

**ETIQUETTE OF A MUSLIM**

**IN**

**'ETIKAF**

**Compiled by**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

### ISSUE: I: 'ETIKAF WAS KNOWN BEFORE ISLAM

The following verses are from the Glorious Qur'an which inform us that the word ('Etikaf) was known the past.

#### Allah says in the Qur'an:

وَجَاوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ (138)

***We took the Children of Israel (with safety) across the sea. They came upon a people devoted entirely to some idols they had. They said: "O Moses! fashion for us a god like unto the gods they have." He said: "Surely ye are a people without knowledge."***<sup>1</sup>

Another verse:

قَالُوا لَنْ نَبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفِينَ حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَى (91)

***They had said: "We will not abandon this cult, but we will devote ourselves to it until Moses returns to us."***<sup>2</sup>

Another verse:

قَالَ فَادْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ أَنْ تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَنْ تُخْلَفَهُ وَانظُرْ إِلَى إِلَهِكَ الَّذِي ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا لَنُْحَرِّقَنَّهُ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهُ فِي الْيَمِّ نَسْفًا (97)

***(Moses) said: "Get thee gone! but thy (punishment) in this life will be that thou wilt say, 'Touch me not'; and moreover (for a future penalty) thou hast a promise that will not fail: now look at thy god, of whom thou hast***

<sup>1</sup>SOORATUL A'RAAF: CH. 7, 138.

<sup>2</sup>SOORATU TAHA: CH. 20, V. 91.

***become a devoted worshipper: we will certainly (melt) it in a blazing fire and scatter it broadcast in the sea!"***<sup>3</sup>

Another verse:

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَيِّهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ (52)

***"What then are images that you pay devotion [‘akifoon] to them?"***<sup>4</sup>

قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ أَصْنَامًا فَنَنْظِلُّ لَهَا عَاكِفِينَ (71)

***They said: "We worship idols, and we remain constantly in attendance on them."***<sup>5</sup>

The above verses define the word **‘Etikaf**, that the worshippers of idols devoted themselves to the worship of false gods.

#### **ISSUE: II: THE MEANING OF THE WORD (‘ETIKAF) GENERALLY:**

‘Etikaf means to stick to something, whether good or bad, and to block out everything else at certain place, at certain time for certain reason with certain conditions.<sup>6</sup>

#### **ISSUE: III: THE MEANING OF ‘ETIKAF IN ISLAM**

It means that one sits at a certain place, at certain time with certain conditions to worship Allah alone and to come close to Him by devoting completely to Him.<sup>7</sup> That is, a Muslim sits in the mosque, during the last ten days of Ramadan to worship Allah alone and to come close to Him by devoting completely to Him.

<sup>3</sup>SOORATU TAHA: CH. 20, V. 97.

<sup>4</sup>SOORATUL ANBIYAA: CH. 21, V. 52]

<sup>5</sup>ASH-SH‘URAA: CH. 26, V. 71.

<sup>6</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, Pp. 332-333. AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. 3, P. 117. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P. 318.

<sup>7</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, Pp. 332-333. AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. 3, P. 117.

**ISSUE: IV: RULING OF 'ETIKAF IN ISLAM**

It is not obligatory. Only if someone has made an oath to make an 'Etikaf, then it becomes obligatory upon him and it is compulsory upon him to fulfill.<sup>8</sup>

**ISSUE: V: 'ETIKAF AND ITS LEGITIMACY**

Its legitimacy is confirmed in the Glorious Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ), and consensus of scholars of the Muslim Ummah.<sup>9</sup>

All scholars of Islam agree on its legitimacy. The Prophet (ﷺ) would perform 'Etikaf for ten days every Ramadan.<sup>10</sup> In the year that he died, he performed it for twenty days.

Narrated Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him): The Prophet (ﷺ) used to perform 'Etikaf every year in the month of Ramadan for ten days, and when it was the year of his death, he stayed in 'Etikaf for twenty days.<sup>11</sup>

The Prophet's companions and his wives (may Allah be pleased with them all) performed 'Etikaf with him and continued to do so after his death.<sup>12</sup>

Narrated 'Aishah: (may Allah be pleased with her): (the wife of the Prophet ﷺ): The Prophet (ﷺ) used to practice 'Etikaf in the last ten

<sup>8</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333. AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. 3, P. 118. FAATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P. 320.

