

(Al-Qur`an, 8: 60)

With this strength Allah aided them because they aided His cause and His religion of Islam.

“... Allah will certainly aid those who aid His cause, for verily Allah is full of strength, exalted in Might (able to enforce His will). Also they are those who if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin the right and forbid wrong. With Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.”

(Al-Qur`an, 22: 40-41)

In this verse are the attributes that lead to this victory:

First, for us to be established on the earth as *khulafah*, rulers we must observe total *`ubudiyah* (worship) of Allah alone. If we obey and worship Allah sincerely in our hearts, pronouncements, deeds, and will, and if we do not intend with that action anything but the pleasure of Allah and the last day, and if we do not desire position, praise from people and our peers, wealth, or anything from this world, and this *`ebadah* continues in all aspects of our life, only then will Allah (SWT), if he so wills, grant us, to use the Qur`anic term, *tamkeen* (establish in authority and *khilafah*).

Allah states:

“Allah has promised to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that he will of a surety grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion, the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state) after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace. They will worship Me (alone) and not associate

ought with Me. If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked.”

(Al-Qur`an, 24: 55)

Second, establishing Salaat: that is, to observe it in the way the Messenger observed it. Be mindful of its prerequisites, pillars, obligations, rules, and regulations. Cleanliness must be perfected, standing, bowing, prostration, and sitting must all be observed properly. Be heedful of the time of each and every prayer, *Jum`ah* and *jama`ah* prayers. Observe Salat with humility and complete Allah - consciousness, which is the spirit of the body of Salaat. Without it there is no Salaat. In a hadith related by `Ammar bin Yasir (raa), he said:

“I heard the Messenger of Allah say ‘Verily, a man may turn away from Salaat and nothing is written for him of that Salaat but the tenth or ninth, eighth, seventh, sixth, fifth, fourth, third or half.’ ” (Abu Dawud)

Third, is Zakaat: that is, to give Zakaat to its lawful and rightful recipients willingly and without any rancor or ill feeling, to give a complete amount without cheating, so as to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

Fourth, enjoin what is right, *amru bil maaruf*. This means upholding or helping others to uphold anything that Allah (SWT) and His Messenger commanded or instructed of us. One of the main objectives of enjoining what is right is to revive and maintain the *sharee`ah* of Allah on the earth. To be actively involved in reforming the believers and servants of Allah, so as they will stay the cause of straight path, *siraatul mustaqeem*, and to intend with this, Allah's mercy and His pleasure.

Fifth, forbid what is wrong, *nahyu `anil munkar*. This means personally avoiding or helping others avoid everything that Allah (SWT) or His Messenger forbade, the big or small sins, things that relate to acts of worship, behavior and conduct and relationship with the believers. This aspect protects the religion

and the people, and prevents fasad (evil acts) from seeping into the body of the *ummah*.

Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong are the two most important pillars of Islam. They are necessary for the survival of the ummah, its power, and its unity, so that the ummah would not be weakened by peoples' desires and end up going in different directions. This is why these two principles (enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong) are among the obligatory duties of a believer if he or she is able. Allah (SWT) commands:

“Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones to attain felicity. Be not like those who are divided amongst themselves and fall into disputations after receiving clear signs. For them is a dreadful penalty.”

(Al-Qur`an, 3: 104-105)

Were it not for this principle, the ummah would have been dissolved, as is our situation today. Allah declares:

“You are the best of people, evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah...”

(Al-Qur`an, 3: 110)

By neglecting this principle, Allah cursed the Israelites, as He states:

“Curses were pronounced on those among the children of Israel who rejected faith, by the tongue of Dawuud, and of Jesus the son of Mary, because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses. Nor did they (usually) forbid one an-

other the iniquities which they committed: evil indeed were the deeds which they did.”

(Al-Qur`an, 5: 81)

Whenever these five elements are fulfilled, along with what Allah exhorted us to, victory will come, provided we cultivate determination, perseverance, and prepare for physical strength. This is what we are promised, and Allah will never renege or break His promise. Allah states:

“(It is) the promise of Allah. Never does Allah depart from His promise; but most men understand not. They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world: but of the end of things they are heedless.”

(Al-Qur`an. 30: 6-7)

Only then will victory be accomplished in a way that no one thought possible.

