quote.

Shaykh ibn al-'Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said: Shar'ī i'tikāf must be in the masājid, because Allāh says (interpretation of the meaning): **“... while you are in i'tikāf in the masājid”** [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:187]

End quote from Fatāwā Nūr 'alā ad-Darb (4037 (7/389-390))

Based on this, i'tikāf in muṣallā or Islāmic centers is not valid.

And Allāh knows best. (81)

→ **Can the one who is observing i'tikāf give lessons and ḥalāqat?**

? Is it acceptable for the one who is observing i'tikāf to teach someone or give a lesson?

→ Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh ibn al-'Uthaymīn رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said: 'It is better for the one who is observing i'tikāf to focus on worship by himself such as dhikr, prayer, reading Qurān and

(81) <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/124291>

so on. But if there is a need to teach someone or learn, there is nothing wrong with that, because it is also remembrance of Allāh (dhikr).’ (82)

→ **Can the person performing i’tikāf call the adhān and iqāmah?**

? Can the mu’takif perform the call to prayer (adhan) and iqāmah? ... And can he advise and stop the children in the masjid from creating disturbance? ...

→ Performing the acts goodness within the boundaries of the masjid can be done. (83)

→ **Is it permissible for the one who is observing i’tikāf to use the phone in order to help the Muslims?**

? Is it permissible for the one who is observing i’tikāf to use the phone in order to help the Muslims?

→ Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh ibn al-‘Uthaymīn رحمه الله said: ‘Yes, it is permissible for the one who is observing i’tikāf to use the phone to help the Muslims, if it is in the masjid where he is observing i’tikāf, because he has not gone out of the masjid, But if it is outside the masjid then he should not go out for that. If he is a man who is needed to help the Muslims, he should not observe i’tikāf, because helping the Muslims is more important than i’tikāf, because helping others is benefitting both parties. And good actions from which others also benefit are better than actions from which only the doer benefits, except in the case of actions that are regarded as requirements and obligations of Islām.’ (84)

(82) Fatāwā al-Ḥaram (meeting 32 of 46) – What is the ruling if someone performing i’tikaf gives lectures during their i’tikaf? [1408H] – Translation: <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/106537/>

(83) Fatāwā Thanā’iyah Madaniyah (3/280)

(84) Majmū’ al-Fatāwā (479 (20/179-180)) – Translation: <https://islamqa.info/en/answers/106538/>

→ **Contact by the family members using mobile phones?**

? Can the mu'takif contact his family members, relatives, or business partners using mobile phones?

→ One should avoid it unless there is a dire necessity. **(85)**

→ **Unnecessary talking and wandering around during i'tikāf?**

? In our masjid I have noticed that some people who stay for i'tikāf, spend their time unnecessarily talking and wandering around the building to smoke etc. Is this permissible for a person in i'tikāf?

→ I'tikāf is a special worship where a Muslim spends his time in extra worship, and dhikr (remembrance of Allāh) in the masjid, hence keeping away from worldly routines and activities. For such a person, wasting time on unnecessary activities while in i'tikāf would be wrong because these things will divert him from his main aim of worship. He should refrain from any such time-wasting activities. However, if necessary, one is allowed to talk with others within limits. **(86)**

→ **Can a women perform i'tikāf during her 'iddah?**

? Can a women perform i'tikāf during her 'iddah (waiting period due to a divorce, or the demise of the husband)?

→ The ruling depends on the type of 'iddah. A woman's ability to observe i'tikāf during 'iddah depends on the nature of her 'iddah.

① 'Iddah al-wafāt (due to the death of the husband): If a woman is observing 'iddah due to the death of her husband, she is prohibited from leaving her home except in cases of dire necessity. This ruling is based on Allāh's command in the Qurān: **"And those of you who die and leave wives behind**

(85) Fatāwā Thanā'iyah Madaniyah **(3/281)**

(86) Fatāwā Širāṭ-e-Mustaḳīm by Shaykh Mahmood Ahmed Mirpuri **(1/186)**

them, they (the wives) shall wait (as regards their marriage) for four months and ten days..." [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:234]

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا...﴾ (سورة البقرة)

Thus, such a woman is not permitted to observe i'tikāf, as i'tikāf requires seclusion in a masjid, whereas she has been commanded to remain within her home during 'iddah al-wafāt.