<sup>9</sup>L-FIQHUL ISLAAMEE WAL ADILLATUH: VOL. 2, Pp. 693-4. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 118.

<sup>10</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333.

<sup>11</sup>SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 260:

<sup>12</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333.

Even though it is an act, which is done to get closer to Allah, there is no sound hadith concerning its merits. Abu Dawud (may Allah have mercy upon him) states: "I said to Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy upon him), 'Are you aware of anything concerning the virtues of 'etikaaf?' He answered: 'No, except for some weak [reports].'" AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. P. 118.

days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice 'Etikaf after him.<sup>13</sup>

**ISSUE: VI: 'ETIKAF IS OF TWO TYPES.**

1. Sunnah and
2. Obligatory.<sup>14</sup>

**(1). The Sunnah 'Etikaf** is that which the Muslim performs to get closer to Allah by following the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ), especially during the last ten days of Ramadan.<sup>15</sup>

**(2). The Obligatory 'Etikaf** is that which the person makes obligatory upon himself. This may be done, for example, by an oath: "For Allah I must make 'Etikaf," or by a conditional oath: "If Allah cures me, I shall make 'Etikaf."<sup>16</sup>

Narrated 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her): The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Whoever vows that he will be obedient to Allah, should remain obedient to Him; and whoever made a vow that he will disobey Allah, should not disobey Him."***<sup>17</sup>

Narrated Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with both of them): 'Umar said (may Allah be pleased with him): "O Allah's Apostle! I vowed to perform 'Etikaf for one night in Al-Masjid-al-Haram, during the Pre-Islamic Period of ignorance (before embracing Islam). "The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Fulfill your vow."***<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup>SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 243:

<sup>14</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333. AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. P. 118.

<sup>15</sup>TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333. AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. 3, P. 118.

<sup>16</sup>AL-MUGHANEE: VOL. 3, P. 118.

<sup>17</sup>SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 8, Book 78, Number 687:

<sup>18</sup>SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 8, Book 78, Number 688: SAHIH MUSLIM: Book 15, Number 4072:

***The Condition for 'Etikaf and its principles***

- 1. Islam:<sup>19</sup>**
- 2. Sane or one who is mentally normal:<sup>20</sup>**
- 3. 'Etikaf must be done in the mosque:<sup>21</sup>**
- 4. 'Etikaf It can be offered in any common mosque.<sup>22</sup>**

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<sup>19</sup> 'Etikaf is accepted from Muslim only, if disbeliever observe the 'Etikaf, it not be accepted from him.

<sup>20</sup> If a person is mentally sick then he is not required to observe 'Etikaf.

<sup>21</sup> 'Etikaf is observed only in the mosque, because 'Etikaf is the Prophet's Sunnah and he observed it in the mosque and his wives and companions observed in the mosque. There is not single evidence where it is said that he or any of his companion observed 'Etikaf elsewhere. Certainly, 'Etikaf must be done in the mosque, as Allah says: "***And do not touch and be at your devotions in the mosque***" [Al-Baqarah: 178]." This 'ayah proves that if it were proper for 'Etikaf to be performed elsewhere, why would Allah exclusively disallow coming to one's wife during 'Etikaf. The answer is that since such an act would nullify 'Etikaf (no matter where it is performed), it is clear that 'Etikaf itself must be in the mosque.  
TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 123. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 394.

<sup>22</sup> There is a difference of opinion among the jurists concerning what mosques are acceptable for 'Etikaf. Some say it should be observed in a mosque where five daily prayers are offered in congregation. Some say it should be observed in a mosque where Friday-Prayer is offered. This difference of opinions can be referred to in the following books:

1. TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333.
2. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, Pp. 123-4.
3. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4. Pp. 319-20.