The believer who has total trust in Allah's promise is aware that physical elements - as vital as they are - no matter how strong, are not enough and are nothing compared to the power of Allah Who created this strength. The people of `Aad boasted of their power. “Who is more powerful than us?” they said. Allah responded, saying:

“...Did they not see that Allah, Who created them, was superior to them in strength. But they continued to reject Our Signs! So We sent against them a furious wind through days of disaster, that We might give them a taste of the penalty of humiliation in this life; but the penalty of a Hereafter will be more humiliating still, and they will find no help.”

(Al-Qur`an, 41: 15-16)

Pharaoh was proud of his vast domain and the rivers that flowed beneath it, so Allah (SWT) drowned him in the same water he was proud of. Further, Allah made Prophet Musa (ass) inherit his kingdom and his people, whereas he was perceived by Pharaoh as weak and unable to express himself. The Quraysh were intoxicated by their power and vainglory. They left their homes in a campaign to demonstrate their power and to terrorize the entire Arabian region. They were advised to return home, but refused, and continued to march to Badr for an engagement with destiny. So Allah made them pay a heavy price and taste the most humiliating defeat; the defeat that let them become the laughing - stock of all of Arabia and the world over from that day on.

If we today, in this day in time, take heed of the numerous warnings of Allah, and establish our religion and become leaders of this erring world, not following or imitating others, and take all the physical means of modern times and spiritual means from our Book with sincerity, Allah will help us as He helped our ancestors. Allah made good His promise and helped His servants, and He put to fight the confederate alone.

“(Such has been) the practice (approved) of Allah already in the past: no change wilt thou find in the practice (approved) of Allah.”

(Al-Qur`an, 48: 23)

Retreat (*Al-I'tikaaf*)

I'tikaaf is from the root word “*Akafa*” to adhere, cling, stick or keep. It means to engage and to devote something, to a thing, be it good or bad. Allah (SWT) states in Al-Qu'ran:

“...What are these images to which ye are (so assiduously) devoted?”

(Al-Qu'ran 21:52)

In *Shari'ah* it means to engage in a retreat in the Masjid and stay there with the intention of seeking nearness to Allah the Almighty, and His reward.

Its Legalization

The majority of Muslim scholars agree that *I'tikaaf* is permissible, for the Messenger of Allah (saas) observed *I'tikaaf* in the Month of Ramadan during the last ten days. In his last Ramadan he observed it 20 days, as is related by Bukhari and others. Besides, his companions and wives observed it during his lifetime and after.

I'tikaaf can be either Sunnah or obligatory, *wajib*. The Sunnah *I'tikaaf* is when a Muslim volunteers to seek nearness to Allah, and to imitate the Messenger by observing this kind of *'ebadah*, and the Sunnah is meritorious in the last ten days of Ramadan.

The obligatory *I'tikaaf* is the one when a believer makes it obligatory on himself, by invoking a conditional vow, such as saying: I am vowing in the Name of Allah to engage in retreat; or if Allah cures my sick relative, I will engage in *I'tikaaf*. In Bukhari, the Messenger of Allah (saas) said:

“Whoever vowed to obey Allah, should obey him.”

In the same hadith, Umar (ra) told the Messenger (saas),

“I vowed to engage in a night retreat in the Sacred Masjid, and the Messenger responded, “Fulfil your vow.”
(Bukhari)

Time of Retreat

The mandatory retreat can be observed according to the vow of the vower. If he vowed to retreat a day or more, it becomes necessary for him to fulfil it. But voluntary retreat has no time limit. It may be done by staying in the masjid with the intention of *I'tikaaf* for short or long periods of time, and the person will be rewarded so far as he remains in the masjid. If he leaves the masjid and returns, he should restate his *niyah* (intention).

The one who is in retreat may cut off his *I'tikaaf*, when he feels like it, before the time that he had intended. 'Aishah (ra), the Messenger's wife, said:

“Whenever the Messenger intends to engage in retreat he will pray his *Fajr*, then he begins his *I'tikaaf*.”

She continued,

“One day the Messenger intended to engage in retreat the last ten days of Ramadan, and he ordered his pouch to be built. When I saw that, I asked for my own tent to be built, and the rest of his wives asked for the same thing. After *Fajr* prayer, he looked at the tents, ‘What do you intend with this righteousness?’ So he asked his tent and his wives to be removed, then he delayed his *I'tikaaf* to the first ten days of Shawwal.” (Bukhari)

This report is an indication that it is permissible to disengage from the retreat after starting.

