

ITIKAF ON THE LAST 10 NIGHTS

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ
سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ
وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.
أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فِيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، أَوْصِيكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us increase our righteousness to Allah the Almighty by doing all that He prescribes and leaving all that He prohibits. May we be blessed by Allah the Almighty in this life and the hereafter.

Allah says in chapter 2 (surah al-Baqarah) verse 187:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

وَلَا تَبْشُرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا

تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ



Which means: “And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His ordinances to the people that they may become righteous.”

Dear brothers and sisters,

We are indeed grateful to Allah the Almighty for giving us the opportunity to be in the blessed month of Ramadhan. Our greatest hope is that the fasting that we perform is accepted by Allah the Almighty. Among the efforts to ensure that our fast is accepted is to perform this ritual with sincerity by following the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh). Among the sunnahs that is performed by the prophet (pbuh) in the month of Ramadhan is to be at the mosque (*I'tikaf*). Ibnu Umar said in a hadith narrated by Imam Muslim:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْتَكِفُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَّخِرَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ

Which means: *Messenger of Allah (pbuh) used to observe i'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan.*

I'tikaf means sitting in a mosque with the intention of worshiping Allah the Almighty. I'tikaf is not tied to time and is recommended not only during Ramadhan but on other months too. However, it is highly recommended to be done in the last ten nights of Ramadhan because the rewards are much greater than at other times.

I'tikaf done by the Prophet (pbuh) as explained in a hadith narrated by Imam As-Shafi'I means: “For those who want the reward of the sunnah (according to the i'tikaf done by the Prophet (pbuh) during the last ten nights of Ramadhan; he must first enter the mosque on the 21st night of Ramadan and only leaves the

mosque on the eve of Eid al-Fitr. It is even better if he continues to perform i'tikaf in the mosque on the eve of eid al-fitr and comes out only after performing eid prayers. To revive the sunnah, the mosque committee plans to conduct i'tikaf programs continuously during the last 10 nights of Ramadan.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Indeed the companions and early generations that were educated by the Prophet (pbuh) gave much emphasis on executing I'tikaf. They understood that their fast is not complete if not accompanied by spending time in the mosque (*I'tikaf*). Thus, they were earnest in performing I'tikaf so as to emulate the Prophet (pbuh). In a hadith narrated by Imam al-Bukhari, Aisyah Radiallahu anha said:

“Prophet (pbuh) , used to practice I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan till he died and then his wives used to practice I'tikaf after him.”

Imam al-Zuhri advised us to perform I'tikaf when he said, “How strange are humans, why do they abandon i'tikaf? The prophet (pbuh) did some things and left some things but he never abandoned I'tikaf in the month of Ramadan until his death.”

Dear brothers and sisters,

In this millennium, we are busy with worldly affairs and tend to ignore our obligation and responsibility to worship Allah the Almighty. Therefore, make some time to perform i'tikaf on the last ten days of Ramadan. It is acknowledged that most Muslims are unable to fully follow the way of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Though we are unable to follow the steps of our Prophet (pbuh) completely, i.e. to spend the last ten nights of Ramadhan at the mosques, we should try to spend a large portion of our time to be at the mosques during this time. Let's not waste this golden opportunity to get closer to Allah the Almighty through performing i'tikaf. Enhance our ibadah with beneficial activities such as reading the Quran, reciting zikir, performing recommended prayers (*solat sunat*) and so on. Hopefully it will cleanse our hearts and make us righteous servants

Allah the Almighty says in chapter 13 (surah Ar-Ra'd) verse 28:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ ﴿٢٨﴾

Which means: *Those who have believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah . Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured."*

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْءَانِ الْعَظِيْمِ، وَنَفَعَنِي وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ
وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيْمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِي
هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ الْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِيْنَ.