

I'TIKAAF – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the Meaning of I'tikaaf?

The meaning of I'tikaaf' is to seclude oneself in the Masjid, with the express intention of I'tikaaf (seclusion), for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. A person in I'tikaaf is termed a Mu'takif.

Q. When is it Permissible to Leave the Boundary of the Masjid in I'tikaaf?

- ✓ To answer the call of nature, i.e. to go to the toilet.
- ✓ To take an obligatory bath.
- ✓ To make wudhu when wudhu breaks.
- ✓ For Jumua'h Salat, if Jumua'h Salaat is not performed in the Mutakif's Masjid.
- ✓ To bring food if there is no one to tend to this need of his.

Q. Which Acts Break the I'tikaaf?

- × **Unnecessarily leaving the Masjid for even a moment whether intentionally, unintentionally or under compulsion will invalidate the I'tikaaf.** Leaving the Masjid for any reason besides those mentioned above will be regarded as 'unnecessary' in the context of I'tikaaf and will invalidate the I'tikaaf.
- × Leaving the Masjid due to illness, although permissible, will invalidate the I'tikaaf.
- × Fasting is a condition for I'tikaaf. I'tikaaf will break if the Mu'takif's fast breaks.
- × **To delay returning to the Masjid after one has left for a valid reason. For example, leaving the Masjid to go to the toilet, then loitering outside the toilet to smoke will invalidate the I'tikaaf.**
- × To leave the Masjid for **the sole purpose** of Janazah Salaah will invalidate the I'tikaaf. **However**, if a Mu'takif leaves the Masjid for a necessity (e.g. toilet) and then participates in the Janaaza Salaah upon his return and thereafter immediately enters the Masjid, the I'tikaaf will **not** be invalidated.

Q. What Acts are Permitted During I'tikaaf in the Masjid?

- ✓ To eat, drink, sleep and engage in necessary conversation.

- ✓ To change clothes, sew clothing, apply perfume, surma or oil.
- ✓ To cut the hair and nails. These should not be allowed to fall on the Masjid carpet.
- ✓ To tend to a sick person inside the Masjid.
- ✓ If necessary, to buy and sell goods provided that the goods are not brought into, nor is payment made inside the Masjid.

Q. What acts are NOT permitted during I'tikaaf in the Masjid?

- × To maintain total silence and consider it as Ibaadah (act of worship).
- × To talk about worldly affairs, backbite or tell lies.
- × To engage in any occupation for a fee.
- × To erect I'tikaaf tents in a way which inconveniences other Musallees.
- × To disturb, irritate and inconvenience others.

Q. What acts are undesirable during I'tikaaf?

- × **Cell phones should be left at home. I'tikaaf is the time when one forgets the world and connects himself with Allah Ta'ala. If necessary, take a basic cell phone that can only be used for calls and sms. Keep the phone preferably on silent and ensure tones and alarms are not set on musical tones.**
- × To sleep excessively, waste away time & engage in non-beneficial activities.
- × To read books and magazines which are not of a Deeni nature.
- × To do any act that is contrary to the etiquette of the Masjid.

Allamah Shurumbulaali (RA) has stated, "I'tikaaf is established from the Quran and Sunnah. It is from the noblest of actions when performed with sincerity. From its virtues are: freeing the heart from the matters of the world and handing over oneself to one's True Master, remaining perpetually in His worship, and securing oneself under His protection.

Ataa (RA) has mentioned, "The example of the Mu'takif is like the person who frequents the door of a great king. It is as though the Mutakif is saying, "I will not leave until I am forgiven." (Nurul li-daah)