② 'Iddah at-ṭalāq ('iddah due to divorce [raj'ī or bā'in]):

'Iddah of ṭalāq raj'ī (87): During this period, a woman remains in her husband's house, as she is still considered in the bond of nikāḥ. Consequently, it is not permissible for her to leave for i'tikāf, as she is not allowed to leave her home unnecessarily.

'Iddah of ṭalāq bā'in (88): Similarly in this scenario, a woman is required to observe 'iddah within her home. Since i'tikāf is performed outside the home, it remains impermissible in this case as well.

③ **Can a woman observe i'tikāf at home?** In normal circumstances, it is mustaḥabb (recommended) for a woman to observe i'tikāf in a masjid. However, if she is unable to do so, some fuqahā' (jurists) have permitted her to designate a specific room in her home for i'tikāf. Nevertheless, there is no explicit evidence allowing a woman to observe i'tikāf during her 'iddah, as the primary focus of 'iddah is for her to remain in a state of tranquility within her home while fulfilling its prescribed rulings.

Summary: Regardless of whether a woman's 'iddah is due to ṭalāq or her husband's death, it is impermissible for her to observe i'tikāf during this

(87) Ṭalāq raj'ī (revocable divorce): According to the Qurān, after the first and second divorce, the husband has the right to reconcile during the 'iddah. (Sūrah al-Baqarah: 229). A verbal or practical indication of reconciliation is sufficient; a new nikāḥ is not required.

(88) Ṭalāq bā'in (irrevocable divorce): If the 'iddah is completed and the husband has not reconciled, the nikāḥ is terminated. However, the relationship can be reestablished through a new nikāḥ.

The details of reestablishing the relationship are as follows: If the husband has given three divorces (in three different sittings, as per the shar'ī manner), the wife becomes forbidden for him until she marries another man and obtains a divorce from him. [this is known as ḥalālāh shar'īyah and ṭalāq mughallaḏah].

period. This is because she has been commanded to remain in her home, whereas i'tikāf necessitates seclusion in a masjid. And Allāh knows best. (89)

→ Is it allowed to pray nawāfil after witr?

? I am in shā' Allāh going to be acting as imām for a group in tarāwīḥ. We shall pray eight rak'āt and then three for witr. Is it true that my last action before sleeping should be the witr or is this merely recommended as a prudent course of action by the Prophet ﷺ. If I am intending to pray tahajjud later at night would it be better for me to delay my own witr until then and not pray witr with the jamā'ah or can I still lead them with me intending a nafl prayer of one rak'ah and the congregation intending that to be their witr?

→ Praise be to Allāh.

It is mustaḥabb for the last prayer that a Muslim prays at night to be witr, because the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Make the last of your prayer at night witr."** (90)

This command from the Prophet ﷺ is in the sense of it being mustaḥabb and preferable, not in the sense of it being obligatory and compulsory, because it was proven in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (738) from 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا that the Prophet ﷺ used to pray two rak'ah after witr whilst sitting down.

Imām an-Nawawī رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said: 'The correct view is that he ﷺ performed these two rak'ah after witr sitting down, to demonstrate that it is permissible to pray after witr, and to demonstrate that it is permissible to offer nawāfil prayers sitting down. He did not do that all the time, rather he did it once or twice or a few times.' (91)

(89) A fatwā composed by Qāḍī Unībur-Raḥmān (a graduate from Jamia Salafia, Faisalabad), and then checked and approved by Shaykh 'Abdur-Raḥmān Anwar (previously a teacher at Jamia Salafia, Faisalabad)

(90) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (998); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (751); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1438); Mishkāṭ al-Maṣābīḥ (1258); Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1134); and others.

(91) Al-Minhāj fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin Ḥajjāj (3/218)

The well-known regular Sunnah prayers mentioned in ṣaḥīḥayn and elsewhere in reports from ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and from a number of the ṣaḥābah in ṣaḥīḥayn state clearly that the last of the Prophet’s prayer at night was witr. In ṣaḥīḥayn there are many well-known aḥādīth which enjoin making the last of one’s prayer at night witr, such as **“Make the last of your prayer at night witr” (92)** and **“Night prayers are two by two, and when you feel that dawn is approaching, pray one rak’ah” (93)** etc. So how can anyone think, after reading these aḥādīth and others, that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ regularly prayed two rak’ah after witr and made that the end of his night prayers? Rather, what it means, as we have stated above, is that it is permissible to do so. This is the correct answer. (94)

Shaykh ibn Bāz رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ also said explaining the reason why the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ prayed two rak’ah after witr: ‘The reason for that – and Allāh knows best – is to show to the people that it is permissible to pray after witr.’ (95)

So, if you want to pray tahajjud at night, it is permissible for you to pray witr with the congregation, then to pray after that as many rak’ah as you want two by two, and do not repeat witr.

