

Chapter – 14

Seclusion for Worship

(اعتكاف)

Quran:

وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

{And do not touch women while staying in seclusion for worship in the mosques; these are the limits imposed by Allah, so do not go near them, this is how Allah explains His verses to mankind so that they attain devotion. (02:187)}

Hadith:

Narrated Abu Salamah:

Once I went to Abu- Saeed Al-Khudri and I asked him about the Night of Qadr." Abu Said replied, "Once Allah's Prophet performed I'tikaf (seclusion) on the first ten days of the month of Ramadan. Then Jabriel came to him and said, 'The night you are looking for is ahead of you.' So the Prophet performed the I'tikaf in the middle (second) ten days of the month of Ramadan. 'The night which you are looking for is ahead of you.' In the morning of the 20th of Ramadan the Prophet delivered an address saying, 'Whoever has performed I'tikaf with me should repeat it. I have been shown the Night of "Qadr", but have forgotten its date, but it is in the odd nights of the last ten nights. I saw in my dream that I was prostrating in mud and water.' In those days the roof of the mosque was made of branches of date-palm trees. Suddenly a cloud came and it rained. The Prophet led us in the prayer and I saw the traces of mud on the forehead and on the nose of Allah's Prophet. So it was the confirmation of that dream." (Sahih Bukhari: 774)

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

Allah's Prophet used to practice I'tikaf in the middle ten days of Ramadan but later he shifted it to the last ten days of Ramazan. Prophet delivered a speech saying whoever was in I'tikaf with me should stay

in I'tikaf for the last ten days. I was informed of the date of the Night of Qadr that it is in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramazan. So, look for it in the odd nights of the last ten days." (Sahih Bukhari: 1892)

Important Aspects of Islamic Doctrine

Obligatory (فرض):

(1) For I'tikaf there is no clear instructions in Quran, therefore it is not obligatory.

Essential (واجب):

(1) Some Islamic Jurists give the status of 'Essential' to this worship, with certain conditions that I'tikaf should be performed in Mosque. It is preferable if it is in Ramazan, so that Fasting is also added with this worship. (2) For I'tikaf common mosque is enough, Jame Masjid is not a must.

Sunnah (سنة):

(1) Some Islamic Jurists say that I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramazan is "Confirmed Sunnah-Alal-Kifayah". It means if minimum one man stays in the mosque of the area, then Kifayah will be fulfilled, otherwise all the resident Muslims men of the area will be caught for leaving the Confirmed Sunnah-Alal-Kifayah. (2) Other than Ramazan, I'tikaf can be held in any other part of the year. This will be simple 'Sunnah' worship, therefore for this neither mosque is essential nor Ramazan. It is not time bound as well. (3) Intension is a must for this worship, no matter it is 'Essential I'tikaf' or 'Sunnah I'tikaf'.

Desirable (مستحب):

(1) Recitation of Quran, reading books of Hadith and remain busy with other Islamic books is desirable. (2) Offering voluntary prayers. (3) keep busy with praising and glorification of Allah. (4) Remain engaged with good conversations with others.

Miscellaneous (متفرق)

(1) Coming out of the premises of mosque during I'tikaf is prohibited for the natural demands, bath and ablution etc. (2) the person who is on I'tikaf should eat, drink and sleep in the mosque. (3) If Jumua prayer is not held in the mosque he can come out only for the Jumua Prayer. (4) During I'tikaf, sex relation is strictly prohibited. These are the limits imposed by Allah SWT. (5) For women, mosque is not the condition for I'tikaf. She can reserve a room or any specific place in the house.

