

Some Basic Necessary Masā'il of Sunnah I'tikāf

By Muftī Sulayman Lasania

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

I'tikāf means to stay or remain in a place.

In *Sharī'ah* i'tikāf means for a male to seclude himself in a masjid where the five daily ṣalāh are performed with jamā'ah, and for a female to seclude herself in the masjid of her house with the intention of i'tikāf.

The Rukn (chief element) of I'tikāf

To seclude oneself in the masjid.

Note: It is necessary to find out the parameters of the masjid before commencing i'tikāf so that one does not exceed the boundaries, which could result in the i'tikāf becoming void.

Conditions of Sunnah I'tikāf

- a. Intention of a sane Muslim.
- b. To be pure from janābah / ḥayḍ / nifās.
- c. To fast.

Intention

It is necessary to make intention for Sunnah I'tikāf. The intention for Sunnah I'tikāf is that a person makes a firm intention to remain in the chosen masjid before the sun sets on the 20th of Ramaḍān until the crescent is sighted on the 29th of Ramaḍān, or otherwise until the 30th of Ramaḍān.

Leaving the Masjid

The chief element of i'tikāf is to remain in the masjid, hence one is required to spend every moment in this state. However, one may leave the Masjid in those instances where one is unable to fulfil a Shar'ī or natural necessity remaining in the masjid.

Necessities that Permit Leaving the Masjid

- a. To perform Jumu'ah Ṣalāh if Jumu'ah does not take place in the masjid of i'tikāf.
- b. To give adhān.
- c. To perform wuḍū for a worship which is not valid without it – If a person already has wuḍū, he is not allowed to leave to perform a fresh wuḍū.
- d. To answer the call of nature.
- e. To perform farḍ ghusl due to a wet dream. To leave the masjid to perform a ghusl for cooling-off purposes or for Jumu'ah is not permitted.

Note: It is not permitted to bring or leave clothes with najāsāt (impurity) in the masjid.

- f. To go and get food / drink if there is not anyone

present to carry out this chore.

Note: *When leaving for any of the above necessities, one is not allowed to linger around after the necessity is fulfilled, even for a moment. If one stops to talk or do anything the i'tikāf will become void. If a person talks whilst returning to the masjid, it is permissible. Similarly, if there is queue, one is allowed to wait in the queue.*

Needs that do not Permit a Person to Leave the Masjid in the State of I'tikāf

- a. Illness or fear – If one becomes severely ill and it becomes necessary to leave for treatment, the i'tikāf will become void.
- b. To visit the sick.
- c. To attend Janāzah Ṣalāh.
- d. To wash hands, gargle, brush teeth, etc.
- e. To go and fetch water for someone else.
- f. To perform wuḍū for the intention of tilāwah.
- g. To leave the masjid for anything else other than that which has been permitted above.

To leave the Masjid unnecessarily, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, even for a single moment can make the i'tikāf void.

Permitted Acts During I'tikāf

- a. To eat and sleep.
- b. To change clothes.
- c. To clip the nails or trim the moustache – care

should be taken that nothing falls in the masjid.

- d. To have religious discussions and lectures and to speak about lawful matters.

Acts Prohibited During I'tikāf

- a. To talk about worldly matters, backbite or tell a lie.
- b. To remain silent and regard this as a form of worship.
- c. To commit any kind of disobedience to Allāh ﷻ.
- d. To have any kind of sexual relationship with one's wife – cohabitation will nullify the i'tikāf.

Acts to Perform During I'tikāf

- a. Tilāwah of the Qur'ān.
- b. Dhikr.
- c. Perform ṣalāh – qaḍā, nafl (Ishrāq, Chāsht, Awwābīn, Tahajjud, Ṣalāh-at-Tasbīḥ).
- d. Read authentic material.
- e. Du'ā.

Mas'alā: *A person should financially compensate for any extra usage of masjid facilities such as water, electricity, etc. that wouldn't have been used on normal days.*

© At-Tazkiyah 2012