

338286 - I'tikaaf during a time of danger due to the pandemic

the question

How can one observe i'tikaaf during this quarantine because of the pandemic? What would it look like?

Detailed answer

I'tikaaf means staying in a mosque to worship Allah. It can only be done in the mosques, and it is not valid if it is done elsewhere, regardless of whether the one who is observing i'tikaaf is a man or a woman.

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is not valid to observe i'tikaaf anywhere except in a mosque, if the one who is observing i'tikaaf is a man. We do not know of any difference of opinion among the scholars concerning this.

The basic principle regarding that is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): *{And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques}* [al-Baqarah 2:187]. Thus He mentioned mosques specifically in this regard. If it were valid to observe i'tikaaf anywhere else, Allah would not have mentioned the the mosques in particular.

According to the hadith of 'Aa'ishah, she said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would put his head into my room [through the door], whilst he was in the mosque, and I would comb his hair, and he would not enter the house except for some necessary reason when he was observing i'tikaaf. Ad-Daaraqutni narrated with his isnad from az-Zuhri, from 'Urwah and Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, from 'Aa'ishah the hadith: "The Sunnah for the one who is observing i'tikaaf is that he should not go out [of the mosque] except to relieve himself and i'tikaaf can only be observed in a mosque in which prayers are held in congregation." End quote from *al-Mughni* (3/65).

In this matter, a woman is like a man according to the majority of scholars, so she cannot observe i'tikaaf anywhere except in the mosque.

See also the answer to question no. [50025](#) .

Based on that, the one who is allowed to remain in the mosque during a time when prayer in congregation is not allowed due to public restrictions, such as the imam, the mu'adhhdhin and the caretaker, may observe i'tikaaf.

Secondly:

For the one who is not allowed to remain in the mosque, but usually observes i'tikaaf, it is prescribed for him to make it up once the restrictions have been lifted, during Shawwaal or otherwise, or he may observe i'tikaaf for twenty days during the following Ramadan.

Al-Bukhaari (2033) and Muslim (1172) narrated from 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to observe i'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadan. I would set up a tent for him, and he would pray Fajr then go into the tent. Hafsaah asked 'Aa'ishah for permission to set up a tent, and she gave her permission, so she set up a tent. When Zaynab bint Jahsh saw that, she also set up a tent. The next day, when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw the tents, he said: What is this? He was told about it, and he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Is it righteousness that they seek?" Then he did not observe i'tikaaf during that month, but then he observed i'tikaaf for ten days in Shawwaal.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said in *al-Fath* (4/276): It is as if he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was afraid that what motivated them to do that was competition that stemmed from jealousy, out of keenness to be close to him in particular. Thus their i'tikaaf may not have been for the right purpose.

Or it may be that when he gave permission to 'Aa'ishah and Hafsaah in the beginning, that had only a small impact in comparison to what happened when other wives followed them in that, as the mosque became too crowded for the worshippers. Or it may be that having

all his wives gathered around him made it be as if he were sitting in his house, and they might distract him from what he intended to do of worship, and thus he would miss out on the purpose of i'tikaaf.

With regard to the words, Then he did not observe i'tikaaf during that month, but then he observed i'tikaaf for ten days in Shawwaal...:

Al-Ismaa'eeli said: This indicates that it is permissible to observe i'tikaaf without fasting, because the first day of Shawwaal is the day of Eid al-Fitr, and fasting on that day is haraam. Others said regarding his observing i'tikaaf in Shawwaal: This indicates that if one misses a supererogatory practice that one usually does, it is recommended to make it up. End quote.

Abu Dawood (2463) and Ibn Maajah (1770) narrated from Ubayy ibn Ka'b that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to observe i'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadan. One year he did not observe i'tikaaf, then the following year he observed i'tikaaf for twenty days.

A similar report was narrated by at-Tirmidhi (803) from Anas ibn Maalik.

Ahmad (21277) narrated it from Ubayy ibn Ka'b as follows: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to observe i'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadan. One year he was travelling, so he did not observe i'tikaaf, then the following year he observed i'tikaaf for twenty days.

This hadith was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in *Saheeh Abi Dawood*, and by Shu'ayb in *Tahqeeq al-Musnad*.

The matter is broad in scope, praise be to Allah. We ask Allah to relieve us of the calamity and pandemic.

And Allah knows best.