

Aetikaf

Hadrat 'Aishah Radi ALLAHU Ta'ala Anha reported that the Holy Prophet Peace and Blessings be Upon Him used to engage in I'tikaaf. i.e. private devotions in the Masjid during the last ten nights of Ramadan till he met his Lord. [Sahih Bukhari, Vol 1, Page 271 - Sahih Muslim, Vol 1, Page 371]

Hadrat Anas Radi ALLAHU Ta'ala Anhu reported that the Holy Prophet Peace and Blessings be Upon Him used to engage in I'tikaaf in the Masjid in the last ten days of Ramadan. But, one year he omitted the I'tikaaf so he engaged in I'tikaf during twenty nights the following year. [Sunan Abi Dawood, Vol 1, Page 334]

Important Notes:

1. It is sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah to perform I'tikaf in the Masjid in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan, as stated by Hadrat Sheikh 'Abd al-Haq "Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi":

According to the Hanafi madhhab, I'tikaf is Sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah as the Holy Prophet always used to perform it till he passed away. [Ashi'ah al-Lam'at Vol. 2 Pg. 118]

2. There are 3 types of I'tikaf:

a) Wajib – if one makes a "Minnat" (vow) of I'tikaf uttering the words of vow. Mere intention will not make I'tikaf wajib. For example, one says, "If my child becomes cured from his illness then I shall perform I'tikaf for three days." Then to perform I'tikaf for three days with fast is wajib.

b) Sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah – that one should enter the Masjid on the 20th of Ramadhan before sunset, with the intention of I'tikaf and to stay there till the end of Ramadhan i.e. leave the Masjid after the Maghrib prayer on the 30th of Ramadan or if the moon for Eid was sighted on the 29th then to leave after the Maghrib prayer of that day. This I'tikaf is "sunnat-e-Kifayah" meaning that if I'tikaf was performed by even one person in a town then the religious duty shall be fulfilled on behalf of everyone. Otherwise, all shall be accountable for neglecting it.

There are many virtues and excellences for such an I'tikaf. Baihaqi has reported on the authority of Hadrat Imam Husain that the Messenger of Allah has stated, "whosoever performs I'tikaf for ten

days in the month of Ramadan, it is as though he has performed two 'Umrah (lesser pilgrimage) and two Hajj (greater pilgrimage)."

c) Mustahab or Sunnat-e-Mu'akkadah – I'tikaf other than the two types mentioned above are "Mustahab" and "Sunnat-e-Ghair Mu'akkadah" [Fatawa-e-'Alamgiri, Vol 1, Page 197]

3. The mu'takif (person performing the I'tikaf) should not engage himself in wordly talks (as this is strictly forbidden in the Masjid, and in the state of I'tikaf it is even more so). Rather, the mu'takif should engage himself in the recitation of the Holy Qur'an; reading the Ahadith (Sayings) of the Holy Prophet; sending Durud sharif (salutations) upon the Beloved Prophet in abundance; learning and teaching Islamic knowledge; reading the life of our Noble Prophet as well as the other Prophets, Saints; writing Islamic books; listening to Islamic lectures and being engaged in the dhikr (remembrance) of Allah, the Most Exalted. [This has been stated in Fatawa-e-'Alamgiri, Vol 1 Page 198]

4. The easy method of performing a Mustahab I'tikaf is to make the intention of I'tikaf, (with the intention of entry to the masjid,) when one enters into the Masjid. For as long as he shall remain in the Masjid, he shall also earn the reward of being in I'tikaf. The words for the intention of the I'tikaf are:

"With the Blessed Name of Allah have I entered (into the Masjid) and in Him have I placed my trust, and I have made the intention of the Sunnah of I'tikaf. O Allah open Your doors of Mercy upon me."
بسم الله دخلت و عليه توكلت و نويت سنت الاعتكاف. اللهم افتح لي ابواب رحمتك

Extracted From

Anwaar al-Hadith, Page 163 to 165 by Hadrat Allama Jalal al-Din Amjadi al-Qadir