

Fruits for the Week

5th November, 2004

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I'TIKAF OR SECLUSION IN THE MOSQUE

Meaning: I'tikaf means to stick to something. What is meant here is the seclusion and staying in the mosque with the intention of becoming closer to Allah (SWT). All scholars agree on its legitimacy.

The Condition for I'tikaf: The one who performs i'tikaf must be a Muslim adult, a discerning child who is free of sexual defilement, or an adolescent who is free of menstrual or childbirth bleeding.

The Principles of I'tikaf: I'tikaf will be fulfilled if a person stays in the mosque with the intention of becoming closer to Allah (SWT). Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: *"Every action is according to the intention and everyone is what he intended."*

The Length of I'tikaf: I'tikaf has no specific time limit. It can be fulfilled by staying in the mosque with the intention of making i'tikaf for a long or short time. However, The Prophet (SAW) would perform i'tikaf for ten days every Ramadhan. And in the year he died, he performed it for twenty days. The reward will be according to how long one stays in the mosque. If one leaves the mosque and then returns, he should renew his intention to perform i'tikaf. Ya'la ibn Umayyah said: *"I secluded myself in the mosque for some time for i'tikaf."* Ata told him: *"That is i'tikaf as long as you secluded yourself there. If you sit in the mosque hoping for good, it is i'tikaf. Otherwise it is not."*

Permissible Acts for the Mu'takif: The following acts are permissible for one who is making i'tikaf: (1) The person may leave his place of i'tikaf to bid farewell to his wife. (2) Combing and cutting one's hair, clipping one's nails, cleaning one's body, wearing nice clothes and perfume are all permissible. (3) The person may go out for some needs that he must perform. (4) The person may eat, drink and sleep in the mosque, and he should also keep it clean.

Actions that Nullify the I'tikaf: If a person performs one of the following acts, his i'tikaf will be nullified: (1) Intentionally leaving the mosque without any need to do so, even if it is for just a short time. (2) Abandoning belief in Islam, as this nullifies all acts of worship. (3) Losing one's reason due to insanity or drunkenness or the onset of menstruation. (4) Sexual intercourse. Allah (SWT) says: *"But touch them not (that is your wives) and be at your devotions in the mosque."* However, one may touch one's wife without having any desires. One of the Prophet's wives would comb his hair while he was performing i'tikaf. Wallahu A'lam.

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