You also have the option of not praying witr with the congregation, and delaying witr so that it will be the last of your prayers at night.

In this matter you have to pay attention to the congregation praying with you; if there is no one else but you to lead them in praying witr, and if your not leading them in witr will lead to them not praying witr or not praying it properly, then you should pray witr with them.

Shaykh ibn Bāz رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ was asked: ‘If I pray witr at the beginning of the night then I get up at the end of the night, how should I pray?’

He replied: ‘If you pray witr at the beginning of the night then Allāh enables you to pray qiyām at the end of the night, then pray whatever Allāh enables

(92) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (998); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (751); Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1438); Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ (1258); Riyāḍuṣ Ṣāliḥīn (1134); and others.

(93) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (472); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (749); and others.

(94) Al-Minhāj fi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bin Ḥajjāj (3/218-219)

(95) Majmū’ al-Fatāwā ibn Bāz (11/311)

you to pray two by two, without witr, because the Prophet ﷺ said:
“There cannot be two witr in one night.” (96)

And it was narrated from ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا that the Prophet ﷺ used to pray two rak’ah after witr sitting down.’ (97)(98)

With regard to your saying that you will pray one rak’ah with them, intending that as a nafl prayer and not witr, this is not an action that is prescribed in sharī’ah, because the Prophet ﷺ said: “Night prayers are to be offered two by two.” (99)

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ said: ‘It was understood from this that nawāfil prayers should not be less than two rak’ah, except witr.’ (100)

And Allāh knows best. (101)



(96) Sunan Abī Dāwūd (1439); Sunan an-Nasā’ī (1679 [1680]); and Sunan at-Tirmidhī (470). The ḥadīth has been authenticated by Shaykh al-Albānī, Shaykh Shu’ayb al-Arna’ūt, Ḥāfiẓ Zubayr ‘Alī Za’ī and others.

(97) Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (738); and others.

(98) Majmū’ al-Fatāwā ibn Bāz (11/311)

(99) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (472); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (749); and others.

(100) Fath-ul Bārī fī-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (4/82 [2/479])

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- ❁ **Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm wa-Faḍlihi** (Abū 'Umar, Ibn 'Abdul-Barr [d. 463H])
→ **Publisher:** Dar ibn al-Jawzī (1st edition, 1414H) – 2 volumes; **Taḥqīq:** Abū al-Ashbāl az-Zuhayrī
- ❁ **Majmū' al-Fatāwā** (Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin Taymiyyah [d. 728H])
→ **Publisher:** Muḥamma' li-Malik Fahad liṭ-Ṭabā'itil Muṣḥaf ash-Sharīf – 37 volumes
- ❁ **Majmū' al-Fatāwā** ('Abdul-'Azīz bin 'Abdullāh bin Bāz [d. 1420H])
→ **Publisher:** Dārul Qāsim (1st edition, 1420H) – 24 volumes
- ❁ **Majmū' al-Fatāwā** (Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn [d. 1421H])
→ **Publisher:** Dārul Waṭan (2nd edition, 1413H) – 29 volumes
- ❁ **Fatāwā Nūr 'alā ad-Darb** (Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn [d. 1421H])
→ **Publisher:** Mu'assasah ash-Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn (1st edition, 1434H) – 12 volumes
- ❁ **Fatāwā al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah**
→ **Publisher:** Ri'āsah Idārah al-Buḥūth al-'Ilmiyyah wal-Iftā' (2nd edition, 1413H) – 26 volumes
- ❁ **Fatāwā Thanā'iyah Madaniyyah** (Thanā'ullāh Madanī [d. 1442H])
→ **Publisher:** Kulliyyatul Qurān al-Karīm wat-Tarbiyyah al-Islāmiyyah (1439H) – volume (3)
- ❁ **Fatāwā Ṣirāṭ-e-Mustaqīm** (Maḥmūd Aḥmad Mirpūrī [d. 1409H])
→ **Publisher:** Dārussalām (1st edition, 1418H) – 1 volume
- ❁ **Tuḥfatus Ṣiyām lil-Khawāṣ wal-'Awām** ('Abdus-Subḥān Shād)
→ **Publisher:** To be updated.

