

## All About Itikaaf

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

Today I would like to discuss on itikaaf, Inshaa'Allah.

For easy reading, I am presenting this in 15 separate points.

1. The word itikaaf **إِعتكاف** comes from the Arabic root **ع ك ف** 'a-ka-fa.

'akafa means to adhere, cling, stick, to give oneself over, apply oneself, devote oneself. It also means to seclude oneself, isolate oneself, withdraw, retire to a place, to hold back, to restrain.

If you apply the meanings of this verbal root akafa to itikaaf, Subhanallah, a myriad of meaning emerges!

In simple terms "itikaaf is to seclude oneself to the devotion of one and only Almighty Allah.

The question 'where to seclude oneself' is answered in **ayah no. 187 of Surah al Baqarah**. *In a masjid!*

I take the liberty to translate the word itikaaf as 'to disconnect oneself from everything to connect with Allah in His very house, the masjid'.

The person in itikaaf is called as 'aakif (singular) and 'aakifoon (plural) **عاكف - عاكفون**

2. One must make his intention clear: To please Allah and none else!

As it is eloquently clear from the word meaning itself, the purpose of itikaaf must be to devote oneself, fully and exclusively, for the devotion, remembrance and worship of Allah Tabarak Wa Ta'ala.

One must be online with Allah as He is always available hotline!

It is sensible not to connect to the internet in the masjid during itikaaf!

3. Is there any special masjid to perform itikaaf?

Itikaaf can be performed in any masjid where congregational Salah is offered.

4. Itikaaf is better performed in Ramadhaan than in any other month.

Itikaaf has to be done in the last ten days of Ramadhaan as it was the usual practice of the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

5. Itikaaf is optional or obligatory, you may ask.

Itikaaf is optional. It is reported from authentic ahadeeth that the Prophet ﷺ once abandoned itikaaf in Ramadhaan and did it in Shawwal!

Had itikaaf in Ramadhaan been Fardh (obligatory) how could the Prophet abandon it?

So it is clear that itikaaf is Sunnah, the way of the glorious Messenger of Allah.

6. Is it only for men? or Can women also perform itikaaf?

There is no gender bias. Itikaaf can be performed by both, men and women. In case of married woman, her husband's permission is necessary.

7. Three conditions control the act of itikaaf.

a. Niyyah (Intention as discussed before)

b. To be in a state of purity

### c. Staying in a masjid.

#### 8. It is compulsory that one should stay in itikaaf for all ten days?

Islam is an easy religion and it never makes things difficult for people.

So if someone is desirous to perform itikaaf and is not in a position to devote all ten days at a stretch, then it allowed to perform itikaaf even for a day or two.

Itikaaf can be even for some hours!

Just go to the masjid, spend some hours in the dhikr, remembrance of Allah, and come back. You will get the reward of performing itikaaf.

As itikaaf is a preferred Sunnah and the Prophet ﷺ used to sit in itikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadhaan, it is better to complete all the ten days, by those who have the means to do so.

#### 9. Beginning and the end of itikaaf

According to the Sunnah, Itikaaf begins with one having the intention to observe it and it ends when the period intended ends.

It is desirable to begin Itikaaf after the Fajr Prayer of the twenty-first day of Ramadhaan, following the example of the Prophet ﷺ. This is based on the hadeeth of 'Aishah رضي الله عنه

**(Note:** Some of the famous scholars including Imam **Abu Hanifa, Malik, Ash-Shafi'e** , and **Ahmad** see the same hadeeth in a different way and are of the opinion that it should begin before sunset in order to complete ten days and ten nights; that is, itikaaf should begin before the

Maghrib salah of the 20th day of Ramadhaan. For details see [here](#))

10. Three things nullify an I'tikaaf:

1. Leaving the mosque intentionally without any genuine reason
2. Conjugal relations
3. Loss of purity by menstruation in case of women

11. The person in itikaaf, is he or she allowed to leave the masjid?

The one who observes Itikaaf should keep to the place of their itikaaf, and should not go out except for answering the call of nature or for bringing food, if there is no one to provide it for them.

12. Eat, drink and sleep but do keep keep the masjid clean!

Cleanliness of the masjid and caution against things that might dirty it, such as remnants of food, have to be taken into consideration. The Prophet ﷺ said, "I was shown the rewards of my Ummah (for their different deeds) even for a speck of dirt that someone removes from the masjid".

Itikaaf or no itikaaf, no Muslim is allowed to spoil the sanctity of a masjid by spreading the litter around!

13. Avoiding unnecessary talks is very important

It is better for the one who observes Itikaaf not to talk much with people. Rather, they should keep to the `Ibadah and obedience. However, if a man is visited by some of his brothers or a woman is visited by Muslim sisters or some of her Mahram relatives (unmarriageable

relatives) and has talks with them, there is nothing wrong in that.

#### 14. What are the commendable things in Itikaaf?

1. To recite the Qur'an and ponder over its meanings.
2. To engage oneself in the Zikr (remembrance) of Allah.
3. To seek **forgiveness** for one's sins. **Sayyidul Istighfaar** is the best form of seeking forgiveness from Allah.
4. To invoke blessings upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ عليه وسلم
5. To offer as much of Nawafil (extra) prayers as possible.
6. To perform Qiyaamul Layl/Tahajjud prayers.
7. To memorize the chapters (surahs) or aayaats (verses) of the Qur'an.
8. To memorize the ahadeeth.
9. To read any good book on Seerah.
10. To seek Laylatul Qadr preferably in all the nights (of the last ten days)
11. To seek this du'aa compulsorily during the nights of Laylatul Qadr:

**اللهم إنك عفو تحب العفو فاعفُ عني**

"O Allah! Indeed, You are Forgiving, You love to Forgive, So Forgive Me"

15. Do do you know what an vowed Itikaaf is?

Suppose a Muslim swears by Allah that he will observe itikaaf in one of the three masjids (Masjid al Haram, Masjid an Nabawi or Masjid al Aqsa) then he must fulfill his vow by compulsorily observing that itikaaf.

I hope most of the major points are covered in this post, alhamdulillah.

Jazakallahu Khayra for reading this post.

May Allah give us the Tawfeeq, Hidayah and Istiqaamah to live by His teachings. Aameen.

May Allah make us one among those who are truly devoted aakifeen. Aameen.

Consulted work: **Alifta**