The Prerequisites of Retreat

For a retreat to be valid, the observer must be Muslim, must have reached puberty, and must be pure from *janabah*, (major defilement, menstruation, and post-childbirth bleeding). People who are impure cannot engage in *I'tikaaf*.

The Pillars of Al I'tikaaf

There are two pillars for *I'tikaaf*: intention, and staying in the Masjid. Niyah or intention has been discussed earlier, but regarding staying in the masjid, Allah states:

“...But do not associate with your wives while you are in retreat in the masjid...”

(Al-Qu'ran 2:187)

This verse prohibits two things: marital relationships during *I'tikaf* because this contradicts the spirit of devotion, and observing *I'tikaf* in any place but a masjid. Thus, any believer man or woman who desires to observe *I'tikaaf* may do so only in a masjid as we see the Messenger's wives were building their tents in the masjid.

Masjid In Which I'tikaaf Can Be Held.

Some scholars are of the opinion that any masjid in which the five daily prayers are observed can be used for retreat, but this opinion is based on a weak hadith. Imams Malik and Shafi'e and others said *I'tikaaf* is permissible in any masjid because the verse is general, and did not single out or specify any particular masjid.

The retreaters can not leave the masjid, but he can leave his tent to join the congregational prayer, and climb the minaret for *adhan*. But, if he steps out of the masjid the retreat is invalid.

The majority of scholars said if the masjid is in a house - such as a room in a house turned into a masjid, it cannot be used as a place for *I'tikaaf* because it does not have the name "masjid," and it may be sold; whereas, you can not sell a masjid, (unless it is to be sold in order to build a new one on the same spot, or move it somewhere else).

Vowing I'tikaaf in a Special Masjid

Whoever vows to engage in *I'tikaaf* in the Masjid Al-Haram, the Messenger's Masjid, or Masjid Al-Aqsa, he should make it in the masjid that he intended. But if he vows to engage in retreat in any masjid, he can I'tikaaf in any masjid anywhere because no masjid, (except the three mentioned above), is better than another masjid.

If he vowed to engage in retreat in Masjid An-Nabawi he can do it in Masjid Al-Haram, because the latter is better in merit than the former.

Fasting In Retreat

If the retreat fasts, it is good, if not the retreat is still valid. In a hadith reported earlier 'Umar told the Messenger that he had vowed to observe retreat one night during the pre-Islamic (*Jahiliyah*) period the *Masjid Al-Haram*. The Messenger responded "Fulfil your vow." In the hadith, there is an indication that fasting is not necessary for *I'tikaaf* because 'Umar (ra) vowed *I'tikaaf* at night and the Prophet told him to fulfil his vow and there is no fasting at night.

The Beginning And Ending Time Of I'tikaaf

There is no specific time for beginning or ending *I'tikaaf*. Whenever one enters into the masjid with *niyyah*, he begins his

retreat. If he intends to engage in *I'tikaaf* the last ten days of Ramadan, he should prepare his tent before sunset. In a hadith related by Abu Sa`ed, the Messenger of Allah said:

“Whoever intends to retreat with me should retreat during the last ten nights (of Ramadan).” (Al-Bukhari)

The first night of the ten is the night of the 21st of Ramadan because in Islam the days begin at sunset. However, the reports that said the Messenger (saas) entered his *I'tikaaf* place after *Fajr* prayer do not mean he started after *Fajr*, they mean he returned to his place of *I'tikaaf* at that time.

If *I'tikaaf* is for the last ten days of Ramadan, the observer should leave after sunset the last day of the month, but it is preferred that he remain in the masjid and should not leave it until the time of `Eid. If a person intends to engage in *I'tikaaf* for a day, or several days, as voluntary *I'tikaaf*, he will enter into his place of *I'tikaaf* before the break of dawn and will leave after sunset, whether it is in Ramadan or not. If a person intends to engage in *I'tikaaf* for a night or two as a voluntary act, he should enter before sunset and leave after the break of dawn.

The reason is the night begins with the sunset and completes with the break of dawn, and the day begins with the break of dawn and completes with sunset. If a believer intends to engage in *I'tikaaf* for a month he should enter the first night of the month before sunset and leave after sunset when the month finishes.

What A Retreater Should Engage In

It is recommended that the retreater should engage in supereogatory worship, and engage himself with prayer, recitation of *Al-Qu'ran*, Glorification of Allah, Praising Allah, frequent declaration of *Kalimat*, *Takbeer*, seeking forgiveness from Allah,