**5. A woman must take the permission of her husband.<sup>23</sup>****6. Women should observe 'Etikaf in the mosque only.<sup>24</sup>**

<sup>23</sup>Imam Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy upon him) said:

It is not allowed for a woman to observe 'Etikaf without the permission of her husband. If a woman has observed it without her husband's permission then it is allowed for him to ask her to break her 'Etikaf and go back to her house. And if he has allowed her to observe it even then he can ask her to break it and go back to her house.

FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P.325. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 394.  
SUNAN ABU DAWUD WITH THE FOOTNOTE OF IMAM AL-KHATTAABEE: VOL. 2, P. 831.

Imam Ash-Shaaf'ee, Imam Ahmad, and Imam Dawud (may Allah mercy upon all of them) said: "This is permissible for the husband, and the wife must leave her 'Etikaf in such case".

SUNAN ABU DAWUD WITH THE FOOTNOTE OF IMAM AL-KHATTAABEE: VOL. 2, P. 831. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P.325.  
SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 394.

<sup>24</sup>FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, Pp. 323-5. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 126.

Most scholars say that it is not correct for a woman to make 'Etikaf in the mosque in her house (that is, the special place of her house where she performs her prayers). This is because the mosque in her house usually does not fall in the category of mosques and can be sold. There is no difference of opinion on this point. The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) always performed their 'Etikaf in the Prophet's mosque.

Narrated 'Amra: Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to practice 'Etikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and I used to pitch a tent for him, and after offering the Morning Prayer, he used to enter the tent." Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) asked the permission of 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) to pitch a tent for her and she allowed her and she pitched her tent. When Zainab bint Jahsh (may Allah be pleased be with her) saw it, she pitched another tent. In the morning the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed the tents. He said, "*What is this?*" He was told of the whole situation. Then the Prophet said, "*Do you think that they intended to do righteousness by doing this?*" He therefore abandoned the 'Etikaf in that month and practiced 'Etikaf for ten days in the month of Shawwal."

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 249: -The fact that the messenger of Allah (r) ordered his wives' tents to be struck down and asked them to leave the 'Etikaf after they have made the intention for. It shows

7. **Intention:**<sup>25</sup>
8. **Fasting is not compulsory for observing 'Etikaf.**<sup>26</sup>
9. **Complete purification against Janabah, menses, post-childbirth bleeding**<sup>27</sup>
10. **The length of 'Etikaf**<sup>28</sup>

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that they discarded the 'Etikaf after they had begun it. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P.325. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 394.

<sup>25</sup>'Etikaf will be fulfilled if a person stays in the mosque with the intention of becoming closer to Allah. If the person is not in the mosque or did not do it with the intention to please Allah, it is not 'Etikaf. The fact that the intention is obligatory is proven by Allah words: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: ***"Every action is according to the intention [behind it] and for everyone is what he intended."*** SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: VOL. 1, NO.1.

<sup>26</sup>A Muslim can observe 'Etikaf without observing the fast except for such a person who made an oath that he or she would observe 'Etikaf with the fast. Such a person should fast and another person who is observing 'Etikaf in the month of Ramadan, then he or she must fast. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, Pp. 322-3. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, Pp. 120-1. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 395 and P. 403.

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: 'Umar said "O Allah's Apostle! I vowed to perform 'Etikaf for one night in Al-Masjid-al-Haram, during the Pre-Islamic Period of ignorance (before embracing Islam). "The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ***"Fulfill your vow."*** SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 8, Book 78, Number 688: SAHIH MUSLIM: Book 15, Number 4072:

This statement of the Prophet (ﷺ), shows that fasting is not a condition for 'Etikaf; otherwise, performing 'Etikaf at night would not be valid. FATHUL BAAREE: VO. 4, Pp. 322-3. SUNAN ABU DAWUD WITH THE NOTES OF IMAM AL-KHATAABEE: VOL. 3, P. 616, NO. 3325, and VOL. 2, P. 830.

<sup>27</sup>'Etikaf is not acceptable from a sexually defiled person, a menstruating woman with post-childbirth bleeding.

