



Ramadan I'tikaf (Spiritual Retreat/Seclusion)
Rulings During COVID19 Pandemic

Prepared by Office of the Imam
Islamic Association of Raleigh
May 17th, 2020

Is I'tikaf (spiritual retreat) permissible at home during the Coronavirus Pandemic?

- The scholars have all agreed that I'tikaf is Sunnah. The majority opinion specifies that I'tikaf must be done in the masjid; however, other scholars do not have that condition and state that it is permissible to perform I'tikaf in one's home. The stronger opinion is that of the majority which states that one must be in a masjid to perform I'tikaf.
- Abu Hanifa and Ahmad specify that only the masjids that have regular, established congregational prayers qualify as a place for I'tikaf. The majority, on the other hand, state that any masjid qualifies for I'tikaf; however, a person who is obliged to attend Jum'ah prayer should be secluded in a masjid where Jum'ah is established to avoid leaving his place of seclusion on Fridays.
- Regarding the permissibility of a woman to perform I'tikaf in her home, the majority state that it is not permissible and require the masjid to be one's place of I'tikaf for men and women. However, some scholars from the Hanafi school have allowed that and state that a woman is permitted to perform I'tikaf in her home. The reasoning behind that is that the Sunnah states that it is more virtuous for a woman to pray in her home than in the masjid, thus it is also permissible for her to seclude herself in her own home.
- Regarding the I'tikaf of a man during the pandemic, there is no problem with him secluding himself in his own home due to his inability to go to the masjid. Just as it is permissible for a woman to seclude herself in her own home due to that being better for her, it is also permissible for a man to seclude himself at home due to necessity associated with the current conditions.
- There is no problem in making the intention to perform I'tikaf from the beginning of Ramadan as long as one stays home and abides by the conditions of I'tikah. One may perform I'tikaf for a few hours of the day or night, as any duration is permissible according to the majority.
- If one performs I'tikaf at home, he/she should dedicate a specific place for prayer preferably a place that has the least amount of distractions in the house. One should not leave his/her place of seclusion except for necessity



and busy oneself with dhikr and Qur'an recitation. Additionally, a woman's I'tikaf is not invalidated by preparing food or tidying her home.

I'tikaf is beneficial even if for a few hours every day to encourage people to remember Allah, glorify Him, declare His Oneness, repent, pray, and recite Qur'an. It is also a means of leaving behind worldly distractions and staying away from sin and that which leads to it (ex: phones, TV).

And Allah the Exalted Knows best.

