Issues Related to the Legislative Rulings of al-I’tikaaf
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All praise is due to Allah alone, and praise and salutations be upon him whom there is no Prophet after, his family and his Companions.

These are some issues related to the legislative rulings of al-I’tikaaf which I have selected from a compilation of my questions to our Shaykh Saalih Ibn Muhammad al-Luhaydaan (حفظه الله), and I asked his permission to distribute them, which he granted me to do so on the 15th of Ramadhaan.

I ask Allah the Most High to benefit through it and reward our Shaykh the best of rewards.

1. When does the time for al-I’tikaaf start?

The Shaykh responded: The time for al-I’tikaaf begins the morning of the 21st of Ramadhaan.

2. What is the shortest time (duration) of al-I’tikaaf?

There is no proof for (specifying) the shortest duration of al-I’tikaaf; however it is better for the Muslim if he wants to make I’tikaaf, he can make the shortest duration for his I’tikaaf a total of one day and one night.
The Shaykh also mentioned to me once: My opinion is that the shortest duration of al-I’tikaaf is one day and night as al-I’tikaaf is secluding oneself in the masjid for obedience to Allah, so if the individual wants such, then he is to increase this seclusion in the masjid. (As there are some scholars who say it can be as short as an hour.)

3. What is the ruling of travelling for al-I’tikaaf in a masjid other than the three masaajid?

Our Shaykh replied: It is not permissible to travel for al-I’tikaaf except to the Masjid al-Haraam or the Prophet’s Masjid or Masjid al-Aqsa. And it is not permissible to travel to any masjid aside from these three.

4. What is the ruling of making al-I’tikaaf in a masjid where the Jumu’ah prayer is not established?

Our Shaykh responded: It is better for the Muslim to make al-I’tikaaf in a masjid where the Jumu’ah prayer is established and to not make al-I’tikaaf in a masjid where the Jumu’ah prayer does not take place.

5. What is the validity of al-I’tikaaf in a room inside the masjid?

The Shaykh answered: If this room is in the masjid such that if the door of this room is opened, he would be inside the masjid, then this is considered as part of the masjid. Thus, it is permissible to make al-I’tikaaf in it.
However, if the room is outside of the *masjid* and not inside of it, then this is not part of the *masjid* and as such, making *al-I’tikaaf* in it is not permissible.

6. Does *al-I’tikaaf* become nullified by mere intention?

The Shaykh replied: Whoever intends to stop *al-I’tikaaf*, then he has nullified his *I’tikaaf* just as the one who intends to cease the prayer, his prayer becomes invalid.

7. Is it permissible to leave from the place where one is making *al-I’tikaaf* for something that is necessary/inevitable?

The Shaykh answered: It is permissible for the one making *al-I’tikaaf* to leave the place of his *I’tikaaf* and go to his home for something necessary/inevitable like food or drink or that which is similar to them.

8. Is it permissible to make *al-I’tikaaf* conditional (upon something else)?

The Shaykh replied: It is obligatory upon the individual to follow the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) whilst in *al-I’tikaaf* and in other affairs as well. Thus, he is to make *al-I’tikaaf* just as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) made it.

9. Is it permissible to talk to friends while in the place of *al-I’tikaaf*?
The Shaykh responded: The individual will be taken to account for all speech and the best of speech is that which contains the remembrance of Allah the Most High. It is upon the one making al-I’tikaaf to become busy in the remembrance of Allah and there is nothing prohibiting permissible speech if he needs to do such. However, minimizing one’s speech is better.

10. Is fasting a condition for al-I’tikaaf?

The Shaykh answered: Fasting is not a condition for al-I’tikaaf if it is outside of Ramadhaan.

11. What is the authenticity of the hadeeth: “There is no I’tikaaf except in the three masaajid.”?

The Shaykh answered: The hadeeth, “There is no I’tikaaf except in the three masaajid” is not authentic.

I said to him: “If it is assumed to be authentic, how is its meaning understood?”

He replied: If it was authentic, we would look at its meaning.

12. When does the time for al-I’tikaaf end?
Our Shaykh replied: *Al-I’tikaaf* ends at sunset (*maghrib* time) on the last day of *Ramadhaan*. If the sun has set on the last day of *Ramadhaan*, it is permissible for the one making *al-I’tikaaf* to leave the place of his *I’tikaaf*.

13. Is it permissible to make up *al-I’tikaaf* for the one who didn't make it?

The Shaykh answered: *Al-I’tikaaf* is not made up except for the person who made a vow.

14. Can the person making *al-I’tikaaf* go to the courtyard of the *masjid*?

The Shaykh answered: If the courtyard is part of the *masjid* and not separate from it, then this is okay for the one making *al-I’tikaaf* to go to it.