## 11. The Beginning and Ending of 'Etikaf is after Fajr Prayer<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>The obligatory 'Etikaf is to be as long as the oath states it to be. If one makes an oath to make 'Etikaf for one day or more, he is to fulfill that length of time.

SUNAN ABU DAWUD WITH THE NOTES OF IMAM AL-KAHTTAABEE: VOL. 2, P. 831. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 118, TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 333.

Ya'la ibn Umayyah said: "I secluded myself in the mosque for some time for 'Etikaf." FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P. 319.

One who is performing the non-obligatory 'Etikaf may end his 'Etikaf at any time, even if it is before the period he intended to stay. AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, 118.

<sup>29</sup>If the person has the intention to perform 'Etikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan, he should begin it after offering the Fajr-Prayer and if he wants to come out of it then he should come out of it after offering the Fajr-Prayer of that day.

FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P. 323 and 329. It is the opinion of Imam Al-Awzaa'e, Imam Al-Layth, and Imam Ath-Thauree.

Narrated 'Amra: Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, "The Prophet (ﷺ) used to practice 'Etikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and I used to pitch a tent for him, **and after offering the Morning Prayer, he used to enter the tent.**"

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 249.

TAFSEERUL QURTUBEE: VOL. 2, P. 336. Imam al-Qurtubee said, "Hadith 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) rejects all opinions of those who say that one must observe 'Etikaf before sun set." He further said, "It is an evidence against them when it is argued. It is an authentic hadith."

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) used to practice 'Etikaf in the middle ten days of Ramadan and once he stayed in 'Etikaf till the night of the twenty-first and it was the night in the morning of which he used to come out of his 'Etikaf.

SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 244.

The above hadith is very clear that if a person who has observed the 'Etikaf wants to come out of his 'Etikaf, he should come out after offering Fajr-

**12. It is not compulsory to make up the 'Etikaf, if one breaks it.<sup>30</sup>**

### **Etiquette of a Muslims in 'Etikaf**

**It is preferred for the one who is making 'Etikaf.<sup>31</sup>**

- **To perform many supererogatory acts of worship;**
- **To occupy himself with prayers;**
- **To recite the Glorious Qur'an;**
- **To glorify and praising Allah,**
- **To extol His oneness and His greatness,**
- **To ask His forgiveness,**
- **To send salutations on the Prophet (ﷺ);**
- **To supplicate Allah;**
- **To study and read books of tafsir and hadith, books on the lives of the Prophets (ﷺ), books of fiqh, and so on.<sup>32</sup>**

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Prayer of that day. The Prophet (ﷺ) came out of his 'Etikaf after he prayed the Fajr-Prayer.

<sup>30</sup>**[SAHIH SUNAN AT-TIRMIZEE: VOL. 1, P. 241, UNDER THE HADEETH NO. 644.]**

All the Muslim Imams (may Allah mercy upon them) agree that if one makes a vow to perform 'Etikaf for a day or a number of days and then voids his 'Etikaf, it is obligatory upon him to make it up whenever he can. If he dies before he makes it up, then no one is obliged to make it up on his behalf. On the other hand, ... 'Abdurrazzaq (may Allah have mercy upon him) related from 'Abdulkarim ibn Umayyah who said he heard 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Utbah say: "Our mother died while she still had some 'Etikaf to perform. I asked Ibn 'Abbas and he said: 'Perform 'Etikaf on her behalf and fast.'" Sa'id ibn Mansur recorded that 'Aishah performed 'Etikaf on behalf of her brother after his death. **[AL-MUGHANEE WITH THE SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, Pp. 118- 120. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, 395.]**

<sup>31</sup>AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 148.

- **It is also preferred to set up a small tent in the courtyard of the mosque as the Prophet (ﷺ) did.<sup>33</sup>**

### **Things which are disliked in 'Etikaf**

1. **It is disliked for one to engage oneself in affairs that do not concern him.<sup>34</sup>**
2. **It is disliked to abstain from the speech.<sup>35</sup>**

### **Things which are permissible in 'Etikaf**

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<sup>32</sup>AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, P. 149.

<sup>33</sup>FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, Pp. 325-6.

<sup>34</sup>Abu Harayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **"Part of a man's good observance of Islam is that he leave alone that which does not concern him."** SAHIH SUNAN AT-TIRMIZEE: NO. 1886.

<sup>35</sup>Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both): While the Prophet (ﷺ) was delivering a sermon, he saw a man standing, so he asked about that man. They (the people) said, "It is Abu Israil who has vowed that he will stand and never sit down, and he will never come in the shade, nor speak to anybody, and will fast." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, **"Order him to speak and let him come in the shade, and make him sit down, but let him complete his fast."** SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 8, Book 78, Number 695:

'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: **"There is no orphan-hood after one has passed the age of maturity, and there is no non-speaking for a day until the nightfall."**

SAHIH SUNAN ABU DAWUD [ARB]: NO. 2497. SUNAN ABU DAWUD [ENG]: NO. 2867. This tradition indicates the age of orphan-hood. After coming of age, a boy or a girl is not called orphan. The laws about the orphans will not be applied to them. The next part of the tradition is about the manners of speech. The people used to keep silence all the day long as a devotion to Allah in pre-Islamic times. But no such silence is taken into consideration in Islam. It is not necessary to keep silence during 'Etikaf in the mosque. One may have a religious talk. Silence is not an act of worship.

1. **The person may leave his place of 'Etikaf to bid farewell to his wife.**<sup>36</sup>
2. **Combing and cutting one's hair, clipping one's nails, cleaning one's body, wearing nice clothes or wearing perfume are all permissible.**<sup>37</sup>
3. **The person may go out for some need that he must perform.**<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Narrated Ali bin Al-Husain: Safiya, the wife of the Prophet told me that she went to Allah's Apostle to visit him in the mosque while he was in Itikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan. She had a talk with him for a while, then she got up in order to return home. The Prophet accompanied her. When they reached the gate of the mosque, opposite the door of Um-Salama, two Ansari men were passing by and they greeted Allah's Apostle. He told them: Do not run away! And said, "She is (my wife) Safiya bint Huyai." Both of them said, "Subhan Allah, (How dare we think of any evil) O Allah's Apostle!" And they felt it. The Prophet said (to them), "Satan reaches everywhere in the human body as blood reaches in it, (everywhere in one's body). I was afraid lest Satan might insert an evil thought in your minds." SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 251:

<sup>37</sup>SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, 398.

<sup>38</sup>Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) performed 'Etikaf, he brought his head close to me so I could comb his hair, and he would not enter the house except to fulfill the needs a person has." SAHIH AL-BUKHARI: Volume 3, Book 33, Number 246:

Al-Khattabi says: "A group of people say that the person performing 'Etikaf may attend the Friday prayer, visit the ill, and witness funerals. This has been related from 'Ali, and it is the opinion of Sa'id ibn Jubair, al-Hassan al-Basri, and an-Nakha'i." [SUNAN ABU DAWUD WITH FOOTNOTES OF IMAM AL-KHATTAABEE: VOL. 2, P. 833. FATHUL BAAREE: VOL. 4, P. 321.]

Ibn al-Mundhir says: "The scholars agree that the one who performs 'Etikaf may leave the mosque in order to answer the call of nature, for this is something that he personally must perform, and he cannot do it in the mosque. Also, if he needs to eat or drink and there is no one to bring him his food, he may leave to get it. If one needs to vomit, he may leave the mosque to do so. For anything that he must do but cannot do in the

**4. The person may eat, drink, and sleep in the mosque, and he should also keep it clean. He may make contracts for marriage, buying, selling, and so on.<sup>39</sup>**

mosque, he can leave it, and such acts will not void his 'Etikaf, even if they take a long time. Examples of these types of acts would include washing one's self from sexual defilement and cleaning his body or clothes from impurities."

AL-MUGHANEE WITH SHARHUL KABEER: VOL. 3, Pp. 132-3.

Sa'id ibn Mansur records that 'Ali said: "If a person is performing 'Etikaf, he is to attend the Friday congregational prayer, be present at funerals, visit the ill and go to see his family about matters that are necessary, but he is to remain standing [while visiting them]." **[REPORTED 'ABDUR RAZZAQ: NO. 8049 and its chain of narrators is authentic. AL-MUHALLAA: VOL. 5, P. 189. SHARHUS SUNNAH: VOL. 6, P. 401.]**

'Ali helped his nephew by giving him 700 dirhams to buy a servant and the nephew said: "I am performing 'Etikaf ". 'Ali said: "What blame would there be upon you if you go to the market to buy one?" **[AL-MUHALLAA: VOL. 5, P. 189.]**

Qatadah used to permit the person who was performing 'Etikaf to follow the funeral procession and to visit the sick, but not to sit while doing so. **[AL-MUHALLAA: VOL. 5, P. 190.]**

Ibrahim an-Nakha'i says that they preferred that the person who was performing 'Etikaf do the following deeds and he was allowed to do them even if he did not do them.

- to visit the sick,
- to attend the Friday prayers,
- to witness the funerals,
- to go out to meet his needs, and
- Not to enter a place that has a ceiling.

He said: "The one who is performing 'Etikaf should not enter a roofed place unless there is a need to do so." **[AL-MUHALLAA: VOL. 5, P. 190.]**

<sup>39</sup>Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "The Sunnah for one who is observing 'Etikaf in a mosque is not to visit a patient or to attend a funeral or touch or embrace one's wife or go out for anything but necessary purposes. There is no 'Etikaf without fasting and there is no 'Etikaf except in a congregational mosque. SAHIH SUNAN ABU [ARB]: NO. 2160.

### Things which can nullify the 'Etikaf

1. **Intentionally leaving the mosque without any need to do so, even if it is for just a short time. In such a case, one would not be staying in the mosque, which is one of the principles of 'Etikaf.**
2. **Abandoning belief in Islam, as this would nullify all acts of worship. If you ascribe a partner to Allah, your work will fail and you will be among the losers.**
3. **Losing one's sense due to insanity or drunkenness, or**
4. **Menstruation or post-childbirth bleeding, all of which disqualifies a person for 'Etikaf.**
5. **Sexual intercourse will nullify one 'Etikaf.<sup>40</sup>**

CONCLUSION: 'Etikaf is an act of worship in which one is required to devote oneself completely without getting involved into any worldly deeds. Otherwise it is not considered to be complete devotion to Allah. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) has cleared it.

<sup>40</sup> Allah says:

(( وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ ))

***"But touch them not [that is, your wives] and be at your devotions in the mosque."***AL-BAQARAH: CH. 2, V. 187.

However, one may touch his wife without having any sexual desires. One of the Prophet's wives would comb his hair while he was performing 'Etikaf.

As for kissing or touching due to desire,

-Abu Hanifah and Ahmad say that it is not desirable, for it leads to something that is forbidden for the one performing 'Etikaf. However, it does not nullify it unless one ejaculates.

-Malik says that it nullifies the 'Etikaf, for it is an illegal touch regardless of whether the person involved ejaculates or not.

-From ash-Shaf-i there are two reports that correspond to the two preceding opinions.

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Ibn Rushd explains that: "The reason for their differences of opinion is [the (fact) that] if a word has more than one meaning, one being literal and the other figurative, does the word apply at one time to all of them or not? This is one of the types of words that have more than one meaning. Those who say that it carries both meanings interpret 'touch' in the 'ayah . . . 'and touch them not and be at your devotions in the mosque' in the unrestrictive sense--that is, covering both sexual intercourse and also actions [of touching] that are less than that. Those who don't say it carries all of its meanings and they are the majority say that the 'ayah points to sexual intercourse or to touching that is less than intercourse. If we say that it refers to sexual intercourse by consensus, then this nullifies the possibility of it referring to actions less than intercourse, as one [single] word could not be taken in its literal and figurative meaning [at the same time]. Those who say that what is less than sexual intercourse is included say so because it falls under the literal meaning of the verse. Those who differ do not take the word in its literal and figurative meaning